Space for personal development: An exploration of space produced for the self mediated by engagement in one professional doctorate (PD) programme

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Abstract

With regard to the lives of students pursuing a professional doctorate, to date it has been difficult to find studies that have specifically explored the space needed for personal development. This deconstructive study of the space for personal development planning, PDP, explores the ways in which the language of doctoral study mediates changes in the personal development of students engaged in a professional doctorate programme. Based on a deconstructive reading of Martin Heidegger's The Question Concerning Technology, the study begins to illuminate a range of discursive technologies that are currently, continually shaping the self through PDP. In contrast this deconstructive reading of PDP begins to unlock the space for a diverse range of personal developments mediated by reflexive engagement in professional doctorate, PD, research. In so doing it invites further reflection on ways of thinking about personal development planning, PDP, which open the possibility of liberating the self from the complex web of technologies that are shaping its existence.

Keywords: Personal development; Space; Professional doctorate; Self; Technologies.

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The busyness of on-going activity of communal life on the stage set for *the self* by the professional doctorate programme at one university in the East Midlands over the past eighteen months has been punctuated by a series of concerns from the body of students regarding how they can meet the deadlines set. Many of their questions and associated issues have arisen within the context of the intense demands that each of them seem to place upon themselves in maintaining and developing their identities as leading professionals. There is a wider and varied literature on *the self* that is beyond the scope of this paper (Siegel, 2005; Taylor, 1989). Arguably, attempts at a fixed and finished definition of this term run counter to the impulse of this paper. This concept is anchored into the discursive apparatus in which it is evoked. Indeed, the deconstructive readings of the idea of the self in Siegel's (2005) comprehensive guide certainly mitigate against any finality of definition.

Given the innovation of a multi-professional structure in which the self has been situated within this particular PD programme[2], the colleagues involved worked with a deliberate policy of recording all aspects of student feedback on what is done in practice from its inception.

In reflecting on her experience of the programme, one of the students commented that, "in the hurly burly of work I'd lost sight of actually being *interested* in the area I want to research!" Others spoke of their need for space in which they could work on their studies, whilst for some it is a matter of finding the time in which to complete their explorations, suggesting that space and time almost assume the status of desirable commodities that can somehow help students complete their work.

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2. The professional doctorate at the university that is the subject of this study constitutes a single research programme which currently incorporates three degrees entitled Doctor of Education (Ed D), Doctor of Legal Practice (D Legal Prac), and Doctor of Social Practice (D Soc Prac). In 2010 this particular university have plans for the programme to incorporate three further degrees: Doctor of Fine Art (D Fine Art), Doctor of Digital Media (D Digital Media), and Doctor of Fashion (D Fashion).

Production of space for the self

Of course these opening remarks serve only to unlock further commentary and questions, not least concerning an explanation for the language in which the self has been situated. What exactly does the term "space" signify, and precisely how does the self relate itself to the unfolding in time of the coded space of discursive practices of research? Indeed, to what extent is it meaningful to speak of "the production of space"[3] for personal development through social research structured by a professional doctorate, PD? In this paper we seek to explore these questions and some of their implications for the self, which we see at the heart of issues concerning personal development planning, PDP, mediated by doctoral research.

The notion of *The Production of Space* is drawn from the title of Henri Lefebvre's (1991) seminal contribution. David Harvey's (1991) indispensable commentary, presented as an "Afterword" to this book, suggests the formative moments in Lefebvre's work derive from his experience of the shattering of social space in the First World War. Lefebvre argued for a vision of "life lived as a project," flowering concurrently rather than as fragmented pieces.

Lefebvre (1991) invites us to give up the view that "public space is merely the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds" (Carr *et al*., 1992: 3); instead his thesis moves us towards an understanding of *space for personal development of the self as constituted through, productive of, and permeated by social relations mediating research, Higher Education and the professions* represented by the body of students. Consequently the issue of the body and the identity of the self are central to the analysis of space for personal development mediated by social research at doctoral level.

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[3] This term is borrowed from Henri Lefebvre's (1991) seminal critique of "The Production of Space". This is a search for a reconciliation between mental space (philosophy, metaphysical and ideological) and real space (physical and social spheres of everyday life in the home and the city). Lefebvre works with the tension between theory and practice, mental and social, philosophy and reality for an opening of new possibilities of thought and action.

Space for the self in the languages of research

Given that Lefebvre had positioned his work between Marx and Heidegger, and given Foucault's particular readings of these two protagonists, the imperative to adopt a critical standpoint in our analysis of the space for personal development through research, and in our reading of Lefebvre has been guided by the decision to stand outside this particular intellectual arena. Derrida's (2004) deconstruction provides the particular guide for us. In exploring the ways in which the self has been situated within research for the professional doctorate we want to keep the writers in play; so, our deconstructive reading of Lefebvre's thesis regarding space might:

> "Not only teach… us to read literature more thoroughly by attending to its
> *language* … through a complex play of signifying traces; it also enables
> us to interrogate the covert philosophical and political presuppositions of
> the institutionalized critical methods which generally govern our reading
> of a text. There is in deconstruction something that challenges every
> teaching institution" (Derrida, 2004: 155).

The notion of "play" used here should not be mistaken for a subject manipulating objects; idiomatically in the context of PDP it could be understood from the reciprocity of "give and take" that is already placed in an "I – you" structure. Here, the self in its relation to the other is already situated in the midst of institutions of Higher Education and research, on which Derrida has written much[4].

For the moment we have arrived at that complex "undecideable"[5] juncture in which to position the multiplicity of the self seen in the midst of our doctoral researchers. It is placed between; on the one hand, discourses of humanism and structuralism grounded in Marx's

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4. Wolfrey's (2007) *Derrida: A Guide for the Perplexed*, provides an overview of Derrida's numerous writings on the issue of institutions. In his explorations of the interplay of Heidegger's and Derrida's discourses, John Caputo's (1987) account of *Radical Hermeneutics* constitutes a provocative statement on Derrida's engagement with issues of research.

5. The 'undecidable' is a ghostliness that in Derrida's writings 'render(s) all totalisation, fulfilment, plenitude impossible' (Derrida, 1988: 116). For Derrida it always remains undecidable as to whether writing is constituted as a form of promise (performative statements) or statements of fact (constative statements) following the work of the English philosophy, J.A. Austin.

historical materialism and, on the other, Heidegger's somewhat idealist explorations of the ontology of being, where we are attempting to situate PD research in this paper. In developing structures in which to position the self within PD research we are moving in the direction of an optimistic and deconstructive reading, whilst attempting to address the issue of the signification of space[6] for the self in terms of its personal development through research.

By the end of the 1980s political reason "aspired to create an enterprise culture" which "accorded a vital political value to a certain image of the human being" (Rose 1998: 150-151) consonant with dominant readings of the "enterprising self" at the heart of personal development planning, PDP. For Rose the image of an "enterprising self," "was so potent because it was not an idiosyncratic obsession of the right of the political spectrum," to the contrary, it resonated with basic presuppositions concerning human being that remain to this day widely distributed amongst all political persuasions (ibid). Rose (1998: 151) sums up these presuppositions regarding the self as follows:

- "The self is to be a subjective being;
- it is to aspire to autonomy;
- it is to strive for personal fulfilment in its earthly life;
- it is to interpret its reality and destiny as a matter of individual responsibility;
- it is to find meaning in its existence by shaping its life through acts of choice."

In the context of PDP mediated by research, these inventions of the self go to the heart of the governance of that very same invention. Here the concern is not with the details of the concepts expounded by Rose, but rather, from a historical perspective with the language in which the self has been thrown[7]. In what was regarded by Martin Heidegger (1977{1954}; 1991{1957}), as a "technological age," counter-intuitively for Heidegger we are forever in

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6. In this paper we will concentrate upon space but, in the spirit of Husserl there is recognition that the deepest level of human experience, which he calls "the primary world," (Cassey, 1997: 217) is as spatial as it is temporal and generally a phenomenological treatment of this phenomenon would treat space and time together. In the constitution of phenomena, for example, retention and protention as horizons of the now are explicitly tied to spatial horizons. (ibid: 217)
7. Thrownness, *Geworfenheit*, is the language Heidegger (1962) used in *Being and Time* to describe where human being(s), which Heidegger calls *Dasein*, are continually situated; human beings are always already thrown into the midst of things.

danger of becoming puppets of technology. For example, human beings have been shown to have been already themselves confined and corralled by the political "technologies"[8] of the academic and social fields in which the discourse was originally situated (Bourdieu, 1996).

In making an appeal to reflexivity, what have been represented as such "starting points" at least alert the body of participants to some possible discourses in which this "invention"[9] called "the self" and particular forms of agency might be located. Pedagogically, such an appeal also creates something of a challenge to the body encircled by PD research, in that it makes demands for no less than a sensitivity to the discourses in which our experiences and our research might be situated, and also the space inscribed by such language, without which, of course, there could be no such discourses.

Space for personal development mediated by research

So, in developing our response to the foregoing questions concerning social space in this paper we have sought to explore to what extent PD programmes of research open students to the possibility of personal development. In drawing from Lefebvre's (1991) thesis it is recognised that such a question is itself predicated on the production of social space.

In designing one PD programme of research we have attempted to balance, on the one hand, the intellectual demands that such a programme places upon its body of students against, on the other, the understandings and ways of thinking that the programme is beginning to open up for the multiplicity of the self situated in the various discourses outlined earlier. Given the demands of learning, in what, for some students, are new forms of language, there remains the question of whether this one PD programme requires too much of professionals, some of whom are already by their own admission sometimes "overstretched" in their work. Initial indications suggest that the PD programme is a source of motivation for the multiplicity of individuals. One of the students sums up the tenor of

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8 This term is used to connote unfolding events that are structured in accordance with a means-end logic (Heidegger, 1977{1954}; 1991 {1957})

9 This term is borrowed from the moral philosopher and neo-Marxist thinker, Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) in his account of *After Virtue*.

feelings expressed by many in the first cohort of this particular PD programme, when she remarked that "it's not often that I leave on Friday (following a day of workshops within the programme) with so much in my head that I actually *want* to think about: now, how do I keep the rest of the world at bay while I do!"

So, in adopting a deconstructive reading of the self mediated by PD research our approach is one that attempts to uncover the multiplicity of discourses that are already shaping any space available for its personal development.

In any initial inquiry into the latest position in terms of policy and research with regard to PD programmes and without any sensitivity to such language, one could be forgiven for thinking that education and social psychology themselves provide fruitful and relatively unproblematic sources for understanding the relationship between personal development and engagement in research. In fact, the "personal development plan," PDP, is high on the agenda at all levels of education in the UK (Department of Education and Skills, 2003; Quality Assurance Agency, 2004). Moreover, this policy represents one tangible strand in a much broader employability agenda within the context of global transformations, which according to Edwards and Usher (2000, 2007) are replacing the dominant identity of the "enlightened student" with that of the "autonomous /self–directed/ flexible lifelong learners" (Edwards and Usher, 2000: 55).

But, already in this language are echoes from *Liquid Modernity*, in which, for Bauman (2000: 61) at least, the question "what can I do?" has come to dominate continually changing patterns of individualized society (ibid: 31). For Bauman (2000) the process of individualization at the heart of personal development planning, PDP, essentially "consists of transforming human identity from a 'given' into a task," and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance" (ibid: 31 -32; emphasis as in the original).

Is it hardly surprising that Edwards' and Usher's (2004) representation of "self-directed flexible lifelong learners" now appears *de jure* as the "autonomous" individual in the melt of our "liquid modern" world? Barnett (2003) has similarly observed the emergence of

new technologies of performance, reflecting a shift towards the self-generational capacities of students and away from the presentation of a more hierarchically structured disciplinary culture. Indeed, in the field of social psychology (*vide* Higgs and Dulewicz, 2002), in their review of "emotional intelligence" Victor Dulewicz and Malcolm Higgs (2000: 349) cite Goleman (1996) who concludes:

> "The relationship between individual attributes and differentiation between 'average' and 'outstanding' performance (in terms of personal achievement) is at the heart of the case for considering emotional intelligence."

In this particular field "emotional intelligence" along with "managerial intelligence" and "intellectual intelligence" provide a number of categories of personal competencies that create the basis for a more analytical approach to self-auditing used in PDP. Social psychology, it would seem, provides the very means not only for grounding a number of key concepts used in the education of individuals in managing their own freedoms in this liquid modern world (including the freedom to engage in doctoral research), but also the intellectual basis for expertise in the domain of the "subjectivity" of the self (Rose, 1998: 152).

Reflexively, of course, we can recognise that the individual self is, in fact, located within a number of technological discourses derived from education and social psychology, which perhaps deserves a short exegesis on the historical development of this idea as a background to the work of Foucault, which we will draw upon in the remainder of this paper.

In his famous essay, *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger (1977 {1954}) had sought to open new ways of thinking about the relationship between human beings and technology. His thesis provides a basis for understanding modern technology in terms of the unfolding into being of identities and differences, practices and theories; in fact, any means - end relationship found in our modern world. The essence of technology for Heidegger is the ordering of everything, holding its associated energy in reserve for future

use (Peim and Flint, 2009). As these authors have noted, "in its global reach has become a way of revealing the world" (ibid: 351).

By historicising questions of ontology Foucault's reading of Heidegger's thesis went on to find expression in his emphasis upon power, from the Latin, *posse*, to be able, as a productive force, and its relationship with particular inventions of "the self," which is the particular focus here. As Rose (1998: 152) indicates, "the autonomous subjectivity of the modern self may seem the antithesis of political power. But Foucault's (1984b, 1981 {1976}) argument suggests an exploration of the ways in which this autonomization of the self is itself a central feature of contemporary "governmentality" or "mentalities of government." Rose's "portmanteau" notion of governmentality encompasses the "the multiple strategies, tactics, calculations, and reflections that have sought to conduct the conduct of human beings" (Rose, 1998: 152). More concretely, we see that PDP is always in danger of being rendered as one such tactic. What is called for in this study is no less than a critical approach to the powers of government in relation to the self (Dean, 2010: 23-24; Foucault, 2004c, 2007: 192-193).

In this paper we will concentrate on two particular dimensions of this relationship between such powers and the self in this technological world as a way of situating PDP. Both of these centre upon the production of space within PD programmes of research.

The first question concerns the space created for the self within the institution of research, and the second, the space available for the self within the ethical field in which it has been situated. This brings us to the specific question of personal development planning, which Foucault (1984b, 1981 {1976}) explored in terms of the technologies of the self or the methods, techniques and "tools" by which human beings constitute themselves. These are the forms of knowledge and strategies that "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault 1988: 19). This demands that we begin by consideration of the self in relation to social space.

Coded space for personal development of the self mediated by research

First we must turn to the question of the space available for the self mediated by PD programmes of research.

The conception of institution used in this paper draws from the work of Foucault (1977 {1975}) and Derrida (2004). Foucault's (1977 {1975}) idea of "discipline" places a helpful emphasis on the "strategies," "procedures" and ways of "behaving" which are associated with specific institutional contexts, including schools, universities and the work place, which have tended to permeate ways of thinking and behaving more generally. Foucault construes modern institutions as technologies which provide the means to particular ends. In Derrida's writings *institution* refers not only to the manifest materiality of institutions such as universities along with those bodies charged with the governance of HE and the professions, but also to "the operative and normative discourses, from administrative protocols and procedures," to the forms of dialogue and the "disciplines," "to which the various discourses" regarding these agencies "pertain."[10] With its sustained focus upon the complexities of language, Derrida's discourse enables the reader not just to focus upon attempting to understand how such institutions play out in everyday life, but, significantly, to develop a deconstructive reading of the language of such institutional apparatus (Flint, 2009).

Some of the contingent implications for the coded space re-produced as the institutional language of the various disciplines represented within PD research programmes have already been felt by the self as reflected in the multiplicity of students attending PD programmes. In one such programme one student spoke of the irony of "being given one day per week" in which to complete her studies for the Ed D, only to find that her practice had been expanded by the "powers that be" and she has also been given more work to complete in the remaining four days than she had been doing the previous year working

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10. These various phrases signaling the conception of an 'institution' are borrowed from Julian Wolfreys (2007) *A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum): 10.

full-time. Another spoke at length about "having to cover for a colleague" over an extended period of time, which made it quite impossible to do any of the reading she had planned to support her research. Another had been "so submerged" in preparations for an OfSTED inspection in her school over the summer before the programme began and during the autumn term, that it had not been possible "even to start any reading" for the first step in her research until after Christmas in the first year.

In looking at these issues in isolation and centring attention upon the individuals concerned, one possible explanation for them could reflect the personal qualities of the students involved, and their particular individual motivations for maintaining the quality of their own professional practices, whatever demands are placed upon them. But, is this perhaps to deny the decentring of human beings in the discursive technologies of the disciplines that engage particular "populations" of professionals with "regimes of truth," explored by Foucault (1984a: 132) in his earlier explorations of the "docile body" (Foucault, 1977{1975}:135-169)? And, are we to deny to the elision of the self in such a body?

Disciplinary space for personal development of the self mediated by research

From this perspective, in part what are reflected in these various comments of the palpably submissive body of students may well be the disciplinary powers (the taken for granted normalising thoughts and actions for an ideal form of conduct) at work in each of the professions represented in this modern programme. More broadly a general plan for modernisation is exemplified in Bentham's diagram of the "Panopticon" as Foucault describes it - the control and disciplining of human activities through the creation of a regulated "space."[11] There is, as Foucault (1977{1975}; Lefebvre, 1991: 46) recognised in *Discipline and Punish*, within the "forces of production – technology, nature, labour, knowledge," a tendency to produce social space inscribed with a "docile useful" body. The

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11. 'Both in architectural plan and in disciplinary régime; each of these institutions combines seriality with carceariality'; 'a space of domination for the body through 'which surveillance becomes the privileged form of action and in place and space are alike and fixed' (Cassey, 1997:184)

very functionality and efficacy of such disciplinary apparatus is contingent upon "a relation of docility-utility."[12]

> "The disciplinary apparatus constituting the real hub of the university and of the professions is tending to become the very machinery of identity symbolised and somewhat disguised, ironically, by the continual drive towards polysemy in the identity of difference" (Flint *et al.*, 2009: 12)[13].

So, in reflecting upon the *disciplinary space* produced by the institutional machinery of HE (the policies, practices, knowledge(s) and power relations), it has been suggested that the preferred form of identity and subjectivity of the body for such production is an "intensified and instrumental individualism, which must be actively compliant not only to rational self-interest, but towards managerial commands and the singular requirements of a system (Johnson 2008: 287).

As Foucault's (1977{1975}) earlier analysis had suggested, in the day to day reproduction of the institutions of Higher Education "the rule of functional sites" (ibid: 243) or "coded spaces" has taken over space, time and place in a "veritable laboratory of power, whose aim is to bring about the constant location of bodies in space" (Foucault, 1977{1975}: 205).

In Lefebvre's (1991) terms it is important to see that such a "spatial body" does not present itself as a subject or object in the philosophical sense, nor as an internal milieu standing in opposition to an external one, rather a body of students so conceived is "immediately subject to the determinants" of, in this case, the space inscribed by institutions of Higher Education, and the associated professions represented by PD programmes. Its "material character derives from space," not from the possible mediating influences of epistemology, ontology or methodology, nor even from specific imperatives regarding practice, nor

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12. Docility here refers to a propensity to be worked upon; utility to the formation of the body (in the sense of both the individual and collective body) to be rendered productive a necessarily double movement was involved: both increasing the body's 'aptitude' and simultaneously increasing its 'subjection' (Foucault, 1997{1975}: 137). 'The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it' (ibid: 138).

13. Mick Healey's (2005) essay, 'Linking Research and Teaching: Exploring Disciplinary Spaces and the Role of Inquiry-based Learning', opens with the proposition: 'Much of the international debate about the relationship between research and teaching is characterised by difference'.

generation of knowledge as a basis for development of practice, but solely "from the energy that is deployed and put to use there" (ibid: 195).

From a reading a Heidegger's (1977{1954}) *The Question Concerning Technology* such a standpoint is entirely predictable; Lefebvre's energy that is deployed and put to use in space, Heidegger conceived as "standing reserve," where everything becomes "available for use" for its energy in the most extreme forms of technological framing. Where Lefebvre placed an emphasis upon the ways in which "the energy deployed in social space" determines our existence, after the war, Heidegger had been concerned with the ways in which Being gathers and orders everything, rendering it as a store of energy that is continually available for use (Peim and Flint, 2009). But, this deconstruction of technological language would seem to deny the driving forces for development, mediated by the very subjectivity of the self.

More concretely in his later writings Foucault's historicist analysis of power as a productive social force provides a particular focus upon *The Technologies of the Self*[14] and suggests a "heterogeneous range of techniques of subjectification through which human beings are urged to become more ethical beings."[15] Foucault's writings imply that amongst PD students such techniques provide grounds for defining their identities and in regulating themselves in accordance with the moral codes inscribed within the space produced by the institutional apparatus of Higher Education and the professions. One such technique we suggest is that of PDP, which brings us back to our second question, posed earlier, concerning the space available for the self in research mediated by PDP.

Personal development as a means ends structured technology of the self

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14. In *Feminism, Foucault, and Embodied Subjectivity*, Margaret McLaren (2002: 147) makes the following points regarding Foucault's 'Technologies of the Self', which was published posthumously and provides for her a 'modified definition of technologies of the self'. In her words: 'they permit individuals to effect by their own means *or with the help of others* a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves to attain a state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality' (ibid: 147; emphasis added).
15. The phrase is borrowed from Nikolas Rose (1998: 156).

Although PDP is not specifically mentioned in Foucault's writings as such, its standing as one of a multiplicity of technologies of the self is made tangible from his work. Foucault understood technologies of the self as a multiplicity of "operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being" that people make either by themselves or with the help of others, so opening the possibility of reaching a state of "happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality" (Foucault, 1988: 18). In the context of PD programmes of research PDP, in this sense, can be interpreted as particular operations on the body of students that are undertaken by the students themselves, sometimes with the support of others in order to enhance the wisdom of their actions in making inquiries about an aspect of their own professional work.

Personal development of the self therefore embodies two inter-related dimensions of means-ends structured technologies of the self: the first planning stage is already predicated upon an ordering of human beings involved in accordance with the rationality of its own particular protocols. Secondly, in agreement with the ordering of theoretical reason (Heidegger, 1991{1957}) the precise locus for the human being is found to be one of a multiplicity of possible technological "inventions" we call the self mediated by the discourses in which it may have been thrown in practice[16].

As a subject the self is not defined by a series of characteristic attributes or behaviours, but is constituted by technology. As an objectivised subject, of course, the self has become dominated by technologies of power to which human beings have already submitted themselves. But, Foucault was not inviting us to accept such technologies of the self as a deterministic process from which we cannot escape; his writings provide testimony to his questioning of the origins of such technologies. Foucault's (2002{1966}) desire had been already made tangible in his earlier writings in *The Order of Things[17]*; namely, to help his readers free them selves from understandings of the self as a subject.

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16. This paper has already identified discourses of 'postmodernism', 'post-fordism', and those projected for a 'post-industrial society' by Daniel Bell (1973), along with discourses of *Liquid Modernity* (Bauman, 2000) and of the neoliberal 'enterprise culture' (Rose, 1998).

17. In his first chapter, '*Las Meninas*', Foucault brings to the attention of his readers the painter, Velazquez's, pictorial opening to *The Order of Things*, in which 'the subject is elided' (ibid:18). In one short chapter the very existence of the subject is open to question.

Moreover, as we have seen already in this particular case the self is already constituted not on the basis of epistemology or ontology but on the basis of the space inscribed by the institutions of HE and the associated institutions incorporated into PD programmes. It is the coded space of HE that constitutes the self even before any development planning has taken place. And in the process of PDP human being is rendered as "standing reserve" (Peim and Flint, 2009: 354-357) of energy that is there and ever open to new possibilities circumscribed and delimited by technologies of the self.

From this perspective it is, perhaps, no surprise that whilst PD programmes have the potential to open many possibilities for personal development, in practice the possibilities realised reflect the form of production of social space inscribed by these various institutions encircling the body of researchers. But, are such possibilities necessarily delimited and circumscribed by the technologies of the self?

Opening space for PDP through research mediated by philosophical discourse

In alerting students to reflexivity as a way of structuring thinking for *research about the process of PDP* through PD programmes, the foregoing possibilities regarding the self, mediated by the discursive technologies of the institutions in which their research is situated, opens the very process of PDP to a multiplicity of questions concerning the language in which the self is situated.

So, in adopting a reflexive orientation to research in this final step of the paper we want to open a number of extant categories, including PDP, the self, identity… to further questioning that both Derrida's deconstruction and Foucault's historicism invites. Here we will draw on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus*, which in their "introduction: rhizome" opens with the following reflection: "the two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us were several, there was already quite a crowd" (ibid: 3). Here is not the place to offer an elaboration of their thesis. What is unlocked in taking this standpoint is not only the problematisation of the self as a single entity, but a multiplicity of forms of research invited by the readings of European philosophy, which open continued reflexivity concerning PDP mediated by doctoral research. In this way rather than PDP

through research being forever in danger of becoming a task in accord with the means-ends logic of discursive technologies, it is continually alerted to the open-ended avenues of inquiry suggested in this paper, and including those discussed by Kathlene Berry (2004a: 81-102; 2004b: 103-127). Such open ended inquiry carries with it the possibility of opening new coded spaces for the self. The question remains, therefore, regarding the hospitality given to the range of possibilities opened by PDP through PD research, which is almost endless.

If the argument in this paper is regarded to be of value then PD research by students, and research concerning the changing identities of students mediated by their engagement in professional doctorates, has the potential to open such new coded spaces for the self in professional practice. In being reflexive this particular standpoint opens the stage set for the practice of the self and its relationship with PDP to a range of new research to uncover, to disentangle, and to unlock the possibilities of the self becoming alert to, and conscious of, the various discursive technologies that are shaping its very existence.

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