Distancing Learning from [the Spatiality of] Higher Education to [the Context of] the Home

Bridget Horner
ORCID iD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0407-4993

Abstract

This chapter argues that connecting online and effectively shifting teaching and learning from the space of higher education to the space of the home during the COVID-19 pandemic, will result in something fundamental being disconnected in students' education. This disconnect lies in the *distancing of learning* from the context of knowing. Mental, social and physical distancing from meaningful engagement in everyday spatial practices with others and the higher education space could be dangerous for students. It is through engagements within the *informal spaces* of higher education that students come to know of themselves and others and that they broaden their conceptions of education beyond narrow, disciplinary content silos. The potential to shift individualistic pursuit of academic success and self-development to a collective knowing of what it means to be a student of higher education and a citizen of a democratic society, could effectively be lost by going online.

The chapter highlights the benefits of students' engagement, physically, socially and mentally, with higher education spaces, by drawing from the literature that constituted part of a larger PhD study on students' knowings of informal spaces of food, accommodation and transport on campus. It employs Foucault's heterotopia of crisis and Soja's theory of spatial justice to argue for a re-appraisal of informal spaces beyond the notions of welfare, that recognises such spaces as potential active contributors to a holistic education where the benefits of being here [on campus], could far outweigh those of being there [home].

Keywords: higher education spaces, informal spaces, crisis, heterotopia, spatial justice

DOI: https://doi.org/10.29086/978-0-9869936-6-4/2021/AASBS08
Chapter URL pp 94 - 114: http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/Files/books/series/08/05-horner.pdf

1 Introduction: COVID-19 – A Time of Crisis

To curb the spread of the Coronavirus in March 2020, universities across South Africa commenced an early mid-term break and closed all residences and campuses to students, initiating a mass exodus from institutions across the country. Students returned home with no certainty as to when they would return to university or when their education would resume. This indefinite suspension was confirmed when lockdown commenced on 26 March.

In an effort to not lose the academic year, all South African universities switched to emergency remote online learning. At the time, most contact-based universities had resumed online teaching, although with varying levels of preparedness, implementation dates and approaches; those whose students reside predominantly in rural areas with associated inferior internet connectivity, opted to wait the pandemic out and to resume only when full contact learning can occur (Universities South Africa 2020).

Discourses in the media over lockdown addressed conducive environments for learning at home, institutions' readiness to deliver online teaching and learning, and proposed pedagogies and assessment strategies for going online (Brooks *et al.* 2020). These discourses polarised several aspects: the public good of universities and private institutions' opportunism in seizing this online moment (Walwyn 2020); well-resourced and less-resourced institutions; students from lower and higher socio-economic backgrounds (Arnhold & Bassett 2020), and urban and rural homes, in terms of their potential to both deliver and receive online education (Mzileni 2020). Such polarisation is of no of interest to this discussion; rather, what is important is that these discourses tended to be located within the formal curriculum, with higher education as the provider of knowledge and the shift from face-to-face to asynchronous and blended learning opportunities in the delivery of content (Walwyn 2020). Little was said of other learnings not formally accredited by the institution, which are stimulated in higher education environments.

In a discussion on the COVID-19 crisis with reference to what would be lost through contact-based universities going online, Harari (CordenYou Tube 2020) spoke of the loss of the 'break', i.e., the periods between formal timetabled learning in which exciting conversations could be held amongst peers. Harari referred to such conversations as an in-between action that happens informally, suggesting that as there is no *in-between time* online, there is no opportunity for break conversations.

I would like to extend Harari's argument to suggest that there is a break IN conversations in going online. This disruption is a consequence of not only a loss of *in-between time* but also of *in-between space,* as important conversations that contribute to students' informal learnings on campus require both co-presence and physical spaces.

This chapter argues that there is a spatiality within and of break conversations and the informal learning that arises there which is lost in going online. Habib (2020) captured this sentiment when he posed the question of whether this pandemic signifies the end of the physical brick and mortar university as we know it. His answer affirms that not only is the physical space of higher education important, but those spaces that deliver the formal curriculum are just as important as those that do not, because of their contribution to developing holistic, well-rounded students. The learning Habib (2020a: Online) is speaking about includes 'the development of soft skills, consolidation of an intelligentsia, and the promotion of a cohesive citizenry'. Walker (2018) further notes the potential of higher education as both a space of public good, and the development of student capabilities[1] therein as a potential public-good outcome.

If we are to contemplate what is lost in this time of emergency remote online learning, while recognising the potential of the higher education space for students and society as a whole, we need to think deeply about the potential of the physical space of contact-based institutions.[2] This chapter addresses coming to university as a step in an individual's transition to adulthood and in the formation of students as part of a collective project (Walker 2018) in the development of democratic citizenship. This is explored through informal spaces and space use on campus with reference to those spaces in which students interact as part of their everyday life on campus, including those

---

[1] Walker (2018) proposes that higher education fosters capabilities of personhood self-formation, epistemic contribution, and adequacy of material resources. The epistemic contribution is the ability to access knowledge and to reason critically, the material resources enhance well-being and self-formation promotes recognition and social inclusion.

[2] South Africa has both contact and distance options for students of higher education. For the purposes of this chapter, only contact-based learning is addressed as the teaching and learning mode for these students would have been the most radically affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

related to food, accommodation and transport.

In considering these issues, it should be borne in mind that South African campuses are not neutral spaces that serve as passive backdrops to erudite conversations. They both affect and are affected by political action (Ngxiza 2020; Habib 2020b) and social-political issues that rage on their peripheries and enter the campus space. Student protests such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall have disrupted and continue to impact the campus space. Furthermore, many students have had a disrupted education due to academic or financial exclusion, with this number being disproportionately high within the cohort of students that would previously have been excluded from university education (BusinessTech 2019). The intent of this chapter is not to romanticise campus environments as ideal spaces for learning. Rather, its purpose is to recognise the potential of the informal spaces on campus [towards the holistic development of students] and that the opportunities afforded therein are not available to all.

Using Foucault's (1997) heterotopia and heterotopic space the chapter argues that the campus is a heterotopic space [a world within the world] that is forced to function in a different mode in the time of COVID-19. Heterotopias affect the world around them, and this is palpably felt in every student's household as a consequence of the adoption of distributed learning, where every home is compelled to make space for learning. This raises questions about the continued relevance of campus spaces. Heterotopias also house thresholds to opportunities [liminal spaces] (Bonasera 2019) within their informal spaces. The potential of informal spaces to both address spatial injustices and to promote the soft skills that could be more equitably accessible to a broader body of students, is also addressed.

The chapter begins by exploring the campus as a heterotopic space and what constitutes the notions of home space. This serves as a means to comprehend what can be learnt from students' experiences of a campus space operating in crisis mode and in the home, in the idealistic mode. It then addresses the reality of informal spaces on campus in their development of cohesive citizenry, suggesting that the contribution these spaces currently make falls short of their potential. Idealistic notions of what higher education spaces could enable, need to be addressed within the reality of current spatial inequity within these informal spaces that are in desperate need of redress. Thinking of a post-COVID-19 campus enables a re-assessment of the purpose of the campus space in the development of the whole student, and where higher

education currently falls short in achieving this goal.

1.1 Higher Education as a Heterotopia of Crisis

Foucault (1997) refers to 'other' places as spaces, and institutions that are not part of the stable normalcy or everyday existence. Also referred to as heterotopias, these are worlds within worlds that mirror what is happening on the inside, yet upset what is happening on the outside. Foucault (1997) defines several conceptions of heterotopia and heterotopic spaces which I briefly describe with the intention of suggesting how the campus space constitutes a heterotopic space.

The first is a heterotopia of crisis which *'*comprises privileged or sacred or forbidden places that are reserved for the individual who finds himself in a state of crisis*'* (Foucault 1997: 3). These crises are of long or short duration such as giving birth, old age, and a honeymoon. Foucault refers to the spaces that constitute crises as 'elsewhere' and occurring 'anywhere.' He asserts that, in contemporary culture, heterotopias of crisis have been replaced by heterotopias of deviance, that is, places which remove people from society when their behaviour deviates from the norm. Prisons, hospitals and psychiatric clinics are examples of heterotopias of deviance.

A heterotopia which is of interest here is an existing heterotopia that has not disappeared but is now functioning differently. Foucault explores this through the example of the translocation of the cemetery from the centre of society to the periphery. This 'other city' outside of the city emerged as people's perceptions of death changed from representing a trace of our existence to that of death as related to sickness.

Heterotopias of long duration occur through the storing of artefacts in a single space such as museums and libraries. In contrast, heterotopias of short duration surface in the form of celebrations such as fairs or markets that emerge in empty zones within or on the outskirts of the city for a limited period of time and then disappear. Heterotopias are also associated with layers of exclusivity in that one is either sent there by force or one can only enter by special permission. Furthermore, heterotopic spaces may seem open, but mask exclusions that are only realised once within.

Drawing from this description, I suggest that the campus space is this 'other' space, positioned as a quasi-real world within the real world, a world poised between a monastery and the marketplace (Cantor & Schomberg 2003).

It is neither of these, yet has characteristics of both as a place to retreat to for intellectual growth, that is at the same time connected and responsive to communities on the outside. However, formal access to the campus space is not guaranteed, as entrance requirements need to be met. Furthermore, once inside, exclusions are generated through policies and processes that serve as constant reminders to students of the tenuous nature of their links to this place.

In the time of COVID-19, the campus has assumed a heterotopia of crisis which instead of being a space to which people are sent to overcome a crisis, is banishing students and staff from its core and operating in a different mode by switching to remote, emergency online learning. A parallel can be drawn with Foucault's description of the cemetery's relocation to the periphery as its meaning and significance changed. As the fear of potential sickness or death loomed, institutions moved their teaching and learning from being contact-based within specific campus spaces to becoming peripheral and dispersed within tens of thousands of students' homes. The space of higher education has shifted [virtually] from the quasi-public realm of the campus to the privacy of the home, effectively putting an end to contact-based learning as we know it for an undefined period of time.

The purpose of reflecting on the university as a heterotopic space is to suggest how this space is different and 'other' and, consequently, alienating. This is even more the case as it purges ancillary functions and spaces to become a virtual space for which an additional level of eligibility is required for learning, in the form of internet connectivity and a conducive home environment. Access to learning for some students is denied by virtue of their spatio-geographic location and the socio-economic circumstances in which they find themselves. This is not to say that universities are dystopias or that they are alienating for all, but to recognise that their mode has consequences for how the curriculum is experienced and felt in both its physical and virtual existence. However, all is not lost, as promise lies in heterotopias themselves.

Heterotopias host liminal spaces that serve as boundaries or thresholds between areas. These spaces which students move through[3] (Tarini 2015) have

[3] Liminal space is described in the literature as either a physical space that is moved through, that has no real purpose as a destination in itself, or the psychological space of uncertainty or moving between one state and level of conscience to another. For the purpose of this chapter, I embrace both the physical and the mental aspects of liminality.

no real purpose as a destination or real existence in and of themselves. Liminal spaces serve spaces that come before or after them and are understood spatially as doorways into a room, the doctor's waiting room, corridors and stairwells. They serve as markers of the transitions from one time to another, one space to another, one culture to another and one action to another.

Liminality is also a psychological space of uncertainty, moving from one state and level of conscience to another. It is a mental space of uncertainty (Barnett 2007) that students experience while at university and is associated with students' actions of resistance, agency and capitulation (Wood 2012). Informal spaces are then understood as both mental and physical space in which students can exercise their political selves and as a space in which to engage face to face with other students.

Informal spaces on campus include parking lots, bus-stops, socialising spaces and residences - in-between spaces where students gather at will. They provide the opportunity for diverse bodies of students to interact and engage with one another, potentially contributing to the engendering of democratic citizenship (Klemenčič 2015). Informal spaces accommodate the complex mixing of different students and their multiple identities. Rather than being dominated by a single exclusionary identity, informal space could be seen to be full of internal conflict as different identities contest for their use. They are spaces where different social relations can come together to construct new forms of social interaction. Informal spaces are thus seen as dynamic, and enabling of practices and relations, while at the same time not being immune to forms of oppression or exclusion constructed both from within and elsewhere.

The power hierarchies that exist in informal spaces tend to benefit some students over others and some spaces over others. This contributes to what Soja (2010) refers to as spatial [in]justices, where the spatiality of students' lives can have both positive and negative impacts, enabling, constraining or disempowering them. Hence the spatiality of students' lives as having the potential to be just as well as unjust (Soja 2009). Spatial justice is further denoted in the impartial and equitable dissemination of socially-valued resources in space and opportunities for the student to make use of them. These resources include housing, healthcare and education (Soja 2009). In contrast, spatial injustice is produced in the patterns of unfair distribution of resources and infrastructure, which Soja states are reflected in spatial structures of privilege. Spatial injustice is also reflected in processes that can occur at

multiple scales [macro, meso and micro] leading to the uneven development of some spaces and consequently of some students on campus. Multi-scaler spatial injustices can occur as a consequence of decisions and actions taken by government and higher education management, and from within the student body.

These spatial injustices are most notable in the spaces related to students' material needs wherein difference in access and use and the associated benefits or privileges derived therefrom, would be most profound. They include spaces in which food is consumed, transport related spaces and the various typologies of accommodation available to students.

In terms of accommodation, I dwell on the home environment as its relationship with the higher education space is the most pertinent during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is not to negate other accommodation arrangements that students may have had access to, such as living with friends, extended family or remaining in other forms of private accommodation.

2 Disrupted Home Space [Space of the Individual]

The relationship between higher education spaces and the home environment is important in understanding how these entities support students' development. Some students may go so far as to reject their home environments when coming to university, while others use assistance from their home environments to move forward at university (Soudien 2008). It is thus useful to understand what constitutes 'a home' and what it may offer students to promote their mobility through higher education.

There is no singular understanding of home or the significance it may hold for students (Kenyon 1999). Theoretical representations of the home are of a stable place of human consciousness, remote and womb-like (Bachelard 1964). It is a mental rather than a physical space or a shelter in which to day-dream, protecting the dreamer, and allowing dreams to occur undisturbed. The home space is further associated with a place to retreat to, where freedom, creativity, and expression are possible (Goldsack 1999). Social relations (Easthope 2004) also contribute to engendering a sense of home where the individual resides within the familiarity and security of the family unit, creating a safe space. However, conceptions of home are not only bound to the house and relations therein, but are also associated with social groupings and spaces that extend into the neighbourhood or beyond the immediate area in which the

home is located to include the extended family, church, and sporting communities. Whether the home is understood as a physical or mental space, it is a space that one desires to return to after a long period of absence. Most of these associations with home are individualistic notions that acknowledge the role it could play in students' identity formation (Kenyon 1999).

However, these positive notions of home are not necessarily every student's reality. The home could also be a contested space filled with hegemonies of control and lacking in privacy or respite. In the time of COVID-19, stability or disruption within the home space were set aside as the door to the home was effectively forced open to invite public education in. Students needed to accommodate space and a time for learning within this environment, failing which their education would effectively be suspended or worse still, terminated.

This is not to suggest that students have not studied or do not study at home, or do not have space or the time to study. Some clearly do. The point is that expectations of online learning, both in terms of concentrated time and space for learning were greater, and the links to teaching were more tenuous. Online learning also exposed the precariousness of students' home environments, visually in zoom calls, and in their notable absence when internet connectivity failed them.

Further compounding factors for the home environment in the time of social distancing and lockdown, was that the home space literally shrank to the physical confines of the immediate neighbourhood and the physical, social and mental constraints of the home. As a consequence of the legacies of apartheid planning, South African homes and their suburbs tend to be located within distinct and homogenous socio-economic, racial and cultural clusters, leading to limited opportunities for engagement with others [unlike themselves] outside of these neighbourhood spaces. This is not to refute the potential of learning from chance encounters within homes or neighbourhoods, but merely to note that these were likely to be of limited diversity and already familiar to students. Face-to-face contact and encounters may have shrunk to narrowly defined neighbourhood zones, but virtual connections for students with boundless internet connectivity grew exponentially.

Balancing the home as a learning and living space in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis is a very different space physically, mentally and socially from that in which students found themselves when the academic year began on campus in February 2020.

3 The Space of Higher Education

Turning back the clock to explore what would have been the start of the academic year and the beginning of face-to-face learning calls for the hands to be tweaked further back to examine what South African campuses set out to be and were evolving to become some years into their post-apartheid existence. I briefly delve into the inequity across institutions, across the student body and within institutions' informal spaces to set the context of South African institutions, to suggest that although universities aspire to be spaces of democratic or cohesive citizenry, their reality falls short of achieving this aim.

Reddy (2004: 6 - 7) notes that the vision for higher education institutions post-apartheid was to:

> … contribute towards overcoming the legacies of the country's racialised development, transform the society along democratic and more equitable lines, and make the country more competitive in the global economic system.

However, this vision was compromised in the restructuring of 36 institutions of higher learning, in the post-apartheid era. Cooper (2015: 248) noted an important indicator of inequality that arose through this process, in which many of the former historically white universities [HWU], more than half at the time, as well as one historically coloured university, were excluded from the mergers. In contrast, most of what were considered lower status technical institutions and many of the historically African universities [HAU] underwent mergers. The latter bore an apartheid-era legacy of being historically underfunded and under-resourced in comparison to the HWU. Cooper's observations suggest that the structures of inequality across the now restructured 26 institutions were built into the architectural framework of the new system via what was merged or not merged.

Cooper (2015) further speculated that at some of the upper band universities [HWU], most students come from middle to upper-income families, while students from working class and lower-income families are a minority across all race groups. For Cooper (2015: 238), this demonstrates that the higher education system in HWUs has shifted from reproducing inequality based on race during apartheid to one that in 2012, 'reproduces an equally

serious social inequality … on students' 'race-class' position'. In the HAU, student racial demographics largely remain unchanged, with an increased number of students from working-class families.

Cooper's (2015) study highlights systemic issues that have perpetuated rather than addressed social inequality within higher education institutions. Attempts at social transformation within institutions have not led to the integration of the student body (Cornell & Kessi 2016; Swartz *et al.* 2017; Higham 2012), and the student experience of racial discrimination and alienation on campus persists despite increasing student diversity.

3.1 The Knowledge Agenda Eclipsed by the Welfare Agenda

Annexure 8 of the Higher Education Summit (2015: 2) called for the creation of a new narrative of real, radical transformation as a matter of urgency. The report set out broad principles on how this transformation could take place by refocussing on knowledge as the centre of the transformation agenda. However, Jansen (2017) asserts that it is becoming increasingly evident within South African higher education institutions, that the knowledge agenda is being eclipsed by the need for social welfare redress. Jansen (2017) uses the term 'welfare university' to describe post-apartheid universities in his book, *As by fire: The end of the South African university.*

With the rise of the welfare university, spaces of privilege both within and across the different universities are becoming more apparent, and knowledge or knowing of their spatiality is critical for spatial justice. While formal access to higher education spaces may have changed, the physical containers and spaces which house student diversification have remained largely unaltered. This is not to discount the conscious shifts that have sought to re-architecture spaces through new designs and provisioning for the growing enrollment of 'non-traditional' (Jama *et al.* 2008), 'first-generation Black disadvantaged students' (Fataar 2018) from marginalised communities (Langa *et al.* 2017).

3.2 Students Becoming Mobile

At the start of the academic year, students' geographical mobility from home to university would have denoted a fundamental threshold transition from being a young person to becoming an adult (Christie 2007). Of the many choices students would have made with regard to accessing a contact-based

education, one option would have been where they would live while studying. They would have chosen to either stay at home and commute to university or leave home and live closer to campus. However, pre-COVID-19, some students, especially within South Africa's rural areas and townships, had no choice but to leave home to access education. The obstacles of distance and unconducive learning environments required that they moved closer to campus. Becoming mobile was necessary to access contact-based higher education institutions. These push factors are enabled by bursaries and loans offered by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) that cover the learning and living costs of students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

3.3 Encountering Difference in University Spaces

At the beginning of the year, campus spaces would have been full of students socialising on the lawns, in the cafés and in the open spaces between buildings. Students have opportunities both on campus and in their residential accommodation to spend long periods of time with fellow students. Universities provide many spaces and places for encounters with difference, potentially exposing students to diverse views, cultures, and sexual orientations, with the potential to equip them for living in a multicultural society.

Informal interaction and learning can occur frequently and freely in the informal spaces of the campus located between formal, highly regulated spaces such as lecture theatres and seminar rooms and non-formal spaces that are self-regulated, such as libraries and LANs. Informal spaces encourage interaction by chance or deliberately, and are places where students and faculty mix, mingle, pass by one another and interact should they chose to do so. They host practices such as studying, collaborating, and socialising (Lomas & Oblinger 2006) and contribute to feelings of belonging, personal and professional growth and being part of the intellectual and social life of the university (Gebhardt 2014).

The institution's welfare (Jansen 2017) responsibility also manifests in the informal spaces of higher education through the provision of services such as food, accommodation and transport. It is in these informal spaces that students from different socio-economic groups have the opportunity to interact with others and become aware of their differences. However, the South African reality suggests that this has not been the case.

3.4 Lost Opportunities in Food, Accommodation and Transport Spaces

While food and leisure spaces on campus provide great places for students to socialise, levels of food insecurity on South African campuses remain high (Munro *et al.* 2013), thereby rendering tenuous the potential for students to engage in eating together as a means to build a sense of community and belonging. Studies (Dominguez-Whitehead & Whitehead 2014: 65) highlight asymmetrical relations between those students who are food secure and those who are not, and how these groups cannot engage in equitable social encounters, let alone share the same spatial settings. This highlights the limitations of the university informal space in bringing students of different backgrounds and socio-economic groupings together around food.

Residences are spaces in which students tend to spend longer periods of time with others; however, these relations are normally based on being *thrown together* (Massey 2005) with students they do not know, which is not always ideal. Managing relations with other students and access to specific spaces and conditions within incidental co-living arrangements to study can prove difficult. Yet, these spaces also offer opportunities to develop academic support and lasting friendships (Xulu-Gama 2019). This potential is, however, limited in private residential developments, where the trend is to maximise bed space at the expense of *communal space,* thereby limiting the potential for students to interact more fluidly in the daily activities of eating, cooking, bathing or studying. It is also possible for residential spaces to become homogenous groupings of students of similar socio-economic class given the market forces that dictate rental values and university policies on residence access based on student need.

The report of the Department of Higher Education and Training (2011) on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities highlighted the undesirable conditions in student accommodation and the location thereof. It noted that many students were living in overcrowded and squalid conditions, that the severe shortage of student accommodation led to students being exploited by private rental agreements, and that many students were living in unsafe areas. The quality of student accommodation has a direct bearing on their relations with others and their potential for success within the university (Kuh 2011).

The ability to be mobile and access the campus space is a critical factor

in engaging in campus life (Kenyon 2011). Further benefits include the ability to attend classes which supports student retention (Manik 2015) and enables access to on-campus learning resources such as facilities, infrastructure and people (Allen & Farber 2018). Studies on students' mobility to campus have directly linked access to student achievement and poor access to compromised learning, social and other campus-related activities (Kenyon 2011). Getting to campus is thus critical for students.

Mbara & Celliers' (2013) study on students living off-campus who spend long periods of time travelling, shows that this limits the social-contact opportunities with other students. The authors (2013) assert that such contact is essential to enhance the formal learning and personal development of students. Being on campus and spending time on campus have also been associated with students' identity construction (Christie 2007), and cultural, social and economic capital (Leatherwood & O'Connell 2003), thus making a positive contribution to their development. This privileges students that have more fluid and direct access to campus over those who do not. How then, could students living far from campus integrate into the campus environment, if their time spent on campus is so tenuous?

Ironically, the tenuous nature of the link between home and campus is being challenged in this time of COVID-19. The challenge of physical mobility for students is being usurped by educational mobility, but this is not without emotional, technological and internet accessibility challenges. The mobility of education is, however, not compensating for the potential of informal encounters with a diversity of students across socio-economic, racial, gender, cultural and other lines. While informal campus spaces are falling short of their potential within the contact-based South African university as we know it, being on campus is beneficial.

4 Conclusion: Return to Heterotopia

Let us return to the heterotopic argument that the university is a space of difference; its role is to unsettle the world around it, but it is not the world. However, the notion that within the fabric of the university lies the offering of a democratic and cohesive citizenry, it is at best utopic and at worst, a fallacy. Realising this ideal may not be possible in the short term as its trouble lies deeper than the spaces themselves; it lies in the systems that created them, in the processes that maintain them and in the privileges that are still enabled for

those students gifted with more mobility and of higher socio-economic class.

However, it is not an ideal that we should relinquish as within these informal spaces lie opportunities for change. In my view, some qualities within the idealised home environment could prove useful in addressing the 2030 National Development Plan goals and in re-imagining campus spaces beyond the necessary welfare services to provide the physiological needs of food, accommodation and transport. The qualities of home include a supportive environment through both family and extended networks, a place to dream and a space for creative expression. Supportive environments require a level of familiarity of both the people and the place. How could university spaces enable familiarity in order to better facilitate students' integration into campus and campus culture? Dreaming requires the space to imagine future possibilities of becoming, without fear of being judged or discredited. How could university spaces contribute to enabling students to imagine tangible futures for themselves? Creative expression calls for a space in which students can empower themselves to be in whatever manner or form they may choose, without fear of ridicule and stigma. How could university spaces be more accepting of individual differences and diversity?

The COVID-19 crisis has upset the normal operation of contact-based universities but has also offered an opportunity to reflect on some of the core values of such institutions. The potential of brick-and-mortar structures and the spaces in between to serve as contributors to a holistic education, means that the benefits of learning here [on campus] should in time far outweigh learning there [home].

References

Allen, J. & S. Farber 2018. How Time-Use and Transportation Barriers Limit On-Campus Participation of University Students. *Travel Behaviour and Society* 13: 174 - 182. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tbs.2018.08.003

Arnhold, N. & R.M. Bassett 2020. *COVID-19's Immense Impact on Equity in Tertiary Education.* Available at: https://doi.org/10.1596/36328 https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/covid-19s-immense-impact-equity-tertiary-education

Bachelard, G. 1964. *The Poetics of Space.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Backhouse, J. & F. Adam 2013. The Student Experience in South Africa. In

Kandiko, C.B. & M. Weyers (eds.): *The Global Student Experience.* Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge.
Bangeni, B. & R. Kapp 2005. Identities in Transition: Shifting Conceptions of Home among 'Black' South African University Students. *African Studies Review* 48, 3: 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2006.0004
Barnett, R. 2007. *A Will to Learn: Being a Student in the Age of Uncertainty.* Berkshire, England: Open Universiy Press.
Bonasera, C. 2019. Of Mirrors and Bell Jars: Heterotopia and Liminal Spaces as Reconfigurations of Female Identity in Sylvia Plath. *Humanities* 8, 20: 1 - 16. https://doi.org/10.3390/h8010020
Brooks, D.C., S. Grajek & L. Lang 2020. *Institutional Readiness to Adopt Fully Remote Learning.* https://er.educause.edu/blogs/2020/4/institutional-readiness-to-adopt-fully-remote-learning
Brooks, R., K. Byford & K. Sela 2016. The Spaces of UK Students' Unions: Extending the Critical Geographies of the University Campus. *Social & Cultural Geography* 17, 4: 471-490. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2015.1089585
BusinessTech 2019. *South Africa's University Pass Rate Shocker.* https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/353575/south-africas-university-pass-rate-shocker/
Cantor, N. & S. Schomberg 2003. Poised between Two Worlds: The University as Monastery and Marketplace. *Educause Review* 38, 2: 12 -21.
CHE 2016. *South African Higher Education Reviewed: Two Decades of Democracy.* Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.
Christie, H. 2007. Higher Education and Spatial (Im)Mobility: Nontraditional Students and Living at Home. *Environment and Planning A* October, 39: 2445 - 2463. https://doi.org/10.1068/a38361
Clark, D. 2005. *The Capability Approach: Its Development, Critiques and Recent Advances.* Manchester, England: Economic and Social Research Council.
Cooper, D. 2015. Social Justice and South African University Student Enrolment Data by 'Race', 1998 - 2012: From 'Skewed Revolution' to 'Stalled Revolution'. *Higher Education Quarterly* 69, 3: 237 - 262. https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12074
CordenYouTube 2020. *Yuval Noah Harari on COVID-19's Impact On Humankind.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRRhvwkV7L0

Cornell, J. & S. Kessi 2016. Black Students' Experiences of Transformation at a Previously 'White Only' South African University: A Photovoice Study. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, 11: 1882 - 1889. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1206586

Council on Higher Education 2016. *South African Higher Education Reviewed: Two Decades of Democracy*. Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Cross, M. & B. Johnson 2008. Establishing a Space of Dialogue and Possibilities: Student Experience and Meaning at the University of the Witwatersrand. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 22, 2: 302 - 321. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v22i2.25787

DHET 2011. *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities*. Pretoria: DHET.

Dominguez-Whitehead, Y. & K. Whitehead 2014. Food Talk: A Window into Inequality among University Students. *Text and Talk* 34, 1: 49 - 68. https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2013-0037

Easthope, H. 2004. A Place Called Home. *Housing, Theory and Society* 21, 3: 128-138. https://doi.org/10.1080/14036090410021360

Fataar, A. 2015. *Engaging Schooling Subjectivities across Post-Apartheid Urban Spaces*. Stellenbosch: African SUN Media. https://doi.org/10.18820/9781920689834

Fataar, A. 2018. Placing Students at the Centre of the Decolonizing Education Imperative: Engaging The (Mis)Recognition Struggles of Students at the Post Apartheid University. *Educational Studies* 54, 6: 595 - 608. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2018.1518231

Foucault, M. 1997. Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias. In Leach, N. (ed.): *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gebhardt, C. 2014. *The Spaces between the Rooms: A Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Informal Social Spaces in the HEDCO Education Building*. Unpublished Bachelor of Architecture thesis. Awarded at University of Oregon, Oregon. Available at: Corpus ID: 112622656

Gideon, I. 2019. The Bare Classroom-Representation and the Liminal Presence of Others. *Ethics and Education* 14, 2: 258 - 270. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2019.1587732

Goldsack, L. 1999. A Haven in a Heartless World? Women and Domestic Violence. In Chapman, T. & J. Hockey (eds): *Ideal Homes? Social Change and Domestic Life*. London and New York: Routledge.

Habib, A. 2020a. *How Universities Can Play a Role in Shaping a New Post-Crisis World.* https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2020-05-24-how-universities-can-play-a-role-in-shaping-a-new-post-crisis-world/

Habib, A. 2020b. *The Presence of Political Parties at Universities is a Hugely Destructive Force.* https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-05-25-the-presence-of-political-parties-at-universities-is-a-hugely-destructive-force/#gsc.tab=0

Higham, R. 2012. Place, Race And Exclusion: University Student Voices in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 16, 5-6: 485 - 501. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.655498

Holdsworth, C. 2009. 'Going Away to Uni': Mobility, Modernity, and Independence of English Higher Education Students. *Environment and Planning A* 41: 1849 - 1864. https://doi.org/10.1068/a41177

Holton, M. 2015. Learning the Rules of the 'Student Game': Transforming the 'Student Habitus' Through [Im]Mobility. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 47, 11: 2373 - 2388. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X15599293

Horowitz, H. 1987. *Campus Life: Undergradaute Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present.* New York: Knopf. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226922584.001.0001

Jama, M., M. Mapesela & A. Bylefeld 2008. Theoretical Perspectives on Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Students. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 22, 5: 992 - 1005. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v22i5.42919

Jansen, J.D. 2017. *As by Fire: The End of the South African University.* Cape Town: Tafelberg.

Kenyon, L. 1999. A Home from Home: Students' Transitional Experience of Home. In Chapman, T. & J. Hockey (eds): *Ideal Homes? Social Change and Domestic Life*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2010.09.005

Kenyon, S. 2011. Transport and Social Exclusion: Access to Higher Education in the UK Policy Context. *Journal of Transport Geography* 19, 4: 763 - 771.

Klemenčič, M. 2015. What is Student Agency? An Ontological Exploration in the Context of Research on Student Engagement. In Klemenčič, M., S. Bergan & R. Primozič (eds.): *Student Engagement in Europe: Society, Higher Education and Student Governance.* (Council of Europe Higher Education Series No. 20.) Strasburg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Kuh, G. 2011. Student Success. In Schuh, J.H., S.R. Jones, S.R. Harper & Associates (eds): *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession.* Washington DC: Jossey-Bass.

Langa, P., G. Wangenge-Ouma, J. Jungblut & N. Cloete 2017. Africa: South Africa and the Illusion of Free Higher Education. In Mihut, G., P.G. Altbach & H. de Wit (eds): *Understanding Global Higher Education.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6351-044-8_13

Leatherwood, C. & P. O'Connell 2003. 'It's a Struggle': The Construction of the 'New Student' in Higher Education. *Journal of Education Policy* 18, 6: 597 - 615. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093032000145863

Lomas, C. & D.G. Oblinger 2006. Student Practices and their Impact on Learning Spaces. In Oblinger, D. & J.K. Lippincott (eds.): *Learning Spaces.* New York: Brockport Bookshelf.

Manik, S. 2015. 'As a Person You Need Help Every Now and Then': Accessing Student Support Needs in a Higher Education Environment. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 29, 3: 101 - 117. https://doi.org/10.20853/29-3-491

Massey, D. 2005. *For Space.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mbara, T. & C. Cilliers 2013. Travel Patterns and Challenges Experienced by University of Johannesburg Off-Campus Students. *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management* 7,1: 8. https://doi.org/10.4102/jtscm.v7i1.114

Mittelmeier, J., J. Rogaten, D. Longm, M. Dalu, A. Gunter, P. Prinsloo & B. Rienties 2019. Understanding the Adjustment of First-Year Distance Education Students in South Africa: Factors that Impact Students' Experiences. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 20, 3: 18 - 38. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v20i4.4101

Morieson, L., G. Murray, R. Wilson, B. Clarke & K. Lucas 2018. Belonging in Space: Informal Learning Spaces and the Student Experience. *Journal of Learning Spaces* 7, 2: 12-22

Munro, N., M. Quayle, H. Simpson & S. Barnsley 2013. Hunger for Knowledge: Food Insecurity Among Students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *Perspectives in Education* 31, 4: 168 - 179.

Mzileni, P. 2020. *How COVID-19 Will Affect Students.* https://mg.co.za/education/2020-04-23-how-covid-19-will-affect-students/

National Planning Commission 2011. *National Development Plan Vision for 2030.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Nelson, E. 2010. An Exploration of Heterotopic Space. *Proceedings of the Newport NEXUS Conference Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Special Publication* 3: 12-19. University of Wales.

Ngxiza, S. 2020. *Adam Habib is Wrong: Cultivate a Culture of Student Activism Rather than Closing Democratic Spaces.* https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-05-27-adam-habib-is-wrong-cultivate-a-culture-of-student-activism-rather-than-closing-democratic-spaces/#gsc.tab=0

Palmer, M., P. O'Kane & M. Owens 2009 . Betwixt Spaces: Student Accounts of Turning Point Experiences in the First-Year Transitions. *Studies in Higher Education* 34, 1: 37-54. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070802601929

Patiniotis, J. & C. Holdsworth 2005. 'Seize that Chance!' Leaving Home and Transitions to Higher Education. *Journal of Youth Studies* 8, 1: 81 - 95. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260500063710

Pokorny, A., D. Holley & S. Kane 2017. Commuting, Transitions and Belonging: The Experiences of Students Living at Home in their first Year at University. *Higher Education* 74, 3: 543 - 558. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-016-0063-3

Reddy, T. 2004. *Higher Education and Social Transformation: South Africa Case Study.* Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

Soja, E. 2009. The City and Spatial Justice. *Justice Spatial/ Spatial Justice* 1, 1: 1 - 5. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816666676.003.0001

Soja, E. 2010. *Seeking Spatial Justice.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816666676.001.0001

Soudien, C. 2008. The Intersection of Race and Class in the South African University: Student Experiences. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 22, 3: 662 - 678. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v22i3.25809

Swartz, S., A. Mahai, E. Arogundade, E. Khalema, T. Morison, S. Molefi, C. Rule, V. Reddy & B. Moolman 2017. *Ready or Not: Race, Education and Emancipation: A Five-Year Longitudinal, Qualitative Study of Agency and Obstacles to Success Amongst Higher Education Students in a Sample of South African Universities.* Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Tarini, M. 2015. *Liminal Space: Representations of Modern Urbanity.* Unpublished Masters thesis. Awarded by University of Western Ontario, Ontario.

The Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation in South African Public Universities, 2015. *Annexure 8 of the Transformation of the South African Higher Education.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Universities South Africa 2020. *Public Universities Have Either Embraced Emergency Teaching/Learning, or Are Getting Ready for the Inevitable, in the COVID-19 Era.* https://www.usaf.ac.za/universities-coronavirus-covid-19-updates/

Walker, M. 2018. Dimensions of Higher Education and the Public Good in South Africa. *High Education* 76: 555 - 569. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0225-y

Walwyn, D. 2020. Teaching on the Edge of Chaos: Report on 'The Future of Universities in a Post-COVID-19 World'. *South African Journal of Science* 116, 7-8: 20 - 21. https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2020/8404

Wells, T. 2012. Sen's Capability Approach. In Feiser, J. & B. Dowden (eds.): *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* https://www.iep.utm.edu/sen-cap/#H3

Wood, B.E. 2012. Crafted within Liminal Spaces: Young People's Everyday Politics. *Political Geography* 31, 6: 337-346. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2012.05.003

Xulu-Gama, N. 2019. The Role of Student Housing in Student Success. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 7, 2: 15 – 25. https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v7i2.3822

Bridget Horner
School of Built Environment and Development Studies
Discipline of Architecture, Planning and Housing
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban
horner@ukzn.ac.za