# SUPERVISION: A FOUCAULTIAN EXPLORATION OF INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS BETWEEN POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISORS, THEIR STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY DOMAIN

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ASTA RAU

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# ABSTRACT

Supervision is widely acknowledged as influencing the quality of postgraduate theses, and by association, of postgraduates. Despite this, publications on conducting research offer far less guidance on managing the supervision relationship than on the practicalities of producing a thesis. In-depth, qualitative supervision studies are few and fewer still examine power in the supervision relationship.

Michel Foucault's insights are used to explore the question: *How do postgraduate supervisors and their Master's students experience the supervision relationship and how are the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional power implicated in these relationships?* Foucault argues that power relations always involve resistances; these function primarily through institutionalized discourses to produce different forms of knowledge, one form of which is identity or subjectivity. Accordingly, power relations are explored in terms of thesis-as-product, person-as-product and the impact of both on the mediation of knowledge in the educational domain.

Four institutionalized discourses in the university domain are examined:

- *Commercial educational management discourse:* targets academics through issues of quality assurance, throughput, publication, research productivity and funding.
- *Anarchic educational leadership discourse:* integrates quantum principles with commercial demands, change management strategies and meaningful participation.
- *Humanistic discourse:* favours a pastoral ethic and is person-centered.
- *Holistic discourse:* cultivates ecological sensibility and values the interconnectedness of all aspects of being-in-the-world.

Data collected in sixteen semi-structured interviews with three matched supervisor-student pairs selected from the humanities and education faculties of one South African university, are presented as case studies. Data analysis combines grounded theory techniques with selected aspects of Foucault's methods. A conceptual model is devised to analyse how participants use resistance strategies to interface their autonomy and dependency with their expectations, abilities, and professional and pastoral care.

The research yields rich data in which several thematic correlations in interpersonal and institutional power dynamics are grounded. These include: the significance of supervisor-student matching; links between expectations, abilities, the way participants negotiate power and the quality of professional and pastoral care they experience; the benefit of personal affinity to thesis-as-product and person-as-product; and the impact of commercial demands on participants' power relations. Participants tend to reproduce the discourses in which they are embedded and adopt or adapt aspects of contesting discourses to this end. Potential avenues are identified for improving supervision practice and for further research.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The academic world is changing rapidly. Funding, production, throughput: these are the demands in a new education market. Academics are under pressure to meet commercial directives, to publish or perish and to balance increased teaching loads with the needs and expectations of their postgraduate students. How can this be achieved? According to a growing body of publications offering guidelines for supervising academic research, the answer lies in effective management. In line with this thinking, pragmatic concerns such as time management, the structure of a thesis and research design are regular targets of attention. Less attention is focused on one of the most vital pivots on which postgraduate research turns: the supervision relationship. This research aims to redress this imbalance.

As the opening paragraph suggests I am aware of commercial pressures on academics, but this was not the case when I began this research. A preliminary literature search revealed a large body of texts that target the manufacturing and corporate sectors and which prescribe techniques of supervision pertinent to training artisans and business people. I scanned some of these, but their insights and principles did not seem to be of direct relevance to the academic context. As I soon discovered, this initial assumption was not altogether correct. Nonetheless I skirted these texts and turned my attention instead to reviewing in greater depth some of the publications that address the supervision relationship in the helping professions such as psychology and social work (Chen & Edwards 1999; Hahn 1996; Kaslow 1986; Rustin 1998; Teyber 1997). Here I found concepts and terminologies that are specific to psychology praxis. While these publications may be of great value in analyzing human interaction, in worlds and disciplines other than psychology there is sometimes resistance to its constructs and practices (Foucault 1980a, 1988, 1996; Nias 1993). In order to target as wide an educational audience as possible, I decided to circumvent such resistance and to work with literature that is not discipline-specific but which addresses supervision across a broad academic spectrum. Most of the supervision literature cited in this thesis derives from such a body of work.

My decision to research the supervision relationship originated in personal interest. Its pertinence to academia is serendipitous. Some years back, in partial fulfilment for a postgraduate degree in Psychology, I submitted a half-thesis based on research I conducted

on the phenomenon of gut-feeling. On re-reading the final text I found many gaps and anomalies and, on reflection, realized that some of these arose out of resistance to my supervisor's advice. Why did I resist? Was it a kind of selective deafness that throws counsel to the winds in order to be free - to follow a vision as it unfolds - untrammelled by the first neat plan that mapped my research intentions? Did my supervisor have difficulty letting go of *her* vision for my work? Did I intuit this and unconsciously assert my need for space? How did time influence the supervision relationship? Did I use brinkmanship to assure her minimal input? Or did a shortage of time constrain her capacity to engage? Perhaps I simply had difficulty letting go of lovingly crafted passages and hard won analyses? I am somewhat disproportionately attached to favourable academic assessment and although my project was awarded a distinction mark, this failed to satisfy me. Why? Are some answers to be found in the unarticulated expectations of supervision - of teaching and learning - that surged beneath the surface of our composed communications? What was happening in the silences between us? How did we frustrate each other and ourselves? Reflexions such as these and a life long interest in relationship is what led me to this current work.

My earlier research experience not only led to a choice of topic, but also to a choice of approach. Although all the processes of my former research challenged and excited me, it was data analysis that particularly captivated me. It was here that my research focus shifted unexpectedly. I had started out intending to describe and explore how participants accessed and experienced gut-feelings during focused meditation sessions. During data collection it soon became clear that the feelings and thoughts, the metaphors and the memories that the sessions evoked in participants were unexpectedly sensitive, often very private and a source of some discomfort to them. Partly out of respect for their privacy and partly out of fascination with the process that had induced such powerful experiences, I decided to concentrate my analysis on the *processes* of focused meditation. How does focusing work? What happens? And when? What sort of content surfaced during which of the processes? In the course of analyzing data with these foci in mind, the actual experience of participants became subsumed - shredded into discrete bits by the scissors of my analytical method. To a great extent a sense of who participants are as *people*, their individual voices, was lost. The research succeeds in as far as it offers fresh insights into focusing as a process, but I found this accomplishment hard to reconcile with the realization that the knowledge I had produced seemed disconnected from its source in the

lived experience of people. It is not unusual for research to present disembodied findings and this outcome – fallout, really – is often quite readily accepted. Nonetheless, this makes me feel uneasy; it brings to mind Nietzsche's prophecy: the death of the individual. My resistance to this idea and its manifestation in depersonalized research outcomes shows that I am strongly constructed in humanistic discourse: in its valuing of the individual, its recognition of personal agency in the co-creation of the world, its appeal for each human to actualize his or her highest potential and the belief that this is possible, even probable. Romantic notions, perhaps, but they are part of how I view the world and dissatisfaction with my earlier research is likely to be rooted in these beliefs. In this current project I aim to balance my humanistic proclivities more equitably with scientific rationality and its attendant rigour. Roger Brooke (1991: 4-10) speaks of *poesis*: a way of being that seeks to balance science and romance. As a research attitude *poesis* merges scientific attitude with heart; it grounds abstract concepts in the lived-in-world. Accordingly, in this project I aim to maintain a tension between close examination of the processes of power relations, the practice of supervision and the personal experience of participants. I want each unique voice to weave in harmony and dissonance with the refrain of my argument so that all are equally audible in a single song.

The refrain or theme that I aim to render more audible in this thesis is power in the supervision relationship – both interpersonal and institutional dimensions of it. My choice to focus on relations of power evolved out of initial exploratory conversations with students and academics during which I noted that much of what they said about supervision related to issues of control – either having too much, too little or an equitable balance of it. Control implies influence and power. With this in mind I began to scrutinize supervision texts with a fresh focus. Almost all of the publications acknowledge that the supervision relationship influences the quality and outcome of a student's research process (Burgess 1994; Chapman & Sork 2001; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Whittle 1994; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). These publications also refer to concepts associated with control or power such as authority, autonomy, choice, mastery, dependence and so forth. However, very little of the reviewed literature or research isolates power relations in academic supervision as a specific area of investigation and excepting for the work of Chapman and Sork (2001) I found no research that explores *how* power relations *function* in the academic supervision relationship. My

research aims to address this gap. I hope that insights offered in this thesis may help to inform future research in the field. I also hope to extend current praxis by identifying and describing situations and strategies that help or hinder a profitable supervision experience.

Exploratory conversations with students and academics and information from the literature review also indicated that expectations – interpersonal and institutional ones – play an important role in the supervision relationship (Burgess 1994; Chapman & Sork 2001; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Denicolo & Pope 1994; Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Whittle 1994; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). It struck me that expectations could relate to supervisors' and students' perceptions of their own and one another's abilities. I wondered how they perceive the university as an institution: are their expectations premised on how they perceive the ability of university management to respond to the needs of supervisors and students? Do expectations and abilities impact on the quality of care that supervisors and students give and receive? In response to these questions I decided to investigate how participants' interpersonal and institutional power relations may interface with expectations, abilities and care.

In terms of care, all the reviewed literature on supervising postgraduate research offers supervisors information on how to give students professional care. There appears to be some silence, however, on the issue of pastoral care. Although all the reviewed supervision texts refer to it, there is little information on how this dimension of care *functions* in the supervision relationship. Some texts counsel the use of informal conversations as a means to open out and share the more emotive and personal experience of supervision (Denicolo & Pope 1994; Phillips & Pugh 1996), but most instances which offer supervisors advice on how to effect this dimension of care are somewhat vague and resemble the comment of Phillips and Pugh: "…a significant part of your job as supervisor is one of keeping morale at a reasonable level…there are periods when moods are volatile and a certain subtlety is needed to help a student through the difficult times" (1996: 166). In order to render the functioning of pastoral care more visible, I examine it separately from professional care. Professional and pastoral care are explored in terms of the processes of institutional and interpersonal power relations, but I also construe and explore these *processes* in terms of their *products:* the thesis as an extrinsic product of education processes (thesis-as-product) and the person as an intrinsic product of learning processes

(person-as-product). I also examine how thesis-as-product and person-as-product interact to influence the production of knowledge in the university and broader educational domains.

Like most research processes mine has been unpredictable: subject to stops and starts, progression and regression, elation and desolation, in short: untidy. To present the research coherently this document is structured as follows: it starts with an examination of the central phenomenon underpinning this project - *power*, then carries this theme through a critical description of factors and discourses pertinent to the broad context of the contemporary university - *the educational domain.* Thereafter the focus narrows to the more specific context of *supervision practice*. The theme of power stays visible as a backdrop in the subsequent description of the research *methodology.* After a reiteration of the *research question*, the *discussion* integrates information from all the preceding chapters into a critical analysis of power relations at their narrowest focal point, the direct experience of supervisor and student participants. The *conclusion* sums up and offers comment on the research. Data are contained in the *appendices*.

Chapter two presents the context of the research and is divided into three sections respectively entitled **Power**, **The educational domain** and **Supervision practice**.

1. The first section, **Power**, presents the theoretical basis of this thesis as derived from Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights on how power relations work. A selection of his ideas are described and illustrated with examples pertinent to the process of supervision. An explanation is also given of how I customize or operationalize his insights for the purpose of this research. Throughout the thesis I offer less a general criticism of his ideas than an engaged critical analysis of their application as theoretical *frameworks* and practical *tools* for this specific research.

   For Foucault power is not a reified thing possessed by some and not by others. Instead he views power as relational *processes* that are negotiated via strategies of resistance. According to Foucault (*ibid*.) power relations or resistances exist in all human interactions and operate through rules of discourse. Rules of discourse, and the power relations inherent in them, converge with situations or events and with unexpected

contingencies to position people differentially in relationship to one another, to themselves and to their contexts, or to use Foucault's (*ibid*.) term: their domains.

Foucault argues that knowledge is produced and mediated via relations of power (*ibid*.). Knowledge comprises two poles: the sayable and the visible (Kendall & Wickham 1999). The sayable pole is institutionally sanctioned and legitimized discourse that is expressed predominantly in speech and texts. The visible pole is that which the sayable makes manifest or brings into being: social structures - e.g. the university as a literal institution - and the identities or subjectivities of people (*ibid*.). Thus knowledge comprises societal structures (actual institutions), the discourses that operate in them (and have, through repeated usage, become institutionalized) and the subjectivities or identities that people develop in relation to both. These three forms of knowledge - institutions, institutionalized discourses and subjectivities - are produced and mediated in cycles of the will-to-knowledge in which people become both the targets and the vehicles of what they know and learn (*ibid*.). People are targeted and conditioned by the sanctioned norms of their societal structures and the discourses these favour. When people - through their relations of power or resistances - reproduce what they know or have come to accept as true according to these discourses, the forms of knowledge associated with the discourses and the power relations inherent in them will be strengthened and, potentially, entrenched. Such repetition often occurs automatically. The unreflected quality of this process is captured by Nias when he observes: "…most of us, most of the time, are no more conscious of most of our assumptions than we are of the movement of the Earth - we are at one with them, as with it" (1993: 47). People do not always reproduce discourses and their underlying values and assumptions. Through their strategies of resistance, people also adapt or contest discursive rules. Whether discourses are adopted or adapted and whether the forms of knowledge and relations of power inherent in them are reproduced or challenged, *to some degree* knowledge is changed. These new or adapted forms of knowledge then recycle back into and reconstruct the institutions, institutionalized discourses and subjectivities from which they emerged in the first place. Thus the sayable constructs the visible, which feeds back into and reconstructs the sayable, which in turn feeds back into and reconstructs the visible and so on, generating endlessly perpetuating cycles in the will-to-knowledge.

Because “there is freedom everywhere” (Foucault 1996: 441) Foucault argues that people bear some degree of responsibility for how they are positioned: for their intentions and actions as well as for the outcomes of their power relations. Hence he urges us to reflect on our positioning so that we can more freely choose whether to reproduce or to challenge the values, behaviours and identities sanctioned by the discourses in which we are embedded. With regard to reaching for and exercising freedom, autonomy and dependency were recruited as key concepts for this thesis after I noted, during exploratory conversations with numerous academics and students, that these were integral to their experience of interpersonal and institutional power relations.

To operationalise or customise Foucault’s (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights in a way that makes them accessible to research, I devised a conceptual model or analytical tool which construes strategies of power / resistances as falling on a continuum between three main categories: push, allow and pull. According to this model: push, allow and pull are strategic *processes* that serve to situate supervisors, students and their educational contexts in various and varying *positions* on a continuum between autonomy and dependency. I merged this conceptual model with the definition “power is the existence of inequalities” (Stack 2002 pers. comm.) to formulate a working research hypothesis, or rather, a research hunch: *power relations function through strategies of resistance to situate students, supervisors and their contexts in unequal and ever-shifting positions between the polarities of autonomy and dependency.*

2. Although the exploration of power relations is based predominantly on Foucault’s (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) ideas, I link his insights to selected principles of systems metatheory as developed from their origin in mathematics and made applicable to social and human research by Bateson (Becvar & Becvar 1996, Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991). Foucault and systems metatheory both claim that knowledge is context-specific. Accordingly in the second section entitled **The educational domain**, I contextualize the research by interweaving Foucault’s ideas on power relations with critical descriptions of discourses that operate in the university domain.

The section begins with a section entitled **Forms of knowledge**, which describes the main tenets of various research discourses. Information in this section forms a backdrop against which, at a later stage, the methodological positioning of this research is debated. It also informs the subsequent discussions of participants' research and supervision approaches.

The section begins with a discussion of some of the historical roots and principles of structural and poststructural-postmodern research paradigms or discourses. A critical description of five research discourses follows under the sub-headings:

- Positivist research
- Interpretivist research
- Critical research
- Social constructionism/constructivism
- Methodological relationalism

Initial exploratory conversations with students and academics indicated that for all of them a discourse of **Commercial educational management** impacted in some way on their experience of teaching and learning. Accordingly, this section focuses on the professionalization of education. Using a Foucaultian lens to view the draft documents of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee, I explore how its "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) translate its founding principles of fitness of purpose, value for money and transformation (*ibid*.: 3-4) into proposed practices that support government's goals for engineering social and economic change. The section is organized under the sub-headings:

- Funding
- Innovation and reproduction
- The group, the individual and academic freedom
- Assuring quality: surveillance, assessment and feedback
- Professional care, support and training
- Publication

During data collection I identified three additional discourses pertinent to the supervision experience of participants, hence discussions of **Anarchic educational leadership**, **Humanism** and **Holism** follow. Briefly, anarchic educational leadership discourse integrates principles of quantum physics with commercial demands, change management strategies and meaningful participation. Humanistic discourse favours a pastoral ethic and is person-centered. Holistic discourse cultivates ecological sensibility and honours the interconnectedness of all aspects of being-in-the-world.

3. In the third section entitled **Supervision practice** Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights are used as lenses through which to view information in publications on supervising postgraduate research. Information is organized to link with constructs introduced in the Power chapter and is presented under the sub-headings:

    - Introducing research supervision
    - The role of supervision and teaching in the will-to-knowledge
    - The existence of inequalities: Autonomy-dependency
    - Strategies of power
    - Individual and subject positions
    - The constructing process

This completes the presentation of information relevant to the context of the research. The chapter concludes with a statement of **the research question**: *how do postgraduate supervisors and their Master's students experience their supervision relationships and how are the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional power implicated in these relationships?*

The third chapter entitled **Methodology** describes the design and implementation of the research.

- The chapter begins with a section entitled **Positioning the research** in which I debate its positioning in relation to different ontological, epistemological and methodological discourses. In terms of ontology, the research is poststructural. It draws on principles of interpretivism: it employs a rationality that is subjective to explore reality and to

generate and negotiate meanings. The research also draws on constructionist-constructivist discourse: it endorses the view that consensus reality is an unstable representation of the real world that is naturalized - consciously or unconsciously - through the ideologies embedded in language and more specifically, in rules of discourse (Connole 1998; Steffe & Gale 1995). Within the broad spectrum of constructionist-constructivist discourse, this research is more specifically positioned in constructivism as it argues that the linguistic construction of reality is mediated by free will (Steffe & Gale 1995). The research is also situated in critical research discourse, which regards knowledge and education as political (Connole 1998: 19). Consistent with a critical approach I address the *association between processes and products.* In this regard I explore how power relationships in supervision influence the construction of extrinsic-objective knowledge (the *thesis* as an extrinsic product of teaching and education processes) and intrinsic-subjective knowledge (the *person* as an intrinsic product of learning processes). Most texts on supervising postgraduate research prioritize the development of the thesis; the development of the person is more often assumed and rarely isolated as a research focus. Both as critical researcher and humanist I am interested in redressing this imbalance. By focusing attention on both thesis-as-product and person-as-product and by exploring their interaction with and influence on the production of knowledge in the university and broader educational domains, I hope to provide a further base for research on the assessment of learning and supervision and, by association, on quality assurance in the formulation of educational policy. This links to another key aspect of critical and constructivist research discourses in this work: its attention to the close associations between discourse, knowledge and issues of power (Connole 1998; Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Kvale 1996; Steffe & Gale 1995).

In terms of methodology the research is qualitative and positioned in methodological relationalism (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981). Methodological relationalism endorses a realistic approach to conducting research. It advises researchers to draw on the epistemologies and methodologies of different disciplines and research paradigms/discourses in order to transcend the (false) boundaries between these and to craft their methodology with an expedience that accelerates it towards addressing the pragmatic, pertinent issues of research in a real world (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). In this approach, method serves

to address the research focus and is not an end in itself. Choices arrived at through eclectic assimilation are controlled through the rigorous application of theoretical and methodological reflexivity (Bleicher 1982; Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981).

Thus the research is situated in poststructural ontology, in critical-constructivist epistemology and in methodological relationalism. The discussion then describes how a *hermeneutic dialogue* (Bleicher 1982; Clarke 1992; Kvale 1996) functions to mediate the successive interpretations of theory and data.

Pragmatic aspects of the methodology are then described:

- **The research format** is a focused exploratory-descriptive case study (Edwards 1993b; Yin 1989).

- **Sampling** was purposive: three matched pairs of supervisors and their Master's students in one-on-one supervision relationships were selected as the research population. Sampling specified that students should be over the age of 21 and conducting individually conceptualized research in Humanities or Education. These disciplines were chosen because of my familiarity with them at undergraduate and earlier postgraduate levels. Sampling did not specify gender, ethnicity, the level of supervisor experience, nor the time-stage of students in their research processes.

- **Data collection and processing** were led by a hermeneutic approach (Bleicher 1982; Kvale 1996). Data were collected in a series of sixteen semi-structured, in-depth, audio-recorded interviews (Kvale 1996; Seidman 1991) and conducted with the help of interview outlines (Kvale 1996).

- Selected aspects of F**oucault's methods** are integral to this study. Comment is offered on his research approach, which was influenced by Pyrrhonistic skepticism (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Thereafter, a list is presented showing my customization of some key analytical foci he used to guide his investigations of power relations (*ibid*.).

- **Data analysis** and interpretation were led by a technique of constant questioning and cross-questioning (Bleicher 1982; Cresswell 1994; Huberman & Miles 1994; Kendall & Wickham 1999; Kvale 1996; Strauss & Corbin 1997). Consistent with methodological relationalism (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981), I analyzed data by using a mix of standard techniques (Huberman & Miles 1994; Strauss & Corbin 1997) and the list of Foucault's analytical foci as operationalized or customized to match this research. The data analysis took place in three phases, which are described.

- Finally, the **Research validity** or authenticity is debated.

The fourth chapter entitled **Discussion** addresses the research question by integrating information from all the preceding chapters with participants' data. Each participant's statement is referenced to his or her raw data contained in the appendix. The discussion chapter is divided into three sections:

1. Firstly, the data of each participant pair are discussed separately under the headings: **Howard and Ray; Luna and Nadia; Molly and Andy**.

   These discussions begin with an exploration of *interpersonal* power relations. Participants' worldviews and motivations, the students' research topics and the professional and personal matching of students to supervisors are examined in order to ascertain their initial positioning in relationship to themselves, to each other and to their respective research interests. I then investigate how participants use power relations – specific resistance strategies that fall within the broad categories of push, allow and pull – to go about constructing one another.

   The discussion of this constructing process first juxtaposes participants' professional expectations and abilities against the professional care they give and get. Thereafter, their pastoral expectations and abilities are juxtaposed against the pastoral care they give and get. Applying Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights I show how participants are targeted by and positioned in discourse and how they use strategies of resistance to reposition themselves and one another.

The discussion then proceeds to look at *institutional* power relations in each relationship: how discourses in the educational domain influence participants and how, through strategies of resistance, they influence these discourses. The functioning of institutional power relations is presented under the sub-headings:

- Competing discourses
- Expectations
- Care.

Each supervision relationship is then evaluated according to what forms of knowledge are produced

- in terms of the thesis
- in terms of personhood
- in terms of the university and broader educational domains.

2. Data of the three participant pairs are then compared and integrated into a brief discussion entitled **Towards a synthesis of the three case studies** which is organized under the sub-headings:

   - Matching
   - Reflection
   - Authority
   - Levels of guidance and support
   - Power relations in the educational domain.

3. Ending the Discussion chapter is a section entitled **Participants' experience of the research process**. Offering this discussion is congruent with the principles of reciprocal causality and interconnectedness that inform Foucault's work, systems metatheory, interpretivism and critical research, as well as with the injunction of methodological relationalism to render personal, theoretical and methodological reflexivity visible (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992).

The **Conclusion** presents the research outcomes, offers comment on some of its successes and limitations and suggests possible avenues for improving practice and for further research and reflexion.

# CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

## 2.1 POWER

In this section the notion of power is introduced and illustrated to prepare for an exploration of how interpersonal and institutional dimensions of it function in the academic supervision relationship. Foucault's work on the dynamics of power forms the theoretical basis of this exploration. In this section I confine myself to describing and illustrating his ideas and explaining how they have been operationalized for the purpose of this research. Subsequent chapters and sections offer an ongoing critique of his ideas by juxtaposing them with other arguments, including my own. Throughout the thesis, however, I offer less a general criticism of his ideas than an engaged critical analysis of their application as theoretical *frameworks* and practical *tools* for this specific research. Information in this section is presented under the headings: **Choosing Foucault: motivations and limitations; Power as relationship; A conspiracy of possibilities; Suspending judgment; Power and freedom; Power and knowledge** (Sub-headings: The influence of discourse; Subject positions; The two poles of knowledge: the sayable and the visible) and **Summary.**

Most of us have a sense of what power means but when we try to study it, power resists precise description. Volumes of essays and theories are crafted by philosophers and academics who aim to capture the meanings and mechanisms of power (Arendt 1992; Dahl 1992; Emerson 1962; Foucault 1982; Galbraith 1992; Habermas 1992; Knights & Willmott 1996; Lukes 1992, 1996; Matheson 1996; Parsons 1992, 1996; Rouse 1987; Russell 1992; Scott 1996; Spencer 1996; Weber 1992; Wrong 1996). Arguing and counter-arguing they probe its meaning with finely tapering scrutiny. Despite this academic rigour no single definition or theory of power has emerged that reflects its many facets (Scott 1996). After reviewing the publications cited above, I selected the work of Michel Foucault "…to understand how meanings are constituted and how power is implicated" (Pearce in Parker 1999: 79) in the academic supervision relationship.

### 2.1.1 Choosing Foucault: Motivations and limitations

My most compelling reason for choosing Foucault's work as the lens through which to view power is that he does not reduce this complex phenomenon to simplistic classifications of its structures. Instead, he views power as a series of *relational processes* and examines how they function. As this research investigates supervision relationships, Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) perspective of power-as-relationship matches my focus. Accordingly, I examine power relations in terms of the question: *How do relations of power function in the supervision relationship?*

A significant aspect of Foucault's (*ibid*.) work is his examination of how relations of power function to shape and reshape the identities of people and their social structures. He construes identities and social structures as *forms of knowledge* that are produced and mediated through relations of power (*ibid*.). As this thesis explores power relations in an academic context, a theory of power that links it to the production of knowledge and furthermore that links knowledge to identity, is apposite. Accordingly, a further question I pose in this thesis is: *What forms of knowledge are produced through the functioning of power relations in academic supervision?*

What I also find appealing in Foucault's approach is that, consistent with principles of systems metatheory [1], he refrains from judging power relations or their outcomes in terms of dichotomies like good or bad. Instead he views outcomes as appropriate to the people, conditions and contingencies that combine to produce them.

I encountered many challenges using Foucault's ideas, not least of which was my own resistance to some of them during the course of the research. I remain dissatisfied with the way he deals with the tension between what he presents as the almost overwhelming

[1] Principles of systems metatheory form a backdrop to this thesis. Systems metatheory developed out of mathematical constructs which were applied to the field of information processing and particularly to the development of computer technology. After attending a series of conferences held in the 1940s in New York city under the sponsorship of the Josiah Macy Foundation - conferences which attracted a cross section of leading scientists, engineers, mathematicians and social scientists - Gregory Bateson saw a way to extend the mechanistic mathematical and engineering concepts of systems metatheory in a way that would make them more congruently or sympathetically applicable to issues in the social and behavioural sciences. More specifically, he offered an interpretation of systems concepts that better suited his focus - examining human communication processes. When I refer to systems theory in this thesis, I do so in a way that is congruent with the principles of Bateson's epistemology (Becvar & Becvar 1996, Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991).

muscle of discursive rules and institutionalized power, and his claim that people have freedom and agency. In as far as this impacts on my research, his insights and methods give me tools to examine the power relations of institutions and institutionalized discourses as they impact on the individual. However, I had to conceptualize and construct my own way of examining how power relations may operate from the micro-level of the individual to the macro-level of institutions. Moreover, the conceptual scheme I devised had to be congruent with his insights

A further difficulty was to distill a relatively simple set of concepts from the large body of Foucault's work and to translate or operationalize them for the purposes of this research. Each of his publications builds on the cumulative knowledge of what went before it and it is not within the scope of this thesis to explore the genesis and development of those of his concepts that are applied here. Compounding this is the more literal problem of translation. Translations of Foucault's interviews and his works from French into English often obscure nuances in his meaning and on occasion his concepts and insights become ensnared in a tangled web of language (Hoy 1986; Kendall & Wickham 1999). To some extent this may account for the myriad of contesting interpretations of his work (Baudrillard 1987; Boileau 2000; Deleuze 1990; Hoy 1986; Rabinow 1984). My approach to Foucault was to first read selections of his works and interviews to reach my own understanding of them. I then formulated ways to apply his insights to my research. It was only once the project was well under way that I began to familiarize myself with the publications of some of his many critics. Given Foucault's views on the importance of autonomy in the construction of knowledge, I suspect he would have approved of this approach.

### 2.1.2 Power as relationship

Unlike most theorists, Foucault does not view power as a reified thing that is possessed. Instead he sees power as a relational process: "I scarcely use the word 'power', and if I use it on occasion it is simply as shorthand for the expression I generally use: 'relations of power' " (Foucault 1996: 441). He advises that a relation of power:

> …must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions as in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in

> anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization…(Foucault 1980: 98).

His view of power relations as chain-like processes concurs with the systemic principle of "reciprocal causality" (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 66) or "recursiveness" (*ibid*.) where "…we see every system influencing and being influenced by every other system and every individual influencing and being influenced by every other individual" (*ibid*.). According to this perspective, the personal and social meanings and actions evoked in reciprocal relationships co-construct an interconnected and dynamic web of social reality (Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991).

Foucault suggests that power relations are *always* present in this web of human interactions and that in the presence of power relations there is *always* resistance:

> …There can be no relations of power without resistances; the latter are the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power…(Foucault 1980: 142).

He views resistance as continually positioning people unequally and interdependently in relation to other people as well as to the net-like contexts in which they are embedded. Even when there appears to be consensus between people as well as between people and the rules of conduct that are sanctioned and institutionalized by their contexts, resistance still exists, so in this thesis when I use terms that indicate compliance or agreement it does not imply the absence of resistance. Instead, it is a matter of the quality and degree of resistance. Gordon notes: "…the existence of those who seem not to rebel is a warren of minute, individual autonomous tactics and strategies which counter and inflect the visible factors of overall domination" (in Foucault 1988: 257).

Foucault examines power in terms of the question: How do power relations work? He does not define power in terms of the question: What is power? (Kendall & Wickham 1999). I am obliged to Professor Lilla Stack who after reading the first draft of this chapter offered a definition that bridges this gap, one that remains compatible with Foucault in that it avoids reifying power: "Power is the existence of inequalities" (2002 pers. comm.). To ground the abstract concept of inequality in the context of the

supervision relationship, I drew from initial exploratory conversations with students and academics during which I noted that they often mentioned control – either having too much, too little or an equitable balance of it. The way students and supervisors spoke of their experience of control indicated that they either *perceived* themselves to be, or literally *were*, either more or less dependent on, or independent of, one another and factors in their contexts. This insight led to the idea that control is a power relation which situates supervisors, students and their contexts in unequal positions in relation to one another and furthermore that these various and varying positions are located somewhere along a continuum between the polarities of autonomy and dependency. Thus, autonomy and dependency [2] were recruited as central constructs in the thesis. I wondered what specific positions students and supervisors adopt between autonomy and dependency and how they negotiate or strategize or simply fall into these positions.

Merging the definition "power is the existence of inequalities" (*ibid.*) with the constructs of autonomy and dependency and with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) view that resistance exists in all power relationships, I formulated a working hypothesis or, rather, a research hunch: *Power relations function through strategies of resistance to situate students, supervisors and their contexts in unequal and ever-shifting positions between the polarities of autonomy and dependency*.

It could be argued that the division of interdependence into autonomy and dependency sets up binary oppositions and represents reality in a way that perpetuates a legacy of Cartesian dualism. In defense of my position I suggest that the ontology generated by Descartes' work has become habitually maligned and to some extent possibly even misrepresented: dualism is not necessarily a demon. Dualism is simply a way of looking at the world and like any ontology it has advantages and drawbacks depending on your value position. Also, for the purpose of moving this research forward I prefer to set aside rarefied debates as to whether binary opposites do or do not exist and to abstain from speculations attending the issue. Instead, I suggest that on an everyday level of awareness opposites are

[2] A substantial body of theoretical work exists on the construct of autonomy (Marshall 1996). My use of the term in this thesis does not derive from having closely examined these theoretical works. I use the term autonomy congruently with its definition in the *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*: "the possession or right of self-government; freedom of action" (2002: 72). Dependency implies the existence of conditioning or limiting factors; it is defined as: "… relying on someone or something for financial or other support" (*ibid*.: 311).

*perceived* and that working *with* this perception may potentially empower us to find a middle path between opposites or seeming opposites as we reach for balance [3]. The quest for balance is mine; readers may not share this aspiration. Nonetheless, exploratory conversations with students and academics revealed that autonomy and dependency are perceived by them to be important factors in the supervision relationship. Rather than questioning their perception I choose to explore it by working *with* it. Thus in the context of the everyday experience of supervisors and students, I take these antithetical constructs to be pertinent to an exploration of how power relations work to strengthen autonomy and dependency or to balance them more equitably. Furthermore, when I use the term polarities, I view autonomy and dependency as complementaries rather than mutually exclusive dichotomies. As Wheatley (1999) notes, inequalities, polarities or complementaries are indispensable to each other and neither can be accorded primacy. Thus the division I draw between autonomy and dependency is *conceptual*: they are interdependent and different degrees of the same thing - control.

Working from the assumption that actions of control are the same as strategies of resistance, I then had to find a way to identify and speak about *concrete manifestations* of strategies of resistance - a way that accommodates the idea of there being different resistance strategies and different degrees of them. To this end I operationalized the notion of resistance/control/power-relation as an action/strategy that falls somewhere along a continuum between three main categories: *push, allow* [4] and *pull*. The concepts of push and pull correspond with the everyday use or common meanings of the words. On a continuum between them, allow falls in the middle: allow happens when the quality of flow between push and pull balances them almost evenly. Autonomy and dependency are

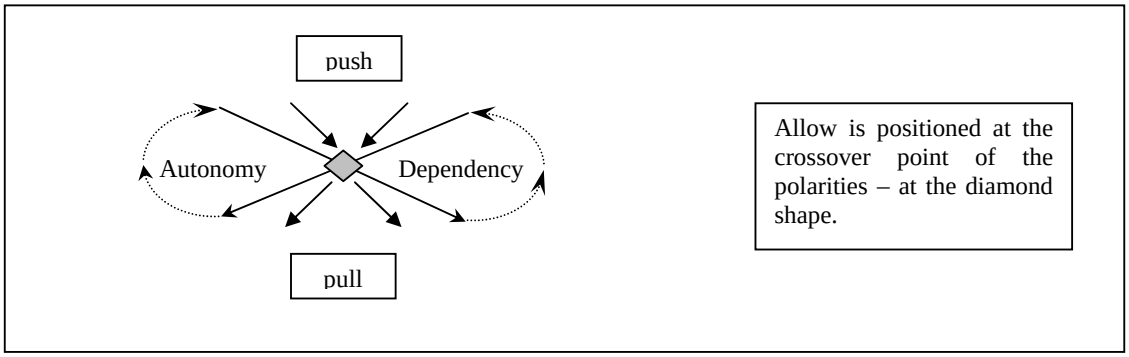
[3] This approach follows the homeopathic maxim: "*similia similibus curantur*" (Jackon in Burbatti & Formenti 1988: 9) where a disease is used to counteract itself, somewhat like allopathic vaccinations introduce a dose of the disease into the body in order to stimulate the production of antibodies and thereby increase resistance to the disease. Linking these interventions with Tibetan Buddhist epistemology: the perception of opposites can be used to transcend the perception (The Dalai Lama & Goleman 2003). In such transcendence the perception of boundaries between autonomy and dependency collapses into the awareness of *interdependency* and in this awareness compassion and compassionate action arise readily.

[4] Allow is a term used by Brennan (1993) in her text on esoteric healing. Working with energy fields in and surrounding the human body, she describes patterns of communication between people and how the shapes, colours and dynamics of their energy fields link with certain energy responses e.g. a schizophrenic response pattern of withdrawal, or a psychotic response pattern of aggression. In other words, the energy fields are like energy behaviours. The energy shape of *allow* is a self-contained yet open response pattern, it occurs when both people remain available to each other without violating the boundaries of self or one another.

different states or *positions* that arise from power relations, while push, pull and allow are different *processes* of power relations.

The following figures illustrate how the *processes* of push, allow and pull work in relationship to the polar or complementary *positions* of autonomy and dependency [5]. Broken lines indicate openness to chance or contingencies.

Figure 1

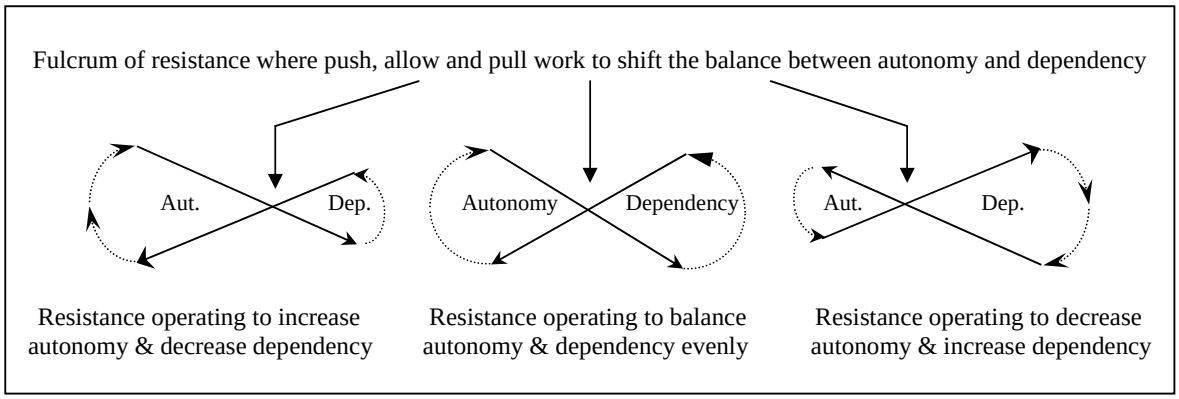



The crossover point in the diagram is the fulcrum of resistance – the middle of a continuum between the *positions* of autonomy and dependency. It is the point where resistance strategies operate to balance autonomy and dependency. This crossover point is also the middle point on a continuum between the *processes* of push and pull – it is the position of allow, where push and pull are most equitably balancing autonomy and dependency. The quality of push, pull and allow can be illustrated and sensed in the act of drawing the horizontal looped figure 8. *Push* pushes inwards and *towards* the middle point, where it begins to *pull* outwards and *away* from the middle. It rounds the extreme of a polarity and then pushes inward again towards the middle, before pulling away again, and so forth. The quality of allow can be sensed in the *whole* physical movement when drawing the horizontally looped figure 8: push and pull work together in one smooth flow - or in terms of my interpretation of allow (see p. 106) - in collaborative agreement.

[5] Although these figures are my own conceptualizations in as far as they represent my (principally intuitive) integration of Foucault's notion of resistance with the constructs of autonomy and dependency, they are inspired by the teachings of Eastern philosophy and more specifically by the mystical text of W. B. Yeats (1981) entitled *A Vision.* In many eras and cultures, mystics use the horizontal figure 8 to symbolize eternity, but as far as I know Yeats was the first to offer an avenue into a more literal understanding of the symbol's mystery. In his text Yeats offers diagrammatical illustrations to represent how energy works to converge polarities into an integrated and constantly mutating whole. This ever-shifting whole forms a multi-dimensional chain-like structure that closely resembles the DNA helix.

As illustrated by the figure below, the resistance processes of push, allow and pull shift the balance between the positions of autonomy and dependency somewhat like a slide rule is maneuvered to increase or decrease the spaces between the left and right hand sides of it. In this example the hand would be the fulcrum of resistance - the instrument of intention - in this case conscious intention.

Figure 2




Within the primary categories of *push*, *allow* and *pull* strategies of resistance take many specific forms; for example, communicating, reflecting, avoiding and collaborating. Strategies of resistance are described in the chapter on supervision practice where a critique of the constructs of push, allow and pull is also offered (see p. 97).

### 2.1.3 A conspiracy of possibilities

Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) research focused on historical processes. He showed how, in a complex interplay of continuities and discontinuities that are dynamic, unpredictable and subject to circular causality or "recursiveness" (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 66), historical processes form and reform our perceptions of reality and in turn these influence the construction of our identities or subjectivities. Foucault conceptualized his approach to history as geneology: a "history of the present" (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 4) that aims to "…account for the *constitution* [emphasis mine] of the subject within a historical framework" (Foucault 1980b: 117). By focusing on how subjectivity is constituted, his research exposes the expedient power relations devised to

render humankind more readily governable [6]. Foucault's approach was novel and his work contentious; it continues to challenge unexamined assumptions of causal origins (Kendall & Wickham 1999) and rejects the modernist propensity to predict outcomes in terms of a steady, linear and predictable progress towards improvement (Hauke 2000; Kendall & Wickham 1999). Instead, Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) proposed that people's resistances in specific situations or contexts merge with unexpected contingencies to influence events so that different end states may be reached from the same initial situation. From this perspective "…it is not possible to make deterministic predictions about developmental processes" [7] (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 66).

Foucault (1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) uses the term contingency in a way that combines it with the idea of blindness or chance. Contingency describes a situation - a moment perhaps - from which an event can emerge spontaneously as one possible result of a complex interplay of relations between other events (Kendall & Wickham 1999). This perspective is congruent with the scientific paradigm of quantum physics [8] which claims that in the *process of becoming* apparently contradictory elements can merge together in surprising and innovative ways. A pertinent example is the process of research itself where progress is not bound by certainties but is alive to possibilities and characterized by ambiguity, contradiction and complexity. Similarly "…power relations are mobile, reversible and unstable" (Foucault 1996: 441). To research this intricate interplay and reach as clear an understanding of it as possible, Foucault fostered an a-positional stance, describing historical processes, their attendant power relations and their outcomes without making value judgments of them. His aim was simply to show *how* these processes function and to examine what forms of knowledge, including subjectivities, they bring into being.

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[6] Researching the historical roots of assumptions of causality upon which many psychiatry and psychology theories are based, Foucault deconstructed many truisms, notably the concept of hidden meanings. Foucault showed how theories constructed on the idea of hidden meanings produced practices that function more to label and control people than to improve our understanding of human ways of being.

[7] Systems theorists term this equipotentiality (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 71).

[8] This is discussed and developed in the next chapter under the headings: *Forms of knowledge* (see p. 42), *Anarchic educational leadership* (see p. 70) and *Holism* (see p. 80).

### 2.1.4 Suspending judgment

This is more easily said than done. Any description of information relies on perception and the interpretation of meaning and it is usually difficult to maintain an appropriate distance from personal proclivities. Perception, interpretation and personal preferences are embedded in cultural and historical contexts in which dominant discourses influence ways of seeing and being. These modes of seeing and being influence decisions regarding which issues merit attention and how questions are formulated to address these issues. In order to circumvent such conditioning Foucault used Pyrrhonistic skepticism [9] as an analytical tool (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Skepticism involves a careful description of appearances and a suspension of judgment that aims to consider all oppositions "…in favour of [an] indefinite continuation of investigations" (*ibid*.: 11). Using this approach Foucault never stops problematizing. Uncertainty becomes a virtue.

Accordingly, Foucault does not judge power relationships in terms of simplistic and value-laden dichotomies like functional or dysfunctional, good or bad (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Factors such as resistance, agreement or dependence function as aspects of power relations and he does not endorse or oppose them, nor their outcomes. In an interview, Foucault once remarked:

> …Judgment is being passed everywhere, all the time. Perhaps it's one of the simplest things mankind has been given to do. And you know very well that the last man, when radiation has finally reduced his last enemy to ashes, will sit down behind some rickety table and begin the trial of the individual responsible. I can't help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge, but to bring an oeuvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, catch the sea-foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply, not judgments, but signs of existence; it would summon them, drag them from their sleep. Perhaps it would invent them – all the better. All the better. Criticism that hands down

[9] This form of skepticism can be traced back to Pyrrho of Elis, a Greek philosopher from the third century BCE whose teachings were revived in the second century ACE by Sextus Empiricus and later in the modern era by Montaigne and Hume (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Pyrrhonistic skepticism is based on the proposition that "…we cannot know anything, including the fact that we cannot know anything" (*ibid:* 10). In keeping with his skepticism, Pyrrho left no written works, but his pupil Timon reports Pyrrho as having shown that "…objects are equally indifferent and unfathomable and indeterminable because neither our senses or our judgments are true or false, so for that reason we should not trust in them but should be without judgment and without inclination and unmoved, saying about each thing that it no more is than is not, or both is and is not, or neither is or is not…The idea is not to affirm or deny any proposition, but to move away from the possibility of doing so and toward the desired suspension of judgment. By continually seeing only oppositions the mind will, it is claimed, eventually stop judging" (*ibid*.: 10).

> sentences sends me to sleep; I'd like a criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms…(1988: 326).

Perhaps it was his detachment from the obligation to adopt a particular value position in his research that enabled Foucault to turn concepts upside down, to formulate questions in a way that turns them upon themselves and to craft a body of research remarkable in its originality or, in his words, its "scintillating leaps of the imagination" (*ibid*.). His work continues to attract vociferous criticism (Baudrillard 1987; Boileau 2000; Deleuze 1988; Hoy 1986; Rabinow 1984) partly because his leaps in imagination are larger than some critics are willing to countenance and partly because his a-positional stance makes him difficult to pin down.

### 2.1.5 Power and freedom

Inevitably any discussion of power necessitates some reference to freedom. Examining the strategies employed when freedom of choice, action or integrity are threatened or supported is integral to this thesis. To prepare for a dialogue in later chapters between Foucault's insights and an investigation of freedom in the relationships between students, their supervisors and their university context, I quote him here at length:

> …It should be noted that power relations are possible only insofar as the subjects are free…This means that in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies capable of reversing the situation) there would be no power relations at all…If there are relations of power in every social field, this is because there is freedom everywhere. Of course states of domination do indeed exist. In a great many cases power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom…[but] the idea that power is a system of domination that controls everything and leaves no room for freedom cannot be attributed to me…(Foucault 1996: 441-442).

Foucault remains true to this claim and does not endorse a deterministic perspective that declares discourses and relations of power to dominate or be responsible in the last instance for the production of subjectivity and forms of knowledge. He acknowledges that chance and the inevitability of change impact on peoples' resistances and things as they

are at any given moment, creating "…a circularity of interdependence [that] precludes questions of primacy" (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 48).

Foucault does not view relations of power as being exercised by some and not by others. Instead, he views power as "…a relation which exists between two individuals who are both capable of acting" (Grant & Graham 1994: 167). Because power is "…exercised on and by individuals over others as well as themselves", Foucault urges us to "…take responsibility for inventing or producing one's own 'self'" (*ibid.*). Kendall and Wickham remark that this is like an "…'agitation within' towards the capacity for re-invention" (1999: 30). By nurturing awareness of how we are positioned we can take a measure of responsibility for co-creating our own reality – our community, our sense of self-worth, of belonging, of ethics and self-knowledge. We are then empowered to resist being regulated by others or by the discourses in which we are embedded, particularly when such regulation produces contradictory subjectivities (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Contradictory subjectivities occur when people adopt roles and ways of being that are incongruent with whom they think, feel or desire themselves to be. As I interpret it, when Foucault speaks of the need to "produce one's own self" (*ibid.*) he is referring to the discovery of personal authenticity and the choice to assimilate and live congruently with the intrinsic truth and integrity that arises out of such discovery [10]. Foucault remarks: "…this transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?" (1988: 14).

### 2.1.6 Power and knowledge

When Foucault urges us to take responsibility for constructing our "self" he seeks to counterbalance the ways in which selfhood is constructed by the workings of formal knowledge as embodied in disciplines like the sciences or the humanities and in texts that reinforce their ontologies and epistemologies (Kendall & Wickham 1999). According to a constructionist paradigm, the lived reality of individuals is constructed by the cultural

[10] Authenticity is the knowledge of and the candor and honesty with one's own selfhood (Patty in Morris 1972). This links to a humanistic discourse, which is described in the following section (see p. 76).

contexts in which they are rooted (Parker 1999; Steffe & Gale 1995). Cultural devices like language pre-exist individuals and embed them in realms of values, shared meanings and assumptions that offer few avenues for escape. Nias captures this when he remarks: "…Most of us, most of the time, are no more conscious of most of our assumptions than we are of the movement of the Earth – we are at one with them, as with it" (1993: 47). Such assumptions are inherent and hidden in discourse.

#### 2.1.6.1 The influence of discourse

As Kendall and Wickham comment: "…the term 'discourse' has gained a wide contemporary currency and is perhaps in danger of becoming all things to all people" (1999: 35). In this thesis discourse refers to the inter-relationship between people's worldviews, values, languages, and contexts and concerns how these mutually influence one another to produce knowledge, actions and even emotions (Boughey 2000; Kendall & Wickham 1999; Steffe & Gale 1995). Constructionists claim that the avenues of thought and action available to people are prescribed by the linguistic possibilities of discourse – in a sense this perspective proposes a world made up of ideas (Parker 1999). Constructivists concur with the idea that discourse produces actions, thoughts and subjectivities, but differ from constructionists in as far as they also acknowledge the influence of subjective experience and individual agency on the construction of reality (*ibid*.). The way I read Foucault and use his insights is positioned more in line with a constructivist perspective as captured by Becvar and Becvar: "…we create [behaviour]…and how we language it becomes crucial" (1996: 85).

There are many dimensions to the way discourses influence practices. Some discursive influences are readily accessible such as the ethical rules and laws that govern society through the functioning of the legal system. However, what we mean and what we say or do, may not always be congruent with explicit rules we have learned and furthermore sometimes what we have learned may bypass our conscious grasp of it: "…ways of behaving are adopted not only from precept, but mostly unconsciously, by passive absorption from the culture, unquestioned and only partly questionable, because only partly verbalized" (Nias 1993: 61). In addition to the unconscious aspect of learning, thinking and acting, the meanings and intentions of what we say or do may be conscious,

but disguised or kept secret. Nonetheless these covert meanings and intentions can influence people, relationships and contexts (Emerson 1962; Weber 1992). Furthermore, whether people are conscious or unconscious of their motives, the consequences of their strategies and actions are not always congruent with their intentions (Lukes 1992, 1996; Scott 1996).

Irrespective of whether people choose to probe how discourses influence their lives, Foucault (1980, 1982, 1988, 1996) claims that they are active in shaping or producing themselves. "…More than that, they are active in producing themselves as subjects in the sense of *subjected* to power" (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 53). In Foucault's words: "…the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation" (1988: 50). The benefit of exploring the underlying assumptions and unintentional consequences of discourse is that it may then be possible to "…identify the limitations of dominant discourses and to locate more empowering alternatives which extend [our] opportunities for action" (Willig 1999: 155).

It seems pertinent at this stage to clarify the distinction between the terms subject and individual. The term subject is one instance of the difficulties encountered when translating Foucault's work from French to English. Subject and subjectivity are somewhat simplified translations of the multiple meanings of the French word *asujetissement* (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 53). One of the meanings of the word *asujetissement* is "to know how to do" (Foucault 1996). This meaning implies an adaptation to the normative injunctions. In this thesis, the term *subject* is used when I draw attention to how a person is being constructed by a particular discourse. The terms *person* or *individual* are used to denote when free choice is marshalled in order to resist this constructing process. As this thesis unfolds, it will become evident that I am regularly challenged by the tension between the concepts of the subject and the individual, particularly as Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insists that freedom exists everywhere, all the time. How free is freedom in the light of Foucault's statement:

> ... it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the vis-à-vis of power, it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle…(1980: 98).

In short, part of my challenge in this research is to examine how power relations sustain a tension between structure and agency. As pointed out before, Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) work focuses predominantly on how societal structures influence individual agency. My research examines this process, but is equally focused on exploring how individual agency influences the construction of societal structures, particularly educational ones, and how this process operates at the ground level of the supervision relationship.

#### 2.1.6.2 Subject positions

As subjects we are positioned in different ways by the discourses that construct us. Subject positions indicate our identity in a shared cultural world – for instance supervisor, teacher, parent, student and, more intricately, critical thinker, slow learner, encouraging supervisor, controlling parent, angry child and so on (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Subject positions are taken up within particular domains for example the family, the university, or particular disciplines within the university. In the Foucaultian sense of the word a domain is a specific, exclusive and institutionalized body of knowledge (*ibid*.). For example, the university is an educational domain with specialized concepts, languages and practices that are enshrined in policy texts and mission statements. Similarly, within the university domain, psychology is a disciplinary domain with specific set of concepts enshrined in language and practices that enable psychologists to define human beings and to prescribe ways of being humans.

There are several disciplinary domains within the university domain (e.g. the sciences and humanities) and different discourses within all of the domains, some of which challenge each other [11]. A subject may be positioned in one way, for example as a difficult student, in terms of one educational discourse and be positioned as an obliging student within a different educational discourse. It is not necessarily the person who changes, but rather that he or she takes up different subject positions in discourse and that these bring different power relations into play, thus producing different subjectivities. As Kendall and

[11] This links to Foucault's concept of subjugated knowledges, which is described in the chapter entitled *Supervision practice* (see p. 92).

Wickham point out "…for a Foucaultian account of the 'subject', attention must be drawn to the way in which power relations differentially position subjects in discourse even when (perhaps especially when) this produces contradictory subjectivity" (1999: 54). Accordingly, I pay close attention to the subjectivities and contradictory subjectivities that are produced in participants and examine how these are produced.

Within a domain, dominant discourses prevail and certain subject positions are regarded as more desirable than others. Systems are devised to optimize the truth of such desirability. In Foucaultian terms: cycles of *surveillance, assessment and feedback* are systematic ways in which subjects are targeted and rendered accessible by discourse (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Hunt & Wickham 1994; Kendall & Wickham 1999). These cycles establish and entrench behaviour – usually normative behaviour. Dominant discourses in an institution (e.g. the university, or the medical institution) become sanctioned as desirable and acceptable and will enable authority figures (e.g. university managers or psychiatrists) to get a measure of the person according to the values, language and behaviours of privileged or dominant discourses. Individuals are assessed according to how well they fit in and the degree to which they perpetuate or challenge the status quo. Rules in an academic institution's guidebook, for example, target academics and students by shaping their desirable development as particular types of educational subjects (e.g. responsible students or efficient supervisors). In recommending what is desirable, what is less desirable is implied, for instance, supervisors who work outside legitimized boundaries or students who are overly dependent on their supervisors.

Discourses on research methodology, for instance, prescribe research paradigms and methodologies whereby the desirability as well as the validity, not only of the research, but also of the *researcher* can be measured. The following example illustrates how cycles of surveillance, assessment and feedback may work to achieve this. First a research student will be supervised or overseen by those who are sanctioned as authorities within an institution (the process of *surveillance*). Then her or his work will be evaluated by methods of calculation relevant to the sanctioned norms of dominant discourses (the process of *assessment*). Finally, systems of reward and punishment (processes of *feedback*) are formulated to communicate these measures of assessment. Reward and punishment may be overt (e.g. awarding marks) or covert (e.g. subtly praising or withholding approval). Customarily, if research students and their work are found to

display thinking and behaviour congruent with dominant or sanctioned discourses they will be encouraged by systems of reward; if they fall short of these injunctions they will be discouraged by systems of punishment. In this way, cycles of surveillance, assessment and feedback [12] usually serve to re-produce the principles of the discourses they espouse. To the extent that the principles of the discourse/s are believed to be correct or true, this outcome is desirable.

Thus rules of discourse act on people as raw materials (Kendall & Wickham 1999). At a metapower-level this can be observed in the current and proposed interventions by government in South African higher education institutions. However, in this case strategies of surveillance, assessment and feedback are designed to *interrupt* the status quo and act on university managers, academics and students as raw materials for engineering and accelerating social and economic change. Operationalizing government's national plan for higher education, the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (HEQC) has produced draft documents outlining practices for improving teaching and learning (CHE 2003). Suggested good practice descriptors (*ibid*.), ranging from those applicable to the university management level through to those at the teaching level, offer detailed information on factors of quality pertinent to "institutional audit" (*ibid*.: 3) - in other words, subject to processes of *surveillance*. The document offers a series of self-evaluative questions that university managers and teachers should ask themselves in relation to quality *assessment*. Processes of *feedback* regarding quality include the award of institutional and programme accreditation (*reward*). The document does not articulate what form feedback will take in cases of non-compliance, but it is likely that some punitive measures (*punishment*) will be formulated if standards are not met [13]. Although still in draft form, as I interpret it the CHE (2003) documents serve to translate, albeit in ideal terms, the popularization of education as a democratic goal and to link this to the

[12] Feedback is a concept that is also applied in systems metatheory, where a distinction is made between negative and positive aspects of it (Becvar & Becvar 1996). I have not incorporated this distinction in the thesis, mainly because systems metatheory is a backdrop and not a focus of this research, but also because participants use the terms negative and positive in the everyday sense of the words - as value laden dichotomies - and this would complicate any attempt to apply their specific meaning in systems metatheory.

[13] This example serves to show how surveillance, assessment and feedback mechanisms work, but presents a simplistic interpretation of surveillance as envisioned by the CHE (2003) interventions. These are based on the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (*ibid*.: 3) which advocates the development of self-surveillance as a means whereby accountability may be reclaimed by individuals. By promoting self-surveillance or inner integrity, the *need for* extrinsic surveillance is decreased and perhaps even deflected. This is elaborated on in later chapters.

professionalization of education, which in turn is linked to economic growth. The implications thereof are explored in more detail in the next two chapters.

These examples of surveillance, assessment and feedback present these processes in a way that could be construed as ominous or menacing, but this is not necessarily so. Benefits as well as drawbacks attend actions of control and systems that are devised to achieve them.

#### 2.1.6.3 The two poles of knowledge: The sayable and the visible

According to Foucault, knowledge comprises two poles: the *sayable* and the *visible* (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Again, these terms are examples of the difficulties encountered when translating Foucault's work from French into English and require suspension of the common or everyday understandings of say and see and variations of these such as unsaid or invisible. Sayable and visible have specific meanings in Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) work. The sayable comprises knowledge that is expressed, legitimized and institutionalized in discourse (in spoken and written texts and the discourses and behaviours these endorse). The visible comprises sayable knowledge that becomes actualized or manifested in things and people (*ibid*.). In other words, words shape forms: what is said in words and texts becomes manifested in things and people.

Three *forms* of knowledge are referred to in this thesis:

- The university as a literal institution (in the sense of an actual place or space where people are organized around attaining knowledge). When I refer to *institutional* power relations, I am referring to those operating between the university as an organization, the people within it, and or factors in the broader *context* in which the university is embedded.
- Discourses*:* worldviews, values, languages and behaviours within the university *domain* that have become institutionalized and privileged through repeated usage. When I refer to *institutionalized* power relations, I am referring to power relations constructed by rules of discourse.

- The subjectivities or identities that institutional and institutionalized power relations construct in people.

Through the functioning of power relations / resistances, the sayable and the visible poles of knowledge are merged in a cycle that Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) calls the will-to-knowledge [14]. In this cycle, the tension between the sayable and visible poles of knowledge is similar to the tension between structure and agency. *For the purpose of clarification*, I divide the will-to-knowledge cycle into two phases, although the phases are inextricably interlinked and synchronous. The phases can be thought of as two halves of a circular process. In the first phase or first half of the circle, what is sayable constructs what is visible: institutionalized knowledge constructs our perceptions of reality, our social structures and the identities or the subjectivities we adopt in the world. In this first phase the sanctioned norms of societal *structures* in which we are embedded predominate. In the second phase of the will-to-knowledge cycle - the second half of the circle - we resist these structures with their institutionalized perceptions of reality and the forms of knowledge (including subjectivities) they bring into being. This resistance gives rise to new or adapted forms of knowledge, which recycle *back into* the societal structures and change these in some way. In this second phase *agency* predominates. In Foucaultian terms, the visible doubles back on and *re*-constructs the sayable:

> …For Foucault, the subject is produced out of the doubling of force upon itself, the attention to self. This production of subjectivity always occurs as a doubling of self upon self in every realm – the realm of the body, the realm of force and the realm of knowledge…(Kendall & Wickham 1999: 53).

In the same way that power relationships / resistances maintain inequality between the complementarities of structure and agency and keep these in a constant state of flux, so power relationships or resistances keep the two poles of knowledge - the sayable and the visible - unequal and in a constant state of flux.

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[14] Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) uses the notion of the will-to-knowledge interchangeably with the notion of the will-to-power. This is congruent given the link he proposes between knowledge and power: "…it is not just that power relations produce knowledge and transform its objects. They also produce their targets as productive...as Foucault says the 'will to knowledge' must itself be understood as the outcomes of the relations of power" (Rouse 1987: 218).

Power relations are like scaffolds linking what is or may become sayable (written and spoken texts) and what is or may become visible (what is made manifest) [15]. Power is a *relational strategy* that influences what *forms* knowledge will take. "…Knowledge is stratified…and rigidly segmented…Power is strategic, but anonymous" (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 51). Thus forms of knowledge are *structures* within which *strategies* of power are practised. In other words, power functions *in relationship* to knowledge.

> …Knowledge cannot be reduced to thinking, thoughts, opinions, ideas, and so on, but is best understood as a material practice with definite public, material conditions of operation like literacy training, schooling…and professional organizations for specific knowledge endeavours…(Kendall & Wickham 1999: 45).

Some knowledge is made explicit and accessible (written texts, spoken instructions) while other knowledge is not (for instance, secret pacts) (Hunt & Wickham 1994). Whether or not knowledge is covertly or overtly articulated, it has the capacity to influence a domain and its effects become dimly or blatantly visible. People are the vehicles of this process. Because "…subjects are the punctuation of discourse, and provide the bodies on and through which discourse may act…we may say that the subjects form some of the conditions for knowledge" (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 53). To ground this in an example relevant to this thesis: power relations maintain a tension between discourses on teaching praxis (the sayable pole of knowledge e.g. texts on how to teach) and the teachers that result (the visible pole of knowledge *i.e.* teachers as manifestations of what is sayable in teaching praxis). Teachers are positioned as subjects of - in the sense of subjected to - teaching discourses, but they have a degree of freedom as individuals, thus as both subjects and individuals they "…form some of the conditions for knowledge" (*ibid.*). Teachers may use relations of power to knowingly or unknowingly re-enforce and re-produce the discourses that construct them, in other words, they may re-enforce the forms of knowledge privileged by the discourses in which they are embedded - including the

[15] To examine what forms of knowledge are produced by power relationships, Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) pays close attention to the interplay between what is sayable and what becomes manifest or visible. He shows that what is sayable about crime (social, legal and political discourses) leads to visiblities i.e. forms of imprisonment and punishment (including the design of actual prison buildings, notably Bentham's Panopticon: see Foucault 1980b: 147-165). These visibilities then double back to produce people as particular kinds of criminal subjects. These criminal subjects are then used to justify the discourse that imprisoned them in the first place, with the result that the discourse is reinforced and becomes dominant. With continual reinforcement over time, the principles and underlying assumptions of discourses of punishment and criminality cease to be questioned and come to be accepted as truth. This is the cyclic process of the will-to-knowledge.

subjectivities that they as *people* adopt. However, teachers may also use relations of power to resist these discourses and the forms of knowledge that they bring into being, or they may seek to integrate these with alternative discourses, in which case rival and perhaps new forms of knowledge are produced. Thus *people* – in this case the teachers – become simultaneously the subjects and the vehicles of the knowledge they produce. This is what Foucault (1979, 1980, 1982, 1988, 1996) means when he says that power is productive:

> …not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing or exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting targets; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application…(Foucault 1980: 98).

Thus, in the cycle between what is sayable and what is visible: "…the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (Foucault 1980: 52). Sometimes knowledge can become so deeply rooted through this cycle that even processes of reflexion work to entrench instead of interrogate ways of being and seeing. As Foucault asks: "How is the reflexivity of the subject and the discourse of truth linked?" (1988: 38). This is elaborated on in later chapters.

Although they are intricately interwoven and insinuated in each another, the sayable and the visible are in opposition to one another and their relationship is one of resistance (Kendall & Wickham, 1999)[16]. Whether the knowledge embedded in a particular discourse is entrenched in its original form, integrated with knowledge from other discourses or perhaps even ousted, its form will be changed in some way, however slight (*ibid*.). Because of the continual adaptation of, and resistance between, what is sayable and what is visible, Foucault claims that power relations actually *avoid* the two poles of knowledge (in Kendall & Wickham 1999). To illustrate this with an example: by

[16] "The visible is always in danger of exhaustion because it is completely determined by the sayable; the problem is one of how visibilities, being completely receptive, in contrast to the spontaneity of the sayable, are *inexhaustible*. This is something of a recurrent problem in philosophy…Foucault's solution lies in regarding these two poles of knowledge as always in conflict" (Kendall & Wickham 1999: 50-51).

I have some difficulty with the term 'spontaneity' used in the above quote. I think what Kendall and Wickham may mean by spontaneity is the unreflected, almost reflex response that is learned through continued practice of a form of knowledge – a type of conditioning. Bourdieu's (1987) example of the immediate and almost intuitive responses of a soccer player participating in a soccer match is useful to illustrate this calibre of learned spontaneity.

choosing university education (and a specific university and discipline within it) as a domain in which to acquire and disseminate knowledge, students and their supervisors become overtly or covertly positioned by forms of knowledge that are influential discourses in our social milieu. Thus students and supervisors are constructed by educational discourses (what is sayable) and these influence how they think and act, how others see them and how they come to see and think of themselves (what is visible). As visibilities of their knowledge they use power strategies to re-construct themselves, others and, by association, the discourses with which they interact (this is the cyclic process of the visible doubling back on the sayable). Through a combination of power relations, chance or contingencies and specific situations and events, the educational discourses and subjectivities that arise out of them will be entrenched or challenged, but in some way these will change and thus avoid their existing forms.

This research examines how power relations in supervision produce and mediate two forms of knowledge. I conceptualize these as person-as-product (the person as an intrinsic product of learning processes) and thesis-as-product (the thesis as an extrinsic product of education processes). I also examine how thesis-as-product and person-as-product interact to challenge or reinforce the ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies of different discourses and thus how person-as-product and thesis-as-product impact on the construction of knowledge in the university and broader educational domains.

Domains of education are vital centers for the re/construction of knowledge. They are fulcrums of change for personhood and by association, for the fabric of society. Foucault's notion of the will-to-knowledge, when linked with Vandenberg's declaration that "…education is…the discovery of one's own possibilities of being…it is the enabling of unalienated (that is authentic) existence" (1997: 14), emphasizes Foucault's injunction that we should look beyond superficial facades of what and how we learn and teach in an attempt to understand and engage more autonomously with the discourses that produce us.

### 2.1.7 Summary

Foucault's theory of power relations leads my exploration of power relationships between students, supervisors and their contexts. Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996)

does not view power as a reified thing, but as relational processes. He argues that power relations exist in all human interactions and that power relations always involve an element of resistance. In order to identify and examine concrete manifestations of power relations/resistances, I operationalized resistances as strategies/actions that fall along a continuum of push-allow-pull. I merged this with the idea that resistance strategies balance autonomy and dependency between students, supervisors and their contexts, to formulate a working hypothesis: *Power relations function through strategies of resistance to situate students, supervisors and their contexts in unequal and ever-shifting positions between the polarities of autonomy and dependency*.

A central idea in Foucault's work is the construction of knowledge and subjectivity. I have interpreted his insights in a way that is congruent with a constructivist perspective, which claims that people's identities or subjectivities are co-constructed by and interplay between their personal agency and discursive influences in their cultural contexts. Foucault (*ibid*.) includes chance or contingency as a further influence in this process – a wild card, so to speak. His ideas on how relational processes construct knowledge are congruent with Bateson's interpretation of principles of systems metatheory (Becvar & Becvar 1996, Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991), notably the principle of "reciprocal causality" (*ibid*.). This perspective views power relations, discourses, people and contexts as being interrelated in a web of unpredictable and complex interactions, the outcomes of which are appropriate to the circumstances, contingencies and contexts from which they arise. To research this intricate interplay Foucault adopted an a-positional stance and avoided judging power relations or their outcomes in terms of value-laden dichotomies like good or bad. He used Pyrrhonistic skepticism as an analytical tool to help him achieve this neutrality (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Skepticism involves a careful description of appearances and a suspension of judgment that aims to consider all oppositions "…in favour of [an] indefinite continuation of investigations" (*ibid*.: 11).

Foucault (in Kendall & Wickham 1999) claims that the influence of institutionalized power on contexts and people occurs through the operation of rules of discourse. (Foucault uses the term domain in place of the term context to denote a specialized, institutionalized and legitimized body of knowledge.) Discourses arise out of the different worldviews, values, assumptions and actions that are embedded in language. The power relations that operate through discourse are productive; they influence a person's ways of

being in the world by targeting and positioning him or her as a subject of (in the sense of subjected to) covert and overt injunctions of the discourse/s in which he or she is embedded. Thus rules of discourse act on people as raw materials. Cycles of surveillance, assessment and feedback are systematic ways in which subjects are targeted and rendered accessible by discourse (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Hunt & Wickham 1994; Kendall & Wickham 1999). These cycles establish and entrench behaviour – usually normative behaviour. Because we have a degree of freedom, Foucault urges us to take responsibility for producing our own "self" (Grant & Graham 1994: 167) so that we do not become wholly subjected to the power relations inherent in discourse, particularly if the discourses in which we are embedded alienate us from our authenticity or our vision of who we want to be or become. Dominant discourses resist change but are not immune to it: by becoming aware of and questioning the underlying assumptions of the discourses that construct us, we can become empowered to challenge or reproduce these discourses and thereby, to co-construct reality. I argue that while power relations are constructed in discourse, people use idiosyncratic strategies of resistance (that fall into the categories of push-allow-pull), to interface discursive influences with their individual motives and proclivities. In this regard, in this thesis I use the term *subject* to denote when a person is being constructed predominantly by discourse and I use the term *person* or *individual* to indicate when she or he marshals freedom of choice in order to concede or oppose such construction.

Foucault claims that there are two poles of knowledge: the sayable pole (institutionally sanctioned and legitimized discourse that is expressed predominantly in speech and texts) and the visible pole (what the sayable makes manifest in social structures - such as the university as an actual institution - or in the identities, subjectivities and behaviours that people adopt) (Kendall & Wickham 1999). Power is a *strategy* that maintains the relationship between the sayable and the visible. Knowledge comprises the *forms* of the sayable and the visible and is best understood as a material practice with public, material conditions of operation like literacy training (*ibid*.). An outcome of power relations is the production of knowledge. Knowledge arises out of a process Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) terms the will-to-knowledge, a cycle in which what is sayable reinforces or challenges what is visible and vice versa. In this thesis I examine how power relations in the supervision alliance produce two forms of knowledge: person-as-product (the person as an intrinsic product of learning processes) and thesis-as-product (the thesis

as an extrinsic product of education processes). I also examine how thesis-as-product and person-as-product influence different discourses and thus the construction of knowledge in the university and broader educational domains.

Thus: The positions that supervisors and students adopt in terms of autonomy and dependency are maintained in a state of perpetual flux and inequality through relations of power. Relations of power function through strategies of resistance. Strategies of resistance converge with the contexts in which they are embedded (specific situations and events), unexpected contingencies, and what is sayable in discourse (institutionally sanctioned knowledge). This combination produces what is visible (made manifest) as forms of knowledge. Forms of knowledge in the educational domain are the university as an actual or literal institution, institutionalized discourses sanctioned by disciplines within the university, as well as forms of personhood (the identities or subjectivities that people adopt). In a cyclic process that Foucault (*ibid*.) terms the will-to-knowledge, what is visible feeds back into what is sayable so that existing forms of knowledge are reproduced, or new or adapted forms of knowledge are produced. In this way the sayable becomes reinforced or challenged by what is visible or vice versa, but in some way both the sayable and the visible change. Surveillance, assessment and feedback are central processes in the will-to-knowledge cycle (*ibid*.): they function to promote and perpetuate, or to challenge and change, the truth claims and norms of institutionalized discourses.

**Conclusion**

To prepare for a description and exploration of power relationships between postgraduate students, their supervisors and the university domain, in this section I introduced Foucault's insights on power relations, illustrated his ideas with examples pertinent to academic supervision and explained how I have conceptualized and customized his insights for the purposes of this research. Attention was drawn to the links between discourse, power relations, the contexts in which these function, and the production of knowledge. The next section offers perspectives on factors and discourses in the contemporary educational domain which influence the construction of students, supervisors and university managers.

## 2.2 THE EDUCATIONAL DOMAIN

Foucault's work on power relations and the principles of systems metatheory that inform this thesis, claim that knowledge and therefore research are context specific. Accordingly, this section offers a critical description of aspects of the educational domain in which students, their supervisors and the university are embedded. More explicitly, in preparation for a discussion of participants' interpersonal and institutional power relations, it is necessary to outline the main tenets of some of the discourses that produce them as subjects. This outline also provides an historical and epistemological framework in which to situate the methodology of this research.

The section begins with a section entitled **Forms of knowledge** which first describes some of the historical roots and principles of structural and poststructural-postmodern research paradigms. Thereafter a critical description of five research paradigms is presented under the sub headings: Positivist research; Interpretivist research; Critical research; Social constructionism/constructivism; and Methodological relationalism.

During the initial stages of this research, exploratory conversations with students and academics indicated that, for all of them, commercial demands impact in some way on their experience of teaching and learning. Because **Commercial educational management** is an overarching discourse in which all participants are embedded, I offer a detailed description of key aspects of it. Links are drawn between the principles and suggested practices contained in the draft documents of South Africa's Council for Higher Education's Quality Committee (2003), the professionalization of education and the popularization of education as a democratic goal. The section is organized under the sub-headings: Funding; Innovation and reproduction; The group, the individual and academic freedom; Assuring quality: surveillance, assessment and feedback; Professional care, support and training; and Publication.

After I had collected my data, reread it many times and begun to analyze it, I identified three additional discourses pertinent to participants' experience of supervision. I realized that the main tenets of these discourses would need to be presented in order to prepare for

a critical discussion of how they influence participants' interpersonal and institutional power relations. I also realized that in the context of an academic thesis my own understanding of these discourses, which integrates my prior learning with what participants said, would not qualify as permissible knowledge and would need to be augmented by information in published - *legitimized* - texts. This is a direct and pertinent experience of the power-knowledge nexus revealed in Foucault's work. I was tempted to resist conforming, but decided to conduct a literature search of the three discourses to satisfy academic sanctions as well as my impulse to improved understanding. The resulting information, synthesized with my own understanding, is organized under the headings **Anarchic educational leadership**, **Humanism** and **Holism**.

Although the four discourses are presented here under separate headings, discourses refer to other discourses (Parker 1999) and are by no means discrete; instead they share many common features and are interlinked. Participants' experiences often incorporated aspects of all of the discourses.

### 2.2.1 Forms of knowledge

Different ontologies or views on the nature of reality give rise to different ideas on epistemology, on how reality can be known. In turn these inform different paradigms that structure how we explore, understand and explain the world and, in the case of researchers, the methodologies we choose for our research endeavours. The forms of knowledge that are embedded in these underlying philosophies and paradigmatic structures use different languages to articulate their values and aims, and in order to advance their claims to truth they tend to privilege certain kinds of rationalities and methodologies.

Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) proposes that in the cyclic process of the will-to-knowledge, forms of knowledge tend to re-produce and entrench themselves as well as do the ontologies, epistemologies and paradigms out of which they emerge. All of these impact on and are embodied in *people* who become the vehicles - the bodies - on which forms of knowledge work and through whom knowledge is mediated. Different forms of knowledge position people differently in the world. This constructs different

subjectivities that give rise to different ways of being and acting. For this reason I propose that forms of knowledge be thought of as discourses – ideological configurations in which values, languages, actions and even emotions, converge.

Drawing from many texts (Barker, Pistrang & Elliot 1994; Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bleicher 1982; Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Brooke 1991; Chapman & Sork 2001; Connole 1998; Crabtree & Miller 1992; Denzin 1978; Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Grant & Graham 1994; Grice & Humphries 1997; Hauke 2000; Huberman & Miles 1994; Kvale 1996; Phillips 1990; Ritzer 1981; Rouse 1987; Sarup 1993; Scholtz 2001; Steffe & Gale 1995; Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999), I offer a brief overview of two strands of philosophical thought, structuralism and poststructuralism-postmodernism. Within these I locate and discuss five research paradigms/discourses: positivism, interpretivism, critical research, social constructionism/constructivism and methodological relationalism. Although I have matched research discourses/paradigms to specific disciplines, this is simplistic. Boundaries between discourses and disciplines are permeable and many alternative combinations are possible. Similarities and continuities exist between discourses and disciplines and researchers often apply a mix of rationalities and methodologies to their investigations.

Structural ontology derives from Enlightenment thinking as exemplified by Descartes whose meditation “I think, therefore I am” gave rise to Cartesian dualism, heralding the beginning of the modernist enterprise. Humans were seen as free agents divided from and superior to the natural world by virtue of intellect, which was seen as pure in the sense of being universal and not located within the individual (Scholtz 2001). In modernist thinking, knowledge attained by science was awarded the status of truth. Science was lauded as capable of explaining and ordering all aspects of the world and solving all problems within it. Scientific rationality is linear and instrumental; it assumes that progress takes place in an ordered sequence from cause to effect and that logic can be applied to achieve a controlled and incremental advance towards a higher and better way of being in the world. In pursuit of the knowledge of absolute truth, it was considered possible, indeed necessary, for researchers to adopt a scientific and thus an a-historical and objective stance, poised outside of their research projects. Speaking through the neat and precise language of science, the modernist project quantified the world, proclaiming that empirical and experimental research methods have the potential to provide value-free

proof and solid evidence for truth claims. Irregularity and dispute were often banished as deviant and having no place in the order of nature. Such irregularities *do* occur, but when modernist science encountered these, it often ignored them (Hauke 2000). Critics of this worldview dispute the value of the modernist project arguing that scientific rationality and instrumentality have produced more problems than they have solved. Many current global problems show evidence in support of this criticism, but it needs to be balanced with the acknowledgement that science and scientific rationality have also contributed many benefits to our world. A more equitable claim is that by the time social research adopted scientific methods, science had begun to move from structural Newtonian to poststructural quantum physics and that to some extent social research remains slow to adapt to the inclusiveness and unpredictability of quantum thinking [17] (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Connole 1998; Wheatley 1999). Instead it continues to formulate and articulate its values in the language of an old scientific paradigm, leaving many social scientists "…playing the science game by the wrong rules" (Connole 1998: 9).

In the nineteenth century, the emotive allure of Romanticism began to destabilize Cartesian dualist thinking by focusing on the interconnectedness of humankind and nature and accentuating the irrational and the transcendental. By the twentieth century phenomenological thinkers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty expanded on Romantic thought by decentralizing subjectivity: consciousness became seen as context dependent. This contests the claims to concrete consciousness that were so central to the modernist project (Brooke 1991; Sarup 1993; Scholtz 2001). Existentialists and Marxists added their perspectives to the debate, with Nietzsche wryly intercepting these voices by declaring truth to be an army of mobile metaphors. These arguments converged with Saussure's 1914 work on structural linguistics, which called attention to systems of meaning and the *contextual* embeddedness of truth (Sarup 1993; Scholtz 2001). Although his work reinforced a more holistic understanding of the world, it also perpetuated the assumption that it is possible to examine a self-contained system objectively and discern its coherent, consistent and a-historical structure (*ibid*.). Saussure's work was influential but did not go unchallenged. Derrida argued that the search for essential hidden constructs only yields more constructs, and reinforces a misguided Cartesian quest for certainty (*ibid*.). This

[17] This is discussed in more detail in the subchapter entitled: *The educational domain*, under the headings *Anarchic educational leadership* and *Holism*.

criticism could be levelled at the work of many researchers who work at the interface of structural and poststructural epistemologies. The work of sociologist Bourdieu (1987) is one example. Merging phenomenology with structuralism he jettisoned the idea of a-historicity and the Cartesian subjectivity-objectivity split, nonetheless his notion of *habitus* is rooted in a structuralist quest for certainty. This notion proposes a coherent, historically determined geneology of consciousness that is fairly fixed or at least predictable, to account for the ways of being - the thoughts, feelings and emotions - that individuals assimilate through socially entrenched patterns of interaction (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) [18].

Out of these and other challenges to Cartesian dualism and scientific hegemony the influence of systems metatheory (as interpreted by Bateson), which started in the 1940s, began to increase. Its concept of cybernetics declared objectivity impossible, ousting it with the notion of subjectivity and obliging researchers to acknowledge that they are part of the system of relationships they are studying and thus will inevitably influence their research (Becvar & Becvar 1996). Ironically, systems metatheory emphasizes relationships to the point where the individual - and individual responsibility - is marginalized, sometimes almost lost. Cybernetics-of-cybernetics took cybernetics a step further, expanding the concept of subjectivity to one of intersubjectivity. Researchers now not only had to acknowledge their influence on their research, they needed to explore their positioning more comprehensively and open it up to public scrutiny (*ibid*.). Moreover, Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, which argues that the world is a living organism that is self-regulating and therefore always in a state of balance, casts doubt on concepts such as 'problem' and 'intervention' (*ibid*.). This critique undercuts any motive to change or improve the world, rendering research somewhat pointless. Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) attributes this impotence to an over-intellectualization of research epistemology and methodology and argues that this deflects attention from the pertinent urgencies of conducting research in a real world.

[18] Poised as they are on an edge between structural and poststructural thought, Foucault's and Bourdieu's works share many similarities (they attended the same university and had the same teachers – Canguilhem and Bachelard), but also many differences. Debating these is beyond the scope of this thesis, but as far as I interpret it, Bourdieu's ideas are predominantly embedded in structural epistemology whereas Foucault's ideas incline more towards a poststructural and arguably postmodern epistemology.

From these shifting and amorphous foundations, far from the clear and reassuring certainty of structural thought, the 1970s saw poststructuralism gaining momentum through the work of thinkers such as Foucault. By the 1980s the relational and contextually relative worldview of early poststructural thought was expanded and popularized by research approaches based on Derrida's challenge to Saussure (Scholtz 2001). Instead of building structures, these approaches seek to *deconstruct* them by close examination of the language and thus underlying assumptions of scientific truth and its satellite: social truth. At this stage it may be more pertinent to use the term postmodern to distinguish this acceleration of poststructural thought from its earlier roots (*ibid*.). Embracing "…complexity, ambiguity and contradiction" (Hauke 2000: 8) postmodernism re-perspectivized progress as a function of erratic processes and change as a compromise between advancement and regression. Research foci shifted to a scrutiny of language as it relates to power and issues such as race, gender and colonialist discourse (Connole 1998; Steffe & Gale 1995) [19]. Deconstruction does not imply destruction. Postmodern thought does not discard scientific principles or its rationality, but unseats science from its status as the one truth, promoting instead a hospitality to many perspectives (Hauke 2000). This has relaxed the grasp of modernist methodological strictures, advancing the notions of intersubjectivity, unpredictability and fragmentation and shifting emphasis from an unreflected acceptance of grand narratives to an acknowledgement of the value of local knowledges. Instead of speaking in terms of this *or* that, postmodernism prefers to say: this *and* that *and* whatever comes before, between and beyond these. Postmodernists are not saying that there is no truth at all, but that truth is contextually relative and *constructed* to serve personal, and/or collective proclivities where claims to truth function to position us within a plurality of equally justifiable perspectives (*ibid*.). The "non-stance" that this sometimes engenders has been criticized as a dubious and expedient exploitation of Feyerabend's "anything goes" (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Swann & Pratt 1999) variety of relativism, often derisively dismissed as a radically anarchic form of eclecticism. This critique is particularly problematic to some postmodern researchers in as far as it assumes that methodological relativism precludes research rigour. Bailey cites several postmodern texts that show evidence of lack of rigour, concluding that "…a great deal of postmodern theorizing alternates between banality and absurdity, between triviality

[19] I recently saw a postcard that subverts Descartes' maxim and that humorously captures this shift in focus: I think therefore I am dangerous.

posing as revelation and bizarre claims that conflict with common sense" (in Swann & Pratt 1999: 33). Bailey's (*ibid*.) examples and his arguments are for the most part persuasive although his citation and corroboration of Ryan's (*ibid*.: 36) critique on Foucault suggests that Bailey himself is not immune to the occasional bizarre claim. Clement Jackson, a critic of postmodernism, attacks it as being "…aimless, anarchic, amorphous, self-indulgent, inclusive, horizontally structured and aim[ing] for the popular" (in Hauke 2000: 91). It could be argued that this trivializes and misrepresents the postmodern position (*ibid*.). Such criticism fails to credit valuable research that has been and is being conducted using postmodern approaches. It also fails to credit the one thing the postmodern attitude most seeks to encourage: open-mindedness to the questioning of truth, knowledge and power, an intention from which its inclusivity and eclecticism naturally arise.

Before describing five key research discourses, I suggest that some factors are common to all of them:

- With the exception of purely theoretical and philosophical research (if these can be called research in the commonly understood sense of the word), I have found no discourses which dispute that reality - in some form or another - does indeed exist: instead, debates tend to center on epistemology - on how reality is or can be known.
- The motive of research is to find out something we do not know or to clarify or develop something we do know; all researchers embark on this exploration intending to manipulate the world in some way regardless of whether that intent is overt or covert to themselves or others.
- Interpretation is inevitable in any human understanding and all research practices involve it.
- To a varying extent, both deductive and inductive reasoning occurs in any research process.
- Research needs to be validated in some way and requires a commitment to methodological rigour for its claims to be worthy of consideration.
- Ethical considerations permeate research aims and activities and researchers need to be sensitive to, or at least reflect on and develop an understanding of, the implications of their practices in this regard. Grice and Humphries point out a subtle ethical consideration pertinent to this research project: "…attempts at characterizing or

> overviewing management discourses may have descriptive or analytical intent but appear often to generate disciplinary effects" (1997: 415).

The following sections describe five key research discourses and draw on the many texts acknowledged earlier (see p. 42). If it were possible to isolate ideas as belonging to any one or more authors, this section would show more references than content. In this regard, acknowledgement is shown only when a specific author provides special insight to a statement or when text is quoted directly from a publication.

#### 2.2.1.1 Positivist research

Positivist research is rooted in modernist and structural concepts of scientific truth. Customarily associated with empirical and experimental research, it is suited to and favoured by the natural sciences and technology, although since the advent of behaviourism social scientists have used positivism to systematically explore behaviour (Connole 1998). Positivism generally applies a linear and instrumental rationality and uses experimental and quantitative methods to prove or disprove clearly defined research hypotheses. Quasi-experimental research usually uses a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, and hypotheses are not always clearly defined; quantitative methods may be used to define aspects of research foci or to augment the interpretation of qualitative data and vice versa. Positivistic research places a high value on researcher objectivity and on statistically validated, repeatable and generalizable research findings. It aims to *explain* reality in terms of fixed axioms and stable pre-existing patterns and often places emphasis on extrinsic and measurable research products - in the sense of directly applicable findings - even when processes are being researched.

#### 2.2.1.2 Interpretivist research

This derives from early poststructural epistemology and extends through postmodern research approaches. Common to the social sciences, it generates mainly qualitative work, often in case study formats. Interpretivism explores reality and the generation and negotiation of meaning in contexts of fluid social interactions. Applying a rationality that

is often holistic, even intuitive, it incorporates everyday common sense understandings and does not regard any value system, interpretation or narrative as wrong, only different. This constitutes a radical departure from the truth claims of structural and positivist research approaches. Interpretivism acknowledges subjectivity and the "…intrinsic, irreducible, and mutually transformative relationship" (Brooke 1991: 7) between researchers, their subject matter and their participants. The generation of meaning is closely associated with context and values the multiple perspectives within different contexts: "…knowledge acquired from personal experience…local stories…should be valued as highly as knowledges produced from abstract or conceptual frames" (Chapman & Sork 2001: 98). Attention is focused on the unfolding of fresh perspectives through a negotiated understanding of social processes – including the process of research itself. Structural and positivistic critics accuse interpretivism of yielding impressionistic and idiosyncratic interpretations of reality that are not repeatable or generalizable and therefore of little practical use. Interpretivists refute this, arguing that research should be validated in terms of its own paradigm (Kvale 1996). Validation takes into account factors such as coherent research design, a commitment to rigour in terms of research methods and analysis, and the degree of congruence between interpretations and research data.

#### 2.2.1.3 Critical research

This shares features of the interpretivist approach but extends these to regard knowledge and education as political. It aims to empower people to change reality, which is seen as riddled with conflict and governed by veiled power structures. Critical rationality is pragmatic and methods such as action-research are used to advance campaigns of social, economic and educational restructuring: "…knowledge becomes emancipatory, enabling both researcher and researched to free themselves from limiting social forces" (Connole 1998: 19). All research is seen as starting from a value position and some value positions are regarded as more tenable than others. These value positions impact on issues such as "…the ownership of knowledge generated, the social, political and economic interests of those who own it and its potential to oppress or emancipate those who are being researched" (*ibid*.). Critical researchers work at the interface of extrinsic-objective knowledge and intrinsic-subjective knowledge (*ibid*.) and are often concerned with the association between processes and products. Critical researchers address issues of validity

in the same ways as interpretivists, with additional consideration being given to the quality of change and social action that a research project may effect in the world. Critical research has attracted opposition to its "…presuppositions of essential conflicts between women and men, between capital and labour, between colonized and colonizer, between managers and subordinates, between blacks and whites, and so on" (Grice & Humphries 1997: 413). In addition critics find "…terms such as oppression, emancipation and domination anachronistic" (*ibid*.) arguing that these concepts privilege values that are based in and endemic to the same grand narrative myths which critical researchers seek to destabilize. These observations highlight problems critical researchers encounter when adopting any value position in postmodernity (Connole 1998).

#### 2.2.1.4 Social constructionism/constructivism

Constructionism and constructivism are most often associated with postmodern perspectives, although thinkers such as Foucault could be said to be poised on an edge between poststructural and postmodern philosophy. Constructionism and constructivism view consensus reality as an unstable representation of the real world that has become naturalized through the ideologies embedded in language (Steffe & Gale 1995; Connole 1998). Whenever I refer to constructionism and constructivism in this thesis, I am referring to *social* constructionism and *social* constructivism. These orientations do not claim that things in the world do not exist (e.g. the planet, trees, animals, people, buildings) but rather that the ways in which humans perceive, understand and interact with them are embedded in language, in social structures and more specifically, in discourse. Constructionism and constructivism challenge researchers, particularly critical researchers, to deconstruct the assumptions and premises on which they base their investigations. In this regard, they critique the production of meanings and the binary oppositions prevalent in the critical approach, claiming that issues of knowledge cannot be separated from issues of power. In Foucault's words: "A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of the thought the practices that we accept, rest" (1988: 154).

In as far as language is seen as the overarching system that constructs reality, including subjectivity and consciousness, constructionism contests the notion of the free individual (Steffe & Gale 1995). Its softer version, constructivism does not dispense with the autonomous person, arguing instead that the linguistic construction of reality is mediated by free will (*ibid*.). This is a somewhat uncomfortable argument, as each premise potentially undermines the other. Constructionist/constructivist approaches are concerned with emancipation and eschew the researcher speaking for others and imposing his or her interests on what or whom is being researched (Connole 1998). This has sometimes been criticized as yielding an a-positional, academic armchair variety of emancipation offering little practical applicability (Connole 1998; Grice & Humphries 1997; Kvale 1996). Constructionism and constructivism use postmodern deconstructive techniques such as discourse analysis to break open commonly held assumptions that hide the dynamics and structures of power in written, spoken and visual texts. Important validity criteria are the degree to which power structures and processes of power relations are exposed and the systematic rigour with which texts and the researcher's position are deconstructed.

#### 2.2.1.5 Methodological relationalism

This is a multi-paradigmatic and multi-disciplinary research approach associated with the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). While his research praxis tends towards realism (Swann & Pratt 1999) and is grounded in structuralism, it anticipates poststructural-postmodern thinking by acknowledging the socio-linguistic and contextual embeddedness of knowledges. The approach also incorporates principles of systems metatheory, notably a focus on relationship and the recognition of reciprocal causality. I have already suggested that systems metatheory tends to privilege the system over the individual; this critique could also apply to Bourdieu's work in which reciprocal causality is more strongly premised on the social dynamics of relationships than on individual agency [20].

[20] Bourdieu's interest focuses on the "…different types of relations to the world that different social groups possess" (Corson in Swann & Pratt 1999: 74). He says: "…social structures and cognitive structures are recursively and structurally linked, and the correspondence that obtains between them provides one of the most solid props of the social dimension" (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 14).

A significant feature of methodological relationism is that it promotes methodological inclusivity. Bourdieu's inclusive research approach can be seen in his criticism of the (false) segregation between different research epistemologies and methodologies. He suggests that these so-called divisions derive from an academic penchant to exclusivity, which risks developing into "methodological imperialism" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 28). Wacquant elaborates: "…it is not the technical sophistication of methodological tools that Bourdieu criticizes, but their mindless refinement to fill the vacuum created by the absence of theoretical vision" (*ibid.*). Bourdieu refers to this phenomenon as "fetishism" (in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 28) and suggests that it promotes an ethic of "methodologism" (*ibid.*) where method becomes like an obsession - cultivated for its own sake. Bourdieu argues that this devitalizes research, blocking creative ingenuity and receptivity to new insights. The outcome is an exaggerated but impotent lip-service to methodological tools which bears little resemblance to their use - or lack of it - in the implementation of research. He asserts that method should serve to address the research focus and not be an end in itself. By drawing from epistemologies and methodologies of different disciplines and research paradigms/discourses, he suggests that researchers are empowered to transcend the (false) boundaries between these and to craft their methodology with an expedience that accelerates it towards addressing pragmatic, pertinent issues of research in a real world. Choices arrived at through this eclectic assimilation, however, need to be controlled and rationalized by a rigorous application of theoretical and methodological reflexivity (Bleicher 1982; Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981). A vital part of such reflexivity is the interrogation of assumptions. Researchers need to be vigilant of how assumptions and their attendant terminology and rhetoric may have been consciously or unconsciously imported into the research. They need to explore how their object of study is constituted at the outset of the research work and track the influence of this initial construction throughout the course of the research. This opens avenues of challenge to the theoretical bases on which the research is premised and guards against studies that simply document and thus reproduce sanctioned knowledges, without probing and thus researching them. Researchers must be alert to, reflect on, and report the ways in which their selected research discourse/s (and the relationships between these discourses) impact on their research and its context, particularly with regard to the power of the research/er to construct the social and educational world. This attention to the power-knowledge nexus accords with foci of critical and constructionist-constructivist discourses. Evidence of

reflexive rigour is an important criterion for evaluating the validity of research that uses a methodologically relational approach. In his paper "Against reflexivity as an academic virtue and source of privileged knowledge" Lynch (2000) points out that while reflexivity is an essential part of qualitative work, it is not without its limitations. He draws attention to the pitfalls of various forms of reflexivity, not least the inclination of researchers to make such liberal use of it that it becomes an exercise in "methodological self-congratulation" (2000: 30) and "reflections ad infinitum" (2000: 28).

Working with elements of positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and social constructivism - a multi-paradigmatic approach that resembles methodological relationalism - Webb (in Grant & Graham 1994: 174) outlines a way that academics can be persuaded to buy into staff development programmes. This model could be tailored for projects aiming to train postgraduate supervisors, bearing in mind that it may be construed as bordering on the patronizing. Basing the model on earlier research which found that different learners [21] respond more favourably to certain ways of speaking about things, Webb (*ibid*.) proposes that staff developers could market their staff development initiatives to academics by selecting discourse appropriate language to access their rationalities and thereby win their interest. Thus principles of methodological relationalism are not applied to methodology as such, but to the practical application of research findings. Webb suggests that academics working in a positivistic discourse, who he considers likely to respond to an experimental and cause-effect method of intervention, could be targeted by stating:

> …teach and construct courses according to the following principles (x, y and z) and your students will learn better. As a staff developer I can supply you with appropriate information, and help you to convert generality into specific practice…(*ibid*.).

Academics working in an interpretive mode, who he presumes are likely to believe in subjective perception and multiple interpretations of reality, could be advised:

> …as a staff developer I can expose you to these ideas and help you to ascertain students' perspectives of the factors that inhibit their "deep" learning, in order that they may be removed and students achieve better quality learning…(*ibid*.).

[21] For an account of various types of learners e.g. atomistic, deep, strategic, pragmatists, theorists, see Wisker (2001).

He suggests that the language of critical discourse, which regards the educational as political, could be used to appeal to educators:

> …as staff developers we need to interrupt hegemony (or taken-for-granted status quo)…reflect on…practices and the contexts in which they occur, and eliminate distortions in order to create more just educational practices and contexts…(*ibid*.).

This model illustrates how the rationalities and languages of different discourses could be manipulated, or perhaps rather marshalled, to circumvent resistance to a project. By presenting the same project in linguistic variations crafted to appeal to specific epistemological assumptions, staff developers may be able to bypass disciplinary boundaries and academic bias and move their staff development projects forward.

### 2.2.2 Commercial educational management

As an introduction to this section, I quote Foucault on the leadership and management of people: "…The men who hold political power are not the shepherds. Their task doesn't consist in fostering the life of a group of individuals. It consists in forming and assuring the city's unity" (1988: 67).

"Assuring the city's unity" (*ibid*.) obliges university managers to pay close attention to commercial demands. This gives rise to a commercial educational management discourse in which all research participants are embedded. I present aspects of this discourse in detail under the headings: Funding; Innovation and reproduction; The group, the individual and academic freedom; Assuring quality: assessment and surveillance; Professional care, support and training; and Publication. Some implications of the draft "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) compiled by South Africa's Higher Education Quality Committee are debated.

#### 2.2.2.1 Funding

It is claimed that "the power of the purse" (Neave in Lemmer 1997: 26) has become a dominant motif in university culture. Quality, production and throughput are demands in a new education market where funding plays a key role (Lemmer 1997; Walker 2001).

> …To a greater or lesser degree, governments have…reduced public spending, to encourage higher tuition market activity and industry links, and to introduce a performance economy and business-like management, while tightening control over academic life through accreditation, evaluation and quality assurance; in other words…[education] is joined to neo-liberal economics and quasi-corporate management…(Marginson 2001: 2).

In response to this trend, universities worldwide are reconstructing themselves around the notion of performativity. Bloland describes this as:

> …the capacity to deliver outputs at the lowest cost, a principle which replaces truth as the yardstick of knowledge…The questions asked now by professionalist students [and] institutions of higher education is no longer 'Is it true?' but 'What use is it?', 'Is it saleable?'…(in Lemmer 1997: 22) [22].

Performativity reflects a shift of funding towards "…applied work that will yield quick results for corporate sponsors" (Altbach 2001: 19). This accompanies a growing preference for corporate-style managerialism and the methodologies and principles of science and technology. As Morris remarks, these disciplines have "…surreptitiously developed [their] own megalomania" (1972: 178). Science and technology embody "…a very specific type of rationality…whose aim is to increase strength within an extensive and competitive framework" (Foucault 1996: 73-77). The instrumental, linear rationality of performativity is sometimes referred to as new vocationalism, which Luckett describes as "…the integration of education and training…[and the collapse of] what are considered to be functionally obsolete distinctions between theory and practice, knowledge and skill and mental and manual labour" (2000: 62). The collapse of these boundaries portends the crumbling of disciplines such as philosophy and religious studies, which according to a secular ethic are less useful. Relocated from a disciplinary world to an interdisciplinary

[22] "Lyotard predicted that education, at all levels, is being rapidly commodified, amidst a kind of cultural cynicism towards larger philosophical issues…Universities are becoming fundamental tools of progress in a very different way from what used to be proposed by the humanistic approach to development" (in Lemmer, 1997: 25).

environment, academics belonging to marginalized disciplines are no longer able to teach in a manner that matches the specific requirements of their subject matter.

The shift to funding techniques that are underpinned by instrumentalist values is also reshaping the traditional profile of academics and eroding their authority. In the sanctuary of the select academy the scholar's status was preserved by a tradition that awarded him or her the power of self-government by virtue of his or her elevated knowledge, trusted professionalism, the canon of academic freedom and "…an unspoken social contract that professionals exercise specialist knowledge and expertise disinterestedly and for the common good" (CHE 2003 6: 3). As Foucault notes: "…To be an intellectual meant something like being the consciousness/conscience of us all" (1980b: 127). He elaborates:

> …The 'universal' intellectual derives from the jurist or notable, and finds his fullest manifestation in the writer, the bearer of values and significations in which all can recognize themselves…Some years now have passed since the intellectual was called upon to play this role. A new mode of the 'connection between theory and practice' has been established. Intellectuals have got used to working, not in the modality of the 'universal', the 'exemplary', the 'just-and-true-for-all', but within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them…This is what I would call the 'specific' intellectual as opposed to the 'universal' intellectual…The 'specific' intellectual derives from quite another figure, not the jurist or notable, but the savant or expert…(1980b: 126-128).

Changes in structure herald changes in practices. Weaving through structures and practices and binding them together are relations of power [23]. These are the continuous networks through which knowledge is produced and changed, either slowly or in a swift educational *coup d'etat.* According to Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996), through a complex network of pervasive and anonymous power relations the instrumentalist values of the new technological society filter down through a system of highly organized and differentiated practices. One of these is funding. Funding practices are translated into microscopically detailed rules which work directly on academics to shape their identities or, less autonomously, construct their subjectivities. Thus their

[23] Up to the beginning of the seventeenth century discipline was exercised through a miscellany of capriciously enforced tolerances and gestures of violence. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, logical and cohesive disciplinary apparatuses were created (the army, the police and fiscal administration). From then onwards meta-power relations operated through a continuous, effective, ordered network of precisely and minutely differentiated and more cost-effective technologies of discipline (Foucault 1980b: chapters 6 & 8).

knowledge, skills and authority are reallocated to serve the goals of a different dominion of truth. The scholar becomes the savant. Regarding truth and the savant:

> …the savant is the person occupying a specific position, but whose specificity is linked…to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth…There is a battle for 'truth', or at least 'around truth'…it being understood that it's not a matter of a battle 'on behalf' of the truth but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays…The stormy relationship between evolutionism and the socialist…mark the important moment when the savant begins to intervene in contemporary political struggles in the name of a 'local' scientific truth…(Foucault 1980b: 129-132).

As sites of "contemporary political struggles" (*ibid*.) and " 'local' scientific truth" (*ibid*.) education and universities are ultra-sensitive areas. Currently, the hard sciences and technology enjoy preferential positioning in the allocation of university funding and consequently, in the attribution of status (Aguinis *et al.* 1996; Altbach 2001; Cooper & Randall 1999; Gibbons 2001; Giroux *et al.* 1996; Halpin & Troyna 1994; Lemmer 1997; Marginson 2001; Morgan 1992; Morris 1972; Phillips 1990; Rouse 1987; Tisdell 1993; Walker 2001). Participants in this research project are supervisors and postgraduate students from disciplines rooted in discourses that compete with those of the sciences and technology: the humanities and education. I am interested to see how funding may position and target participants in terms of their research topics and methodologies. More specifically, because supervisors are positioned between the university system and the students, I am interested to see if and how dominant instrumentalist values and their attendant mechanisms, such as the award of funding or acclaim, may impact on the supervisory relationship. In Foucaultian terms, I am interested in how relations of power and the strategies employed by participants in their supervision relationships collude with or resist what is sayable (institutionally sanctioned knowledge), and what is produced (made visible or manifest) in terms of personal subjectivity and in terms of the production of new or adapted knowledge or the duplication of the status quo.

#### 2.2.2.2 Innovation and reproduction

Universities are embedded in an economic environment where "…intensified competition and innovation are respectively the stimulus and response to globalisation…[and] survival" (Gibbons 2001: 5). Innovation can be thought of less as an enterprise of

originality than a creative adaptation of global solutions to local conditions (*ibid*). Universities are under pressure to take up innovative local solutions in order to compete for funding. In this climate:

> …research information becomes a potential source of power to policy actors…it potentially reduce[s] critical uncertainties for certain policies and stakeholders, and provide[s] policy actors with the raw material from which they can construct arguments to define, justify, and persuasively advance positions in the policy arena…(Cooper & Randall 1999: 26).

The impetus to discovery is usually attended by competition which in turn motivates experimental behaviour that is exploratory, open-ended, flexible and produces new knowledge (Gibbons 2001). Conversely, traditional university structures and managers are more often adapted to conserve principles of management that are formulated according to Newtonian principles: "…the progressive realization of a stable rationality…[where] manifestations of entrepreneurship must be absorbed and neutralized" (Morris 1972: 29). Neutralizing innovation and entrepreneurship renders managers less likely to challenge the status quo.

Universities not only compete to produce research that may enhance their opportunities for funding, they also compete to attract funding through student fees in a climate where students are increasingly mobile in terms of their choice of institutions. In South Africa there is an increased enrolment of students from previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds who suffered inequalities that demand redress. This is expanded on shortly. On one hand, these students are ill prepared to conform to a traditional academic discourse. The values and ways of speaking and behaving in universities steeped in elite, exclusive and traditional modus operandi are often arcane and alien to them (Boughey 2000). On the other hand, universities are ill prepared to adjust to experimental behaviour and emerging student needs and demands. As Foucault comments: "…the university recruits and enrolls…people already undergoing a proletarian conversion and who consequently arrive at the university bearing a revolutionary potential: the enemy is within the gates" (1996: 70).

On a more politically palatable note, in South Africa the collective enemy - apartheid - is vanquished and all citizens have been set free. The enemy to be conquered now is the legacy of apartheid's forty-five year old structures. One such structure was a system of

primary and secondary education engineered to supply manual labour and which, for the majority of South Africans, seriously restricted access to universities, particularly to the so-called elite universities. This limited, and in the case of tertiary education to some extent constrained, the marketable employment credentials of people other than those classified as white. In an ongoing process of dismantling this inequitable system and building new structures appropriate to a democracy, government has embarked on a number of intricately interlinking initiatives, one being the transformation of higher education. Affirmative action widens admission to tertiary education and training for those who come from historically disadvantaged educational backgrounds assuring, or rather envisaging, that more people will have greater access to jobs and thus to increased affluence, or at least to buying power, which in turn will boost the economy. As Foucault remarks: "…ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant" (1980b: 118). Thus the transformation of education merges democratic ideology with economic imperatives, notably those associated with a fiscal policy that is (currently) neo-liberal and aligned with the global professionalization of education. These factors converge to form a complex web of interconnected objectives that have to be translated into do-able, ground level interventions. These interventions need to increase the number of graduates from historically disadvantaged educational backgrounds, assure that all students at exit level have acquired skills that are marketable (CHE 2003) and ensure that cohorts of appropriately qualified academics are multiplied in proportion to the racial demographics of the population.

Foucault declares: "…meta-power can only take hold and secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations" (*ibid*.: 122). Mechanisms of surveillance, assessment and feedback secure this footing by systematically targeting subjects and rendering them accessible to regulation (see p. 30). In other words, these are mechanisms for negotiating or less autonomously, imposing, relations of power. The surveillance, assessment and feedback mechanisms outlined in the draft documents of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (2003) propose systematic ways to subdue the enemies *inside* the gates.

One enemy is the resistance to change: "…whilst the very idea of the university presupposes debate, change and the discovery of new ways of knowing and doing, the

systems, structures and cultures of higher education institutions are notorious for being resistant to change" (CHE 2003: 9). By association, a degree of responsibility for resistance to change must surely also lie with some of the people who make up these institutions. Other enemies are inefficient management and ineffective teaching practices. With regard to these, surveillance, assessment and feedback mechanisms ensure that those institutions and the people within them who are failing to produce deliverables are seen, judged and presumably coerced or influenced to improve. Thus, through a complex array of policy documents and (for the most part, anonymous) bureaucratic structures, the ideological discourses at the root of the government's mega-power relations with higher education institutions filter down to act on managers, academics and teachers as raw material for engineering and accelerating change. According to the Higher Education Quality Committee's document (CHE 2003), it has been given the mandate to facilitate the translation and implementation of government's objectives, but ultimately the *operational* responsibility for assuring deliverables in terms of equity, quality and throughput is devolved to each higher education institution. Particularly in a South African context any homogeneous implementation (and arguably, assessment) system is inappropriate given the heterogeneity of education providers and the democratic spirit that attends the principle of freedom, including academic freedom. This issue is addressed in the draft teaching and learning resource documents of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee, which frequently reiterate that

> …'good practice' is contingent, context-dependent and defies generic description. Thus if these resources [drafts 1-7] are to be useful at all, those who use them must reinterpret and re-describe them and make them their own…The view of [this] expert group is that these principles [theoretical and practical 'suggested good practice descriptors'] should be interpreted and applied appropriately to different contexts by professional educators…(CHE 2003: 5).

This returns me to the concept of innovation as less as an enterprise of originality than a creative adaptation of global solutions to local conditions (Gibbons 2001: 5) and offers a different slant on my earlier statement: neutralizing innovation and entrepreneurship renders managers less likely to challenge the status quo.

All these factors converge to form an unenviable dilemma and a somewhat risky situation for university managers and administrators who need to juggle four imperatives: one, to keep currency flowing into the university (more often from funding for projects of a

technological and scientific nature); two, to respond to governmental and societal demands for affirmative action, which usually entail increased tuition and thus cost; three, to remain vigilant and receptive to innovative research from all discourses (including less dominant or privileged ones) that could potentially enhance the university's profile and competitiveness in the national and global arenas; and four, while remaining tolerant of the reality that valuable and innovative research requires time (Burgess 1994; Christiansen *et. al.* 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994), university managers must achieve these objectives without jeopardizing either quality or successful throughput rates.

Packard remarks that in traditional university hierarchies "…the flow of communication, which is an instrument of power and which functions as a coordinating agent of people and processes within any system, comes from the 'top' and policy is most often modified from the top only" (in Morris 1972: 27). Paradoxically, Gibbons (2001) points out that innovative research projects usually involve collaboration between individual academics or departments, but are seldom pursued as a matter of institutional policy. Taken together, these statements suggest that innovative research findings, and thus potential funding, may frequently bypass the university system, and that a top-down management style may obstruct rather than improve its competitive edge in the educational marketplace. I explore how supervisors and students relate to university management structures and time constraints; how they perceive themselves and their research in terms of institutional expectations and how their experience of supervision relates to Jones's remark that the power dynamic in the culture of university teaching "…has been remarkably resistant to change, with innovations in teaching consisting of cosmetic pedagogical moves which hardly impact at all on the fundamental meta-practices of institutions" (in Grant & Graham 1994: 175).

#### 2.2.2.3 The group, the individual and academic freedom

It is argued that "the power of the purse" has negative repercussions for academic freedom (Altbach 2001; Morris 1972):

> …Man surrenders a measure of individuality and self-realization…The free-lance inquirer who investigates whatever he pleases, in accordance with whatever procedures and standards of truth and meaning he may consider appropriate, is to be

> viewed as intellectually irresponsible and hence socially undesirable…(Aiken in Morris 1972: 113-114).

This serves to shift students and their supervisors away from "…whatever may be incalculable and unpunctual, irritating and shocking, subjective and ambiguous" (Kariel in Morris 1972: 14), towards institutionally sanctioned and often normative research topics and methods. This adjustment is coerced by "…creating a system and environment which respects and rewards precisely those values, aspirations, skills, etc., that serve *system* needs" (Morris 1972: 17).

Nowadays increasing emphasis is placed on the scientific model of research. This favours group or team research projects that are usually funded by the state or by business corporations. Although this model is less common in the humanities and education, it is fast becoming more popular, particularly with the increase in taught Master's and Doctoral programmes (Giroux *et al*. 1996; Whittle 1994). Arguably, taught programmes allow for managing time and the greater volume of students currently entering institutions of higher education [24]. In this model there is:

> …less personal stake in the problem's outcome…[it] demonstrates the great superiority of the group mind over the individual mind …great abiding belief in *group* thinking, the *group* considering; the *group* choosing is a more authentic and reliable avenue to true humanity than the *individual* thinking, considering and choosing…(van Cleve Morris in Morris 1972: 210).

The resulting sociological conformity "…pushes back cultural horizons…to a more common all-inclusive mass culture" (Morris 1972: 33) in which "…creativity, criticality and difference" (Luckett 2000: 64) are suppressed. In this project, all students are conducting individually conceptualized research; I examine how they and their supervisors use strategies of power to exercise academic freedom in the face of changing educational demands.

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[24] In a strange twist of logic government funding for students in taught Master's programmes in South Africa is less than for thesis-only students. This erodes my argument, in terms of the growing dominance of groupwork as a feature of the scientific model of research in South Africa, as it links to the government's neo-liberal economic policy and attendant restructuring goals, *particularly the goal of increasing the number of employable graduates*. Is this due to a time-money ratio (and how is that calculated?) or is there some sort of international collective consensus around calculating the value - in the sense of the standards - of taught Master's programmes?

Mass culture or the commercialization of education should not be demonized as unreservedly bad developments. A Foucaultian viewpoint would regard these simply as developments, ones that are mutually constructed by and constructive of people and their contexts. Foucault recognizes this when he says:

> …Power relationships are being born incessantly, as both effect and condition of other processes…[they do not simply arise from] the resistance of the unhappy ones who are obligated to bow before them…power is born out of a plurality of relationships which are grafted onto something else, born from something else, and permit the development of something else…(1996: 260).

For Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996), power relationships and the structures that arise out of these are not merely repressive, they can be liberating; change is inevitable and freedom exists in being aware of, receptive to, and engaging *with* a changing world. However, he cautions people to be vigilant of, and interrupt, inequitable or corrosive power relationships that may be recurring in any social system. As Grant and Graham assert: "…any serious move to change education radically has to address the power dynamic head on" (1994: 175). An atmosphere agitated by criticism and reflection allows the production of innovative solutions and new knowledge forms. It opens a space for humanist ideals of the traditional university to converge with demands of a commercialized educational domain, but with regard to the latter Grant and Graham warn: "…the discourse of the liberal university, is likely to be lived out in some various but, importantly, constrained ways" (1994: 168).

#### 2.2.2.4 Assuring quality: Surveillance, assessment and feedback

Traditionally academics regulate quality through reflexion, self-evaluation and their own conscience, in other words according to personal integrity. Within the academy, peer review supplements this by offering academics feedback on their principles and practices. Coinciding with a shift in authority from the "universal intellectual" (Foucault 1980b: 126) to the "specific intellectual" (*ibid*.) (see p. 55), in the last two decades the responsibility for quality has shifted and academics are answerable to a much wider range of stakeholders such as government, student consumers and university and business employers (CHE 2003 6: 3). Barnett suggests:

> …the reason for this appears to be a loss of trust and the crumbling of the social contract between the academy and society, largely as a result of the academy's loss of its monopoly on knowledge production and the undermining of its service ethic by market values…(in CHE 2003 6: 3).

It seems that a market driven ethic, encapsulated in the notion of performativity (see p. 54) first calls into question the integrity of intrinsic evaluation, then incorporates it [25] into extrinsic forms of surveillance, assessment and feedback that are formal, rigid and most often designed to manage and measure educationalists in terms of normative standards that are statistically derived from principles of economics (e.g. funding) and principles of efficiency (e.g. corporate managerialism) (Marginson 2001). Rouse notes:

> …For Foucault…a crucial feature of such administration is its normalizing function. It does not primarily operate through the opposition between the permitted and the forbidden, and it does not bring all the weight and power of authority to bear upon those who have been observed in transgression, its function is corrective. It reconstructs the person and his or her behavior by gradual steps and small impositions…it creates distributions around the norm, which can be ranked, classified and dealt with differentially…it corrects and reduces deviation…(1987: 217).

In a South African context, proposed techniques of normalization that are devised to be "…diagnostic or corrective" (CHE 2003 2: 3) are intricately interlinked with successful throughput and the democratization of education. Educational goals are now formulated according to an outcomes-based, "design-down" (CHE 2003 1: 3) model [26]. The rationale underpinning this model is instrumental and its assessment methods are predominantly quantitative. The Higher Education Quality Committee offers some insight on assessment in an outcomes-based approach by explaining that

> …the educational process, including assessment, is consciously determined by the end results (learning outcomes) that it aims to achieve…This involves making explicit the learning outcomes one intends students to achieve and then designing assessment instruments that will effectively test students' attainment of these outcomes…(CHE 2003 5: 2).

This approach is well suited to measuring efficient training and learning in the sciences, technology and the professions where learning outcomes are mainly skills-based and

[25] I use the term *incorporate* because even assessment derived from *self*-evaluation is no longer entirely private but subject to scrutiny and assessment. I expand on this in the *Supervision practice* chapter.

[26] The Higher Education Quality Committee's draft documents apply to seven specific areas of managing, teaching and learning in higher education institutions. The document defines six types of assessment (CHE 2003 5: 9).

content-focused and thus easily estimated and readily quantifiable. Content-based knowledge is also readily measurable in the humanities, but traditionally the humanities provide a learning experience that involves a large proportion of process-based and intrinsic learning, which is enriching in a personal sense and, in a professional sense, enhances the capacity to think critically. Critical thinking and particularly enrichment are processes that are almost pre-cognitive: it is even difficult to *articulate* them qualitatively and they defy quantitative assessment. This problem makes it hard for humanities academics to demonstrate and so rationalize the effectiveness of their curricula and thus justify continued recognition and financial support.

It is clear from the seven teaching and learning resources (CHE 2003) that the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee acknowledges the importance of intrinsic learning: its recommendations are premised on the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (*ibid*.: 3). This advocates "…the development of professional educators who can learn from their teaching practice, engage with educational theory and use self-evaluation to improve professionally" (*ibid*.). This goal extends to include the cultivation of graduates with equally well-honed critical capacities. Yet, irrespective of the value to the economy of graduates who are adept critical thinkers - or as Castells calls them: "self programmable" (1998: 361) graduates who "maximize innovation and flexibility" (*ibid*.) - and however adroitly assessment instruments are designed, it remains to be seen how intrinsic learning outcomes will be measured, how they will be weighted against extrinsic outcomes and how the value of both will be reflected in forthcoming funding policy documents. Like their global counterparts, at this stage South African universities, particularly those that rely heavily on corporate funding, are subject to and subjects of commercial expediencies.

Like any process, normalization offers advantages and drawbacks. In terms of setting standards of quality, one tactic of surveillance and assessment that has potentially positive consequences for research students, supervisors and the university system is the submission of regular progress reports on the quality of supervision. These reports allow students and supervisors to formally register any difficulties they may be experiencing (Cryer 1997) and assure that university managers are aware of difficulties. Appropriate interventions can then be tailored to address supervision problems. I examine the perspectives of participant students and supervisors on these progress reports.

Also, although a global trend indicates that university goals are increasingly formulated and driven by achievement, competition, profit and mobility (Morris 1972), this does not necessarily imply that earlier value systems are discarded nor that teaching praxis is unequivocally constructed by an ethic of "pedagogy for profit" (Smythe in Lemmer 1997: 24). The commercialization of education is unlikely to obliterate vital guiding principles of a university education: to offer a quality learning experience in which students are urged to think critically, to develop themselves to their fullest potential and to contribute meaningfully to society. Seemingly conflicting values and goals co-exist and have the potential to combine into unexpected and innovative forms of knowledge. Foucault suggests that by promoting open-minded, tolerant dialogue between educators with differing agendas, their varying needs could be integrated into creative solutions:

> …There's a whole host of people being trained in the universities and elsewhere who could act as intermediaries between the mass of things and the thirst for knowledge…the problem is to multiply the channels…We have the technical means; the desire is there; there is an infinity of things to know; the people capable of doing such work exist. So what is our problem? Too little: channels of communication that are too narrow, almost monopolistic, inadequate. We mustn't adopt a protectionist attitude, to stop "bad" information from invading and stifling the "good". We must rather increase the possibility for movement backwards and forwards. This would not lead, as people often fear to uniformity and leveling down, but, on the contrary, to the simultaneous existence and differentiation of these various networks…(1988: 328).

Whether or not this is a probable as opposed to a possible outcome of the restructuring of education in South Africa is debatable.

The Higher Education Council's Quality Committee translates government's policy into three guiding principles to articulate what constitutes quality and thus efficiency and effectiveness:

> …Fitness for purpose in relation to a specified mission within a national framework of differentiation and diversity
>
> …Value for money judged in relation to the full range of educational purposes set out in the White Paper. Judgments about effectiveness and efficiency of provision will include but not be confined to labour market responsiveness and cost recovery
>
> …Transformation in the sense of developing the capabilities of individual learners for personal enrichment, as well as [meeting] the requirements of social development and economic and employment growth (CHE 2003: 3-4).

It is in the "fitness for purpose" (*ibid*.) criterion that I suspect Foucault's vision is most likely to be thwarted. Here "…the quality of learning and teaching in a particular institution is closely related to how well it fulfills its publically [*sic*] stated mission" (*ibid*.: 3). Two programme models are identified by the Council of Higher Education, each pertaining to a different mission or vision of tertiary education: the "reflective practitioner model" (CHE 2003 6: 4) and the "competency and skills based approach" (*ibid*.). It is likely that mission statements will be formulated according to one of these two models, thereby effectively separating institutions both conceptually and pragmatically. A likely consequence of this is that traditional universities - those that are based on the Oxford model and the "reflective practitioner" (*ibid*.) approach - will remain as remote as ever from the technicons. Indeed, a new and differentiated category of technically oriented universities will emerge. This increases the amount of channels, but does not necessarily increase the "channels of communication" (Foucault 1988: 328). Although one of the Department of Education's aims is to earmark funding "…for the facilitation of inter-institutional research collaboration" (CHE 2003 7: 2), it remains to be seen whether the skills and knowledge of educational communities will be pooled in the collaborative and innovative way that Foucault envisions.

#### 2.2.2.5 Professional care, support and training

The University of Melbourne survey (2001) found that students placed high value on the relationships they formed with other students and members of their department. While "approachable, friendly and helpful" (*ibid*.: 7) staff members afforded them a sense of community, "…a generally negative atmosphere was said not to be conducive to high quality research, as students felt under-appreciated and [that] their contribution to research remained unacknowledged" (*ibid*.).

Mouton observes: "…most postgraduate students will tell you that their thesis was the loneliest project that they ever undertook" (2001: 7). Although students conducting individual research (usually) have regular contact with their supervisors, Hill, Acker and Black (1994) found that they are particularly anxious about being excluded from both staff and student hierarchies. Grant and Graham (1994) note that postgraduate associations and formal and informal study groups offer students a forum where they can share common

goals, overcome intellectual loneliness and form a critical mass for action (Grant & Graham 1994). Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan document research findings which found that these forums satisfied

> …students' informational, motivational and social needs;…exposed [them] to a wide range of perspectives, raising [their] awareness of alternative approaches, epistemologies and research methods through discussion rather than lecture…[and] helped them to focus and reflect on the process of learning and researching, rather than merely the content…(1994: 78-79).

Advantages were also reported by supervisors, who said: "…they saved resources and time [by] covering topics and discussing problems with a group of students simultaneously, [and developed] greater awareness of practices, problems and effective strategies for postgraduate research training" (*ibid*). Institutional payoffs were: "…enhanced achievement of goals and objectives and the creation of an environment for equity, affirmative action and the continuous improvement of high quality learning and teaching" (*ibid*.: 87). This research explores how participants relate to their respective departments and to the newly formed postgraduate forum.

Most students are the targets of supervisory practices that are based almost exclusively on supervisors' personal experience of either receiving or giving supervision (Burgess 1994; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). Considering that "…it is from current students that future cohorts of academic staff will be drawn" (Grant & Graham 1994: 175), students who experience unsatisfactory supervision and who choose to become academic teachers are disadvantaged in as far as they have no positive role model to emulate. University managers need to be receptive to and address the support and training needs of their staff, particularly new and inexperienced supervisors. South Africa's Council on Higher Education suggests: "…the starting point for staff development should be the individual lecturer's own teaching practice and reflection on that practice, preferably from within a supportive community of educators" (CHE 2003 6: 4). Supervisor participants in the research of Lessing and Schultze felt that "…compulsory workshops on postgraduate supervision were necessary" (2003: 177). Although some institutions offer staff training, Hill, Acker and Black discovered that these courses "…were invariably mentioned

somewhat apologetically by staff who had heard about, rather than attended, any of them" (1994: 59) [27]. This trend reverberates in the South African context. The Higher Education Quality Committee comments: "…with a few exceptions, numbers enrolling for these [formal as well as non-credit bearing] programmes remain small, except where it has become a compulsory requirement for new academic staff" (2003 6: 4). This occurs despite incentives such as remission of fees, upward mobility in terms of promotion, annual distinguished teacher awards, and in some cases, confirmation of tenure (*ibid*.).

Professional care on an institutional level filters down through the hierarchy to impact on individuals. In the next chapter I examine the influence of a pastoral discourse on professional and on pastoral care at the micro-level of supervisors and students.

#### 2.2.2.6 Publication

More than ever before, academic success is measured by published research (Game & West 2002). A common complaint of academics is that the pressure to publish or perish stifles creativity and often results in a plethora of publications that do little more than reshuffle and reproduce information that is already well documented (Bowrick in Cryer 1996). For some students, the thesis and publication of it are not primary motivating factors for embarking on research. Some undertake research for its educative value in terms of personal growth and sometimes, simply for the delight of the intellectual pursuit (Hill, Acker & Black 1994). It can be argued that an emphasis on the measurable products of research trivializes the more intrinsic educative value of the research process.

Hill, Acker & Black report that completion rates, and therefore access to continued or improved funding has impacted on teaching styles: "…some supervisors developed a more structured approach coming from the need to be goal oriented" (1994: 64). They found that this loss of autonomy is connected to the injunction to 'publish or perish': "…interviewees often suggested that supervision was peripheral to the reward systems of

[27] It is likely that the organizers of the training courses researched by Hill, Acker & Black (1994) may not have accessed or used Webb's earlier publication (1992) cited by Grant and Graham (1994) and discussed on p. 52. Webb suggests that a linguistically targeted marketing strategy could be effective in motivating academics to attend supervision training programmes.

their institutions and that research and publication brought greater kudos" (*ibid*.: 59). The findings of research conducted by Phillips and Pugh (1996) concur with this. This is also likely to be the case in the South African context as the statement from the Department of Education indicates: "…the value and importance of research cannot be over-emphasised. Research…is perhaps the most powerful vehicle that we have to deepen our democracy" (in CHE 2003 7: 1).

Publications in accredited journals bring funding and status to the authors and co-authors as well as to the university. In a commercialized context it is debatable whether research even deserves to be called research unless it is publicly shared, disseminated and accrues benefits in terms of status and currency. In the context of the contemporary university, authorship translates into tangible earnings. Authorship is one issue that is sometimes, but not always, negotiated at the outset of the supervision relationship and due to lack of information, or any number of factors such as fear or shyness, students can become victims of a system they know little about. Cryer (1997) and Game and West (2002) point out that because funding and status are directly related to publication, and "…intellectual property rights…are a minefield" (Cryer 1997: 18), there should be careful negotiation regarding the ownership of research:

> …No longer is ownership a matter of generosity of the supervisor [or student], the norms of the department…or even goodwill all round. On some occasions these may suffice, but they may nevertheless backfire later…one clear piece of advice is to contact the expert in your institution at the first consideration of work that could have implications for ownership…(*ibid*).

She recommends that the university should "…take the lead and provide information to their staff" (*ibid*). I add that students should be included in the dissemination of such vital information. This project explores the significance of publication to participants.

Another consequence of the emphasis on publication is that academics are "…being tempted to withdraw from community service or to diminish teaching responsibilities in order to devote more time to the measurable products of research" (Lemmer 1997: 29). This factory notion of educative progress sets the stage for discord between market-driven university managers and academics, and more socially motivated academics and students (Marginson 2001).

### 2.2.3 Anarchic educational leadership

The title I have ascribed to this discourse originates in the comment of one participant supervisor of this study [28]. His observation led me to explore literature on chaos theory and its influence on models of leadership. An essential principle linking all the reviewed leadership literature is most effectively captured in his articulation of it: the anarchic argument. Although anarchic educational leadership challenges many of the values of a commercial educational management discourse, it seeks to work *with* and integrate rather than overthrow commercial considerations. This provides alternative possibilities for university management as well as for teachers and supervisors. Grice and Humphries offer a lucid articulation of an anarchic leadership position:

> …To be non-managerialist is not to be anti-management but to adopt a position that explicitly attempts to move outside institutionalized managerial values…[in order to address] the opposition between the purposefulness of individuals and the seeming givenness and narrow instrumentality of work-process relationships…(1997: 417).

Before offering background information on the ontology of the anarchic position, I offer my insight on how it applies to leadership: I have already argued that power relations work *between* structures and practices by linking discursively produced knowledge to the actions and subjectivities of people. People's resistances then work for, against or with this knowledge, in other words they exercise some degree of agency. This argument applies equally to relations of power in anarchic discourse. In terms of the quality of individual agency, however, there is one important distinguishing factor that characterizes

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[28] "The powerful structures at [this university] do not neatly fit into one pattern, and so they function differently, have different expectations, and affect me differently. But of course the issue is clouded by the fact that there is no "university". There are only people and the structures they put in place. It's about the tension between agency and structure. Agency being individual *action*…willful action…willed action. Structure being systems that are institutionalized, structured, systemic. *There's* a tension…it's at the heart of every organization. The study of leadership and management for over a hundred years has concerned itself with that. I find the anarchic argument appealing…I base my own management and leadership style on that…that there is actually no such thing as an organization. I mean…it's not like God made them. They're not like trees. *We* make them…*we* create structures…so that something can happen. And sometimes it's useful to have hardly any structures…otherwise the structures can get in the way of agency, quite frankly. Academic institutions are beautiful examples of that…academic departments, I mean…if you overload them with structures you've had it. You really don't want to overburden academics with too much bureaucracy. They need self-management, autonomy. In my opinion, the only structure that makes sense is the structure that agency brings about".

Before using the name anarchic educational leadership for this thesis, I first read literature to see whether I had correctly understood the participant's meaning. Having established that my understanding was correct and after broadening this understanding through more reading, I discussed the proposed title with the participant, who approved and validated my choice.

the anarchic leader: he or she steps into the gap between structures and practices armed with intentionality and attached to a value position, *but unattached to outcomes.* By this I do not mean that the anarchic leader does not commit, for example to a job or an institution, nor do I suggest that he or she would not prefer certain outcomes to others, but rather that he or she chooses his or her position, *lives congruently with it* and then *lets go* to *allow* the world to organize itself around him or her according to whatever organizing principle there is or is not, then works *with* whatever arises from the emerging situations, events, people, *etc.* In doing so the anarchic leader engages with change in a dynamic way that seeks to balance change while evading the stagnancy of equilibrium.

The anarch*ist* (and I refer to this specifically because of the potential linguistic confusion and because it is necessary to tease out the distinction in terms of how I construe anarchic discourse in this thesis) also acts as an "equilibrium buster" (Wheatley 1999: 83), but the *anarchist* is attached to outcomes whereas the *anarchic* is not. Both are influenced to some degree by the theory that "…forms of government interfere…with individual liberty and should be replaced by a system of voluntary cooperation" (Collins Concise English Dictionary 1978: 26). However the anarchist works towards "the complete absence of government" (*ibid.*) - in the sense of structures of exterior control - whereas the anarchic works cooperatively and constructively *with* and *within* governing structures. Thus the anarchic is not a radical who promotes chaos for its own sake or for some idealized - and arguably naïve - form of individual autonomy, but rather seeks an *integration* of multiple needs including the need for structure. The anarchic recognizes that not all forms of extrinsic government are pernicious and works towards formulating structures that are not rigid but are evolving. The individual people involved as well as the structures must be accommodated in this process.

The anarchic educational leader brings a specific ontological vision to the tasks of addressing the tension between structures and people and nurturing continuity between the purposefulness of the workplace and the "purposefulness of individuals" (Grice & Humphries 1997: 417). This ontological vision gives rise to non-attachment to outcomes.

Although the term anarchy suggests mayhem, lawlessness and disorder, the work of researchers such as quantum physicists David Bohm (1981) and Werner Heisenberg (in Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989) present persuasive research findings which show that out

of anarchy or chaos, a pattern of order emerges. Bohm (1981) attributes this order to an unbroken wholeness inherent in a cosmic web of relations. To illustrate the underlying unity of what he calls the implicate order, he uses the analogy of the hologram in which the image of the whole is echoed in the image of each part. He uses the term holomovement to denote a state of perpetual flux between implicate order (which is the fundamental structure of reality) and explicate order (in which the implicate order is made manifest in physical reality). The implicate order unfolds as it becomes manifest or explicate in physical reality, and this explicate order then enfolds when physical reality collapses to rejoin the implicate order. Echoing Foucault, Bohm claims that in this process, relational changes are consistent with themselves and one another and that the structures which arise out of anarchy or chaos, are congruent with the contingencies out of which they arise:

> …The material universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events. None of the properties of any part of this web is fundamental; they all follow from the properties of other parts, and the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web…(Capra 1989: 52).

These principles have been appropriated and assimilated into discourses of leadership (Senge *et al.* 1994; Wheatley 1999). Interpreting personal and professional needs according to ever changing circumstances, leaders following this vision participate with their co-workers to formulate structures pertinent to the circumstances in which they find themselves: "…the viability and resiliency of a self-organizing system comes from its great capacity to adapt as needed, to create structures that fit the moment" (Wheatley 1999: 82). In this discourse emerging structures have similar qualities to those that Foucault attributes to power relations: they are "…mobile, reversible and unstable" (1996: 441). This unpredictability is captured in Wheatley's declaration: "…all life lives off-balance in a world that is open to change" (1999: 89).

Anarchic leadership aims to navigate organizations through inevitable cycles of change and to re-perspectivise these cycles as indispensable to the transformation that is vital for the survival of the system itself (Wheatley 1999). "Change is never random…Paradoxically, it is the system's need to maintain itself that may lead it to become something new and different" (*ibid.*: 85). Chaos, disruption and change are conditions that awake creativity. This not only applies at a systems level; it is reciprocally

related to the ongoing growth and development - the self-renewal - of the people who are part of "living systems" (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989). Wheatley points out that organizational leaders operating in an anarchic discourse are like "equilibrium busters" (1999: 83) [29] who are "…deliberately looking for information that might threaten stability, knock [us] off balance, and open [us] to growth" (*ibid*.). "…Stasis, balance, equilibrium, these are temporary states. What endures is process – dynamic, adaptive, creative" (*ibid*.: 90). It would seem then, that challenging and questioning are important strategies in an anarchic leadership discourse and may apply equally well to the articulation of this discourse in institutional and interpersonal power relations in the supervision alliance. I explore this in the discussion.

Capra remarks:

> …our social institutions are unable to solve the major problems of our time, because they adhere to the concepts of an outdated worldview, the mechanistic world view of seventeenth-century science. The natural sciences, as well as the humanities and the social sciences, have all modeled themselves after classical Newtonian physics, and the limitations of the Newtonian worldview are now manifest in the multiple aspects of global crisis…(1989: 225).

In contrast to structurally bound Newtonian praxis, anarchic leadership discourse applies poststructural principles of quantum physics to inform leadership that is sensitive to individual agency, participation and the potentiality of change. As Schumacher articulates it: "…We have to leave room for non-knowledge. Take a small step, wait for feedback, and then proceed further" (in Capra 1989: 230). Open communication between people at all levels within an organization facilitates feedback and the exchange of ideas. This allows for new voices to be heard and for leaders and managers to take up ideas that have their genesis in the needs and experiences of co-workers as they engage on a daily basis with the realities of the workplace. This empowers all concerned to create their organizational realities (Wheatley 1999: 37); it challenges outmoded structures and stimulates the innovation so vital for survival. As Wheatley comments: "…an organization rich with many interpretations develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done. Such organizations become more intelligent" (1999: 67).

[29] A term coined by Jantsch (Wheatley 1999: 83)

When applying these principles to leading, learning and teaching in educational domains and more specifically in the university domain, "…predicting becomes less important than reacting" (Welch in Wheatley 1999: 38). Wheatley explains that this does not mean people, or the organizations to which they belong, exist in a totally reactive state, rather that they have a common basis, a shared vision - perhaps a living document in which expectations are clearly articulated and organizational vision is negotiated - from which to *respond*:

> …There is an essential role for *organizational intent and identity*. Without a clear sense of who they are, and what they are trying to accomplish, organizations [and people] get tossed and turned by shifts in the environment. No person or organization can be an effective co-creator with [the] environment without clarity about who [they] are intending to become…(1999: 39).

Participation is central to anarchic leadership; it is the door between quantum thought and quantum practices. Participation addresses: "…the opposition between the purposefulness of individuals and the seeming givenness and narrow instrumentality of work-process relationships" (Grice and Humphries 1997: 417). Interpersonal power relations such as "…listening, conversing, respecting one another's uniqueness" (*ibid*.) are essential to this collaborative approach: they allow for the expression of multiple interpretations of reality. Open communication between people at all levels within an organization facilitates feedback and the exchange of ideas. This allows for new voices to be heard and for leaders and managers to take up ideas that have their genesis in the needs and experiences of co-workers as they engage on a daily basis with the realities of the workplace. This empowers all concerned to create their organizational realities (Wheatley 1999: 37); it challenges outmoded structures and stimulates the innovation so vital for survival. As Wheatley comments: "…an organization rich with many interpretations develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done. Such organizations become more intelligent" (1999: 67).

As Capra remarks of people in contexts: "…the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web" (1989: 52). As I interpret it, the intentionality of the anarchic leader provides a focal point out of which this consistency can materialize: like a magnet, power relations arising from her or his intentionality provide the central organizing forces around which people, like iron filings, will arrange themselves.

Structures appropriate to the people as well as to their contexts will then develop and evolve.

Thus anarchic educational leadership discourse is predominantly people-centered while commercial educational management discourse is predominantly product-centered. The former responds to change while the latter manipulates for change. Educational leaders working within the anarchic discourse are likely to agree with managers operating in commercial discourse on certain of the educational recommendations formulated by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003): both are likely to encourage managers, academics and students to take responsibility for co-creating their organizational reality. They are also likely to agree with the arrangement whereby each educational institution holds operational responsibility for its outcomes. The importance of developing local and context-relevant solutions to problems and of developing appropriate assessment and feedback techniques are further points on which they are likely to concur. It is in the formulation of outcomes that the two discourses most differ: commercial discourse presupposes that outcomes can be controlled and that managers work towards relatively fixed outcomes while anarchic discourse presupposes change and that leaders work with shifting outcomes. It is plausible, therefore, that the visions or outcomes towards which an anarchic educational leader navigates an educational institution, department, programme or student, will have leaped well beyond the rigid confines of proposed outcomes that are formally documented and thus made accessible and assessable to the slower machinations of institutionalized control. Thus, by combining continuous and meaningful participation with highly flexible change management strategies, anarchic educational leaders increase the avenues for innovative solutions, but decrease the avenues for institutionalized control. At least to this extent anarchic educational leaders are positioned "…outside institutionalized managerial values" (Grice & Humphries 1997: 417).

As I have said before, discourses are not discrete and combine with other discourses, sometimes in unexpected and innovative ways. Because of their governing ontologies, some discourses amalgamate more readily than others. The quantum rationale of anarchic educational leadership discourse particularly regarding change, the centrality of personal agency and the interpretation of freedom merges more comfortably with humanism and

holism than with its commercial educational management counterpart, which is predominantly premised on instrumental, Newtonian rationality.

### 2.2.4 Humanism

As I interpret them, the supervision experiences of all the research participants indicate the functioning of humanistic discourse. Accordingly, I offer a brief presentation of some of its main tenets.

In Western thought, a humanistic discourse was advanced by the work of psychologists such as Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport and Victor Frankl (Louw, Van Ede & Louw 1998). Central to this discourse is the honouring and empathetic acceptance of the person as a unique and valuable individual. Individuals are seen as authoring their own development, which moves in a never ending, future oriented process towards the actualization of their fullest physical, emotional and spiritual potential (Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991; Louw, van Ede & Louw 1998; Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997). As Goldenberg and Goldenberg articulate it, humanism emphasizes "…choice, free will and especially the human capacity for self-determination and self-fulfilment" (1991: 116). Critics of the humanist position argue that by privileging the individual, humanism gives rise to an ethic of individualism that may marginalize the influence of and duty towards broader societal needs. It is argued that this contributes to the disassociation of humans from their social contexts, leading to the fragmentation of shared societal structures and the continuity that these provide (Hauke 2000). Jung concurs: "…the degree of differentiation, separation and opposition manifested by contemporary consciousness results in a degree of dissociation and of sickness that goes beyond the individual" (in Hauke 2000: 35). However, he counters this by suggesting: "…the sickness of dissociation in our world is at the same time a process of recovery, or rather, the climax of a period of pregnancy which heralds the throes of birth" (*ibid*.). This perspective anticipates the postmodern attitude; the concepts of fragmentation and dissociation associated with individualism lose their predominantly negative evaluation and are viewed as potentially fruitful aspects in a process of becoming. In keeping with the notion of inclusiveness, a postmodern perspective would not view individualism as excluding the individual's bonds with and responsibilities to the broader society in which she or he is

situated. A postmodern interpretation of humanism in tertiary education would include the traditional guiding principles of a university education: to offer a quality learning experience in which students are urged to think critically, to develop themselves to their fullest potential, *and* to contribute meaningfully to society. Individual growth is nurtured in the belief that it is valuable for self *and* others.

Foucault challenges the basis of the humanistic discourse from a different angle. His archival research uncovers historical foundations on which humanism is founded - the pastoral discourse [30]:

> …the shepherd has a target for his flock. It must either be led to good grazing ground or brought back to the fold…The theme of keeping watch is important. It brings out two aspects of the shepherd's devotedness. First, he acts, he works, he puts himself out, for those he nourishes and who are asleep. Second, he watches over them. He pays attention to them all and scans each one of them. He's got to know his flock as a whole, and in detail. Not only must he know where good pastures are, the season's laws and the order of things; but he must also know each one's particular needs…[this is] the development of 'pastoral technology' in the management of men…(Foucault 1988: 62-67).

He argues that this "…constant, individualized, and final kindness" (Foucault 1988: 62) evolves from historical structures of surveillance aimed at the control and discipline of people. By being aware of these roots of humanism, Foucault argues that educators and learners are empowered to resist being targeted as subjects, in the sense of being subjected to the forms of knowledge and relations of power that humanism and other dominant discourses promote. Nurturing mindfulness encourages a clearer understanding of the conditions that shape reality and enables teachers and learners to choose how they position themselves in relation to each other and to the world. As Lippitz remarks: "Knowledge educates! This means that it changes the identities of people who integrate it into their lives" (in Vandenberg 1997: 82). This statement is brought closer to a Foucaultian notion of the production of knowledge when Langeveld adds: "…the educational situation is one in which man is produced as a human being and in which he produces such beings" (in Vandenberg 1997: 5). "This is much more than a modern, professional understanding expects of the education profession. That is restricted to a science-oriented,

[30] Pastoral discourse and practices associated with it are discussed more fully in the chapter on Supervision practice (see p. 120).

mainly…instrumental training in specific job competencies" (Lippitz in Vandenberg 1997: 82).

For educators working in a humanistic framework, "job competencies" would include practices that encourage students' personal assimilation of knowledge. Assimilation construed in this way takes into account the value of prior knowledge. Ideally, assimilation should integrate who the learner is as a person with who he or she aspires to become. This is equally applicable to supervisors, particularly those who are concerned with continuing growth. Hence the concept of life-long learners. The implication of this calibre of assimilation is that learners should have freedom of choice to decide which information they use in the construction of their own sense of meaning:

> …The mature, productive, self-assured, "free" person derives his sense of identity and worth from within himself; he experiences himself 'as the active bearer of his own ideas and richness…[not] an impoverished "thing", dependent on powers outside of himself, unto whom he has projected his living substance' (Marcuse). He does not evaluate his value and worth by solely or essentially ranking the marketability of certain talents or skills which are his. He looks beyond these to his "inner" self…(Morris 1972: 69).

In keeping with the values of a humanistic discourse, the goals of postgraduate supervisors and their students would value both the *person* as an intrinsic product of the process of learning, and the *thesis* as an extrinsic product of education, a tension which this thesis explores. To these ends humanistic educators aim to strike a balance between the requirements of the system and the need to remain "…personally engaged and emotionally available" to their learners (Teyber 1997: 21). This engagement requires skill and flexibility on the part of educators who must accept and work with the vagaries of a student's learning process. In the words of Berger they need to "…empathize with an altered conviction" (1987: 116) to what is often a baffling progression of advance, regression, play, rest, fight and flight. In terms of working with change, this approach shares much with anarchic educational leadership discourse, particularly when teachers or supervisors refrain from attachment to outcomes and allow their students to author their own processes.

Many of the strategies suggested in the draft "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee are based on

humanistic discourse. To some extent humanistic principles of "…choice, free will and especially the human capacity for self-determination and self-fulfilment" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg (1991: 116) subvert the instrumentality of the proposed surveillance, assessment and feedback mechanisms and *vice versa*. As such, the resources represent an interesting, if sometimes uneasy, integration of humanistic and commercial goals and a framework (albeit in an idealistic form) within which university managers and academics in South African universities can work towards educational transformation.

What I find most interesting is how the resources merge surveillance and assessment with the pastoral ethic of humanistic discourse and how this interfaces with Foucault's remark that for academic teachers – or "specific intellectuals" (1980b: 126) (see p. 55) – working in the contemporary university "…a new mode of the 'connection between theory and practice' has been established" (*ibid*.: 127). The draft "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) actually articulates this when declaring that one prerequisite for quality teaching is familiarity with theories of pedagogy and the ability to apply these theories to practice. The Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee bases its recommendations for quality teaching on the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (*ibid*. 6: 4). This theory is translated into micro-mechanisms designed to help academics to assess themselves as well as the outcomes of their practices. The resource documents then go on to propose that such self-assessment should be made visible to the broader educational community in "…a teaching portfolio which is open to scrutiny by peers" (CHE 2003 6: 11). The implication is that self-evaluative statements will be rendered accessible to heads of department, deans, university managers, institutional auditors and so on, ever higher up the hierarchy. A pastoral-humanistic ethic of care is recruited to this process. It is expressed in recommendations such as sharing self-reflexive insights with an expert colleague "…who can act as 'critical friend'" (*ibid*.: 10). Another example is creating "…an environment in which it is 'safe' for teachers to observe and reflect on their practice openly and honestly" (*ibid*.). These activities are examples of what Foucault means when he speaks of the "…constant, individualized, and final kindness" (1988: 62) of pastoral discourse as it serves, yet veils, institutionalized control. To the extent that an academic is open and honest in his or her self-evaluative statements, transparency may involve an unpleasant backlash. I suggest that mechanisms designed to assist and even measure self-reflexion on teaching practices are valuable; traditionally academics have used peer review to this end. However, when self-reflexion is opened out to *formal*

assessment, this subverts the principles of humanistic ontology (self-determination, intrinsic integrity, *etc.)* out of which the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 6: 4) arose in the first place. Furthermore, such formal assessment could *institutionalize* subterfuge, or to state it less strongly, window-dressing. It seems unlikely that this outcome was envisaged in the formulation of the "suggested good practice descriptor" (*ibid*.) which recommends "…the promotion of a 'culture' of reflection in teaching" (*ibid*.). This potentially compromises the efficiency, effectiveness and value of institutional audits and could thwart goals of quality assurance.

The CHE (2003) documents are in draft form and frequently reiterate that the recommendations present an idealistic model for quality assurance. They are not meant to be prescriptive; instead they are living documents that are currently being piloted and thus open to debate and likely to change. The criticisms above should be seen as a response to them as such.

### 2.2.5 Holism

A holistic discourse is particularly pertinent to the supervision experience of one pair of participants in this research. However, to the extent that principles of holism mirror aspects of anarchic leadership discourse as well as humanistic discourse, dimensions of holism are relevant to all the participants. I offer here a brief overview of its main principles.

The vision of a unified cosmos, the holistic worldview so often regarded as an anachronism from the Romantic era in modernism, has resurfaced in the wake of resistance to a secularized world and to new discoveries in quantum physics. Discoveries from the new scientific paradigm challenge three basic notions of older Newtonian science: reductionism, linear causality and objectivity (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Connole 1998; Wheatley 1999). A holistic discourse assumes systemic principles of non-separation and the interconnectedness of all inanimate things and sentient beings in a symbiotic and collective union with nature and the human-made world (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989). The collaborative spirit of this holistic vision is poetically captured by Wheatley:

> …Those who have used music metaphors to describe working together, especially jazz metaphors, are sensing the nature of this quantum world. This world demands that we be present together, and be willing to improvise. We agree on the melody, tempo, and key, and then we play. We listen carefully, we communicate constantly, and suddenly, there is music, possibilities beyond anything we imagined. The music comes from somewhere else, from a unified whole we have accessed among ourselves, a relationship that transcends our false sense of separateness…(1999: 45)

According to Bateson (in Becvar & Becvar 1996; Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991) acknowledging and honouring the diversity and complexity of humans in relationship with each other and with their contexts is a cornerstone of the systemic paradigm. This perspective does not judge according to the dualities of right or wrong. Instead, it attempts to understand how structures function according to their own requirements, and examines the relational processes that entrench or change them. As Bateson comments: "…all phenomena should be defined in terms of relationship. No phenomenon has a meaning or identity in and of itself, but only in terms of its logical complement" (in Becvar & Becvar 1996: 356). While differences are celebrated as part of the diversity of creation, they are not considered to be mutually exclusive. Instead, the cohesion and vitality of apparently differing phenomena are considered to be indivisibly and interdependently related to each other (Berger 1987). In this view, reality is thought of as comprising differentiated parts that are loosely bound together in a dynamic whole: differentiated wholeness. Rules associated with this discourse require educators to honour 'the other', to recognize the futility of banishing subjectivity from the learning-teaching relationship and to take responsibility for the co-creation of their own and their student's learning experiences, and to practice humanistic principles of mutual respect, empathy and tolerance.

The individualistic flavour of free will in humanism is reconceptualised in holism's expansion of the concept to include an injunction to *compassionate* action (Balsekar 1992; Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bohm 1981; Brennan 1993; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999). Compassionate action arises from the recognition that we co-create reality. This principle is echoed in Foucault's (1996) injunction to acknowledge personal responsibility in the co-constitution of our world. Each person impacts on the world through her or his reciprocal relationship with each of its parts so that every action can be seen as a contribution to how the world can *become*. The holistic discourse views the role of individual conscience as a pivot for an emerging global consciousness and ecological awareness. It nurtures a

personally motivated critical approach to ordinary, everyday life in order to effect transformation from *within* the personal-collective world by acting mindfully, moment-to-moment (Balsekar 1992). Wheatley's comment mirrors this vision: "…Through engagement in the moment, we evoke our futures" (1999: 38).

Somewhat out of context but apposite to what I am trying to capture in my description of holistic discourse in practice, because it presupposes non-control, non-separation, tolerance to what *is* - in essence, compassion - as the central organizing principle of power relations, is Brooke's comment on the personhood of Jung:

> …when Jung in his old age had a sense of continuity between himself and all things, he was incarnating the self as a fertile and hospitable emptiness within which the things of the world could shine forth, and it was through these things that his sense of himself was founded…(1991: 99).

According to holistic discourse time is not a linear mathematical construct (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen 1997), but evolves from rhythms of harmony as well as chaos (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999). Thus holism is based on the same quantum principles that underlie an anarchic educational leadership discourse. Learners and teachers in a holistic discourse respond to time in a way that allows space for discontinuities and for work to co-exist with play (Nias 1993; Vandenberg 1997). Teaching practices also aim to balance intuition and emotion with logical rationality. This sanctions a focus on experience, creativity and spontaneity rather than the relentless application of intellectual rigour (Capra 1989). Like humanism, holism celebrates prior learning and seeks to integrate all forms of it with new learning tasks. Play is accepted as an aspect of learning that encourages the emergence of the creative self; it is closely related to experimentation, reflection, the realization of personal authenticity and the discovery of intrinsic truth (Winnicott 1971).

References to the importance of play and free time in the reviewed literature on commercial educational management discourse are so rare as to be effectively absent. Play relates to freedom and both are part of the experience of being human. Perhaps this is why nowadays staff integration initiatives in corporate environments often include activities such as drumming and adventure trails: the worth of play in terms of

encouraging lateral thinking, growing a corporate culture and fostering teamwork is fast becoming popularized.

Evidence exists of successful mergers between activities that are premised predominantly in holistic discourse and those which are premised more in commercial discourse: multinational companies like The Body Shop and share portfolio managers who invest their clients' money in green portfolios are two that come to mind. With regard to this synthesis in discourses of teaching and education, there is consensus in the reviewed literature that if academics and students are to be empowered to move forward with and within a commercialized context that is likely to persist (Morgan 2001; Rouse 1987), efficiency needs to be balanced with a joy of teaching and learning (Phillips & Pugh 1996; Walker 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994): "Students and supervisors should not only be pressured towards accountability; they should be helped to experience the full rewards and pleasures of scholarship and intellectual collaboration" (Hill, Acker & Black 1994: 71). Holistic educators reach for these goals.

**Conclusion**

This section commenced with an overview of structural and poststructural-postmodern thought and its influence on emergent research paradigms. This provides an historical backdrop against which to situate different forms of knowledge or discourses in the educational domain and contextualizes the exploration of the power relations that attend participants' experience of supervision. It also builds an epistemological framework for a later chapter, in which the methodology of this research is discussed. In keeping with Foucault's claim that we are the vehicles of the discourses that produce us, it is necessary to contextualize and discuss participants' experience of supervision in terms of the discourses that produce them as subjects. Early conversations with academics and their students indicated that they are all constructed to some extent by a discourse of commercial educational management. Accordingly, I introduced and developed the notion of the growing commercialization of education to show some of the ways (e.g. funding, publication), in which it positions students and supervisors in relation to one another and the educational domain. Attention was drawn to the dilemmas facing university managers and academics in balancing quality assurance and commercial interests against the needs and expectations of students and supervisors. To position this research in its local context,

comment was offered on the seven draft documents of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003). Some authors argue that academic freedom is adversely influenced by the commercialization of education and its counterpart, corporate managerialism, because these privilege the (dominant) discourses of science and technology and, by association, the measurable products of research. This debate was juxtaposed with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights on power relations, his notion that freedom exists everywhere, his reluctance to judge power relations and their outcomes as either good or bad and his view that all new or adapted forms of knowledge are appropriate to the conditions and contingencies that produce them.

After collecting the data and rereading and reflecting on them, I became aware of three additional discourses influencing participants' experience of supervision. These are anarchic educational leadership, humanism and holism. In order to prepare for an exploration of how Foucault's insights on power relations – particularly the re/production of knowledge and the constitution of different subjectivities – can be interwoven with these discourses and with participants' data, critical descriptions of some of the main tenets of the discourses were presented. It was noted that these discourses share many common features and that boundaries between them are permeable. Nonetheless, anarchic educational leadership, humanism and holism differ from and contest the values of a commercial educational management discourse in as far as they are more sensitized to human experience and give greater consideration to the importance of nurturing the people within educational systems.

The following section, in which the focus tapers from the broad context of the contemporary university to an examination of supervision practice, completes the investigation of factors relevant to the context of this research.

## 2.3 SUPERVISION PRACTICE

> …training begins in a setting of practice, where one has to balance values against constraints – in which one has to take action within a political context…(Greenfield 1993: 257)

This section opens with a general introduction to research and supervision entitled **Introducing research supervision.** Under the heading **The role of supervision and teaching in the will-to-knowledge** a dialogue is initiated between Foucault's theory on power relations and the values and constraints reflected in texts on research supervision. This prepares for the following sections in which Foucault's insights are used as lenses to view information from publications on managing the academic research supervision relationship. The sections are organized under headings consistent with constructs in the Power chapter: **The existence of inequalities**: **Autonomy–dependency**; **Strategies of power** (Sub-headings: Push-allow-pull; Communicating; Expecting; Reflecting; Respecting; Changing supervisors), **Individual and subject positions** (Sub-headings: Positioning students; Positioning supervisors; Supervisor-student matching), and **The constructing process** (Sub-headings: Professional care; Pastoral care).

### 2.3.1 Introducing research supervision

**About research:**

We conduct research to advance knowledge, to discover something we do not know, or to test something we *do* know. Research is both goal-driven and exploratory (Cryer 1997); it is a response to human curiosity. Foucault (1988) captures this poetically:

> …'curiosity' evokes for me…the care one takes of what exists and what might exist, a sharpened sense of reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing; a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental…(1988: 328).

The discovery process is a conspiracy of possibilities; it is exciting, frustrating, challenging, illuminating, perplexing, and often a heady mix of these. It requires tenacity, honesty and an open mind in the face of one of its fundamental features: it rarely goes according to plan (Cryer 1996). Although researchers need to plan, Burgess, Pole and Hockey find that sometimes "…predetermined research strategies…hinder rather than assist" (1994: 50) the research process. They stress that flexibility, perseverance and critical reflexion are important factors that help researchers to move through and beyond unanticipated difficulties.

Research is public and private, a product and a process. Measurable products such as books and journals enter the public domain, but some of the things researchers learn often remain private such as unreported findings that form a basis for further exploration, the acquisition of new skills and a greater understanding of oneself (Smith & Brown 1995). Some research projects have their genesis in extrinsically identified problems that are sanctioned (by funders or managers, for instance) as worthy of research. Others arise more subjectively or intrinsically from the personhood of the researcher. Foucault comments:

> …Whenever I have tried to carry out a piece of theoretical work, it has always been on the basis of my own experience, always in relation to processes I thought I could recognize in the things I saw, in the institutions with which I dealt, in my relations with others, cracks, silent shocks, malfunctionings…that I undertook a particular piece of work, a few fragments of autobiography…(1988: 156).

This research explores the interplay between participants' subjective (person-as-product) and objective (thesis-as-product) motivations and how the merger of these interface with their expectations of themselves, their research, their supervision relationships and university structures.

**About research supervision:**

> …Postgraduate supervision and research training is a core academic activity for most higher education institutions worldwide and is distinctive in that it provides the link between research and teaching and learning…(CHE 2003 7: 2).

Supervision means to oversee (Mouton 2001). In this regard, the supervision relationship not only scaffolds the professional and personal needs of the student, it is also a vital link

between the student, the academic community and the university system. There are a number of terms for the overseer or academic supervisor. North Americans use the term advisor; it implies consultation, mentorship, counselling, competency and equity. The German term doctor-father suggests nurturing, guidance and protection and emphasizes the power distance between students and supervisors. Irrespective of the nuances in meaning and the difference in approaches and worldviews that they suggest, there is consensus in the literature that the supervision relationship must be managed; it is too vital to leave to chance (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Wisker 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). In South Africa this is particularly pertinent in the light of statistics quoted by the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee:

- In recent years there has been a 10% decline in total published research outputs
- There has also been a decline in the South African share of world research output
- Only 6 universities are responsible for 65% of research outputs and for 70% of all Master's and Doctoral graduates in the system
- Master's and Doctoral enrolments as a proportion of total enrolments are far too low – 5.0% in 1995 and 5.7% in 1999
- Black students constitute only 30% of all Master's and Doctoral enrolments and women only 40%
  (CHE 2003 7: 2).

Cryer (1996) proposes two vital aspects to managing the supervision relationship. The first is professional. It urges students and supervisors to familiarize themselves with their rights and responsibilities as formally laid down by the university. She stresses that they need to negotiate these at the outset of their relationship. The second is interpersonal. It concerns "…treating one another as human beings who have strengths and weaknesses, personal satisfactions and disappointments, good days and bad days, just like everyone else" (1996: 59). With regard to the first aspect - institutional factors - South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's document recommends that rights and responsibilities should be communicated "…in the form of a supervision/learning contract" (CHE 2003 7: 6). At this stage the resources address only the initial stages of the professional research relationship and although the document targets supervisors and university managers, I suggest that supervision contracts should also be mutually negotiated with *students* and renegotiated according to the changing needs and circumstances of the supervisor, the student and the actual research. With regard to the second aspect - interpersonal factors - the CHE (2003 7) document does not refer to the

role of personal expectations. The personal nature of the supervision relationship is, according to much of what I have heard from academics and students during initial exploratory conversations, very often where the supervision relationship runs aground. I appreciate that research supervision is predominantly professional and thus to some extent generic and that the documents are formulated with this in mind. However, for resources so strongly embedded in humanistic discourse, I find the silence on the personal dimension of the relationship somewhat incongruent. The resources do recommend that adequate counselling services be provided for staff and students and it could be argued that this is enough. Nonetheless, it seems to me that by not drawing attention to the importance of personal expectations in the relationship, it is almost as if the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 3; CHE 2003 6: 4) model is not consistently followed through.

Supervision practices vary across individuals and disciplines and take many forms. Phillips & Pugh (1996) document some of the problems of joint supervision: a diffusion of responsibility, difficulty synchronizing conflicting aims and expectations, incompatible advice, and students who play supervisors off against each other. Unless there are regular three-way meetings of all parties, supervisors may lose an overall view of the project. In long-distance supervision (e.g. by e-mail), the lack of personal contact often exacerbates the invisible postgraduate student effect where students feel themselves to be isolated or unacknowledged (Cryer 1996, 1997; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). Common to the sciences are situations where students work on group projects and where they are often also employed as research assistants. Students and supervisors work closely together and problems commonly arise from their daily proximity to each other (Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997). One-on-one or individual supervision is common to the social sciences and the humanities. Students often research a self-generated topic and are independently funded. Normally the supervisor is the sole source of encouragement and guidance for the student, placing considerable demands on the relationship. It is for this reason that I have chosen individual supervision of student-generated research as my field of study.

Whittle asserts: "…the quality of supervision is one of the main factors which influence the quality of research theses and the ability of candidates to complete their degrees on time" (1994: 110). In the light of the commercialization of education and the demand for throughput, it becomes vital to identify ineffective supervision. Wisker offers a comprehensive list of the issues that contribute to less useful supervision practices:

…*Personality factors* (neglect by supervisor; clash of personalities; differences in approach to work; barriers to communication arising from age, class, race, gender)…

*Professional factors* (misinformed supervisor or one without sufficient knowledge in the area supervised; a supervisor with few genuine research interests, or interests that differ fundamentally from those of the student)…

*Organizational factors* (supervisor having too many students to supervise; too busy with administration; departmental facilities and arrangements that isolate the student; inadequate support services or equipment)…(2001: 33).

I found these categories useful when conceptualizing the research and designing interview questions.

Research into postgraduate supervision is often conducted by surveys. A survey by the University of Melbourne found that for students "…as in 1999, it was the overall *relationship* with a supervisor, or supervisors, that emerged as the single most important issue for most respondents" (2001: 4). Findings indicated that the most pressing issues were availability of supervisors, the quality of feedback and the amount of independence given to plan a project.

In another survey of students' perceptions of supervision, Hill, Acker and Black reported:

> …a high level of agreement amongst students on what constituted good supervision. Students valued interested feedback, constructive discussion, guidance, and suggestions about how to develop their research. A good tutorial was also one where students were made to feel that what they were doing was worthwhile…(1994: 63).

They also report: "…there were *no* totally negative responses; most balanced any difficulties they had encountered against what had been learned or gained from the experience" (1994: 67). This leads me to reflect on the generosity and resilience of their student participants and to wonder exactly what students learned or gained.

Surveys may be useful to identify problem areas, but they are unable to explore these in any depth. The University of Melbourne (2001) and the Hill, Acker and Black (1994) surveys focused on student opinions, but the experience of supervisors was not taken into account. Also, the surveys are interdisciplinary and cover all levels of postgraduate research, so findings are not grounded in a finely defined academic context. In addition

these survey findings may obscure the more subtle influence of pastoral support, a theme that recurs in all the reviewed literature and one that this research explores. Both surveys showed that student priorities were pragmatic and relevant to thesis-as-product. I propose that person-as-product also merits attention but is not easily accessed through survey questionnaires.

### 2.3.2 The role of supervision and teaching in the will-to-knowledge

In the light of Foucault's theory of power relations it seems necessary to offer some further insights on how knowledge, education and power may work together. Basing their work on Foucault's insights, Kendall and Wickham note: "…knowledge is…used to select some techniques of power over others and to implement the chosen techniques in the attempts to impose control or management on the objects concerned" (1994: 90). Herein lies the significance of values and constraints on practices (Greenfield 1993). For example, many of the available texts on academic supervision embody a managerial and commercial discourse and privilege practices that reflect the values embedded in this discourse. Literature discussed in the preceding chapter on the university domain as well as conversations with academics suggest that this discourse is becoming increasingly dominant in universities. From a Foucaultian viewpoint this development is a function of the will-to-knowledge cycle [31]. A pragmatic example from the literature grounds this concept in the context of research supervision:

> …it is generally accepted that the development of any skill requires cyclic repetition of 'receiving feedback on performance', 'reflecting on that feedback', and 'practising the skill again'. The more times the cycle is repeated, the greater the eventual proficiency…(Cryer 1998: 4).

[31] To recap briefly: what is sayable (knowledge that is sanctioned and institutionalized in written and spoken texts) interacts with people, contexts and contingencies to produce what is visible (made manifest). In the cyclic process of the will-to-knowledge, what is visible then feeds back into what is sayable so that existing forms of knowledge are reproduced, or new or adapted forms of knowledge are produced. In this way the sayable becomes reinforced or challenged by what is visible and vice versa.

Forms of knowledge examined in this thesis are *the university* as a literal institution, different *discourses* that are sanctioned and institutionalized by disciplines in the university domain, as well as the *identities or subject positions* that people assume or, more autonomously, choose.

Through repetition and hence greater proficiency the skill (a form of knowledge) reproduces or doubles on itself, so that the visible and manifest forms of it become entrenched. The entrenchment or naturalization of different paradigms or discourses works in the same way, but in this case the idea of *skills* being objects of knowledge is expanded and reformulated as *processes* and *practices* being productive of knowledge. Castells explains:

> …The concept of education must be distinguished from skills. Skills can be quickly made obsolete by technological and organizational change. Education (as distinct from the warehousing of children and students) is a process by which people, that is labour, acquire the capability constantly to redefine the necessary skills for a given task, and to access the sources for learning these skills. Whoever is educated…can reprogram him/herself toward the endlessly changing tasks of the production process (1998: 361).

Thus education teaches people how to *transform* skills and themselves in response to constantly changing requirements in the workplace. When "sources for learning" (*ibid.*) change, processes and practices do so too; as discourses rise and fall in dominance new paradigms become naturalized, new knowledge is produced and people's subjectivity is constructed in different ways. Thus the flexibility and self-programmability (*ibid*.) of people remains constrained to the extent that they are subjects of rules of (new or increasingly influential) discourses. Rouse notes:

> …In Foucault's opinion, we cannot fully separate the existence of an object of knowledge from the various practices through which we encounter and deal with it, perhaps especially from the forms of constraint through which it is simultaneously enabled and compelled to show itself in specific ways…(1987: 216).

In the context of this thesis, "forms of constraint" (*ibid*.) are practices associated with assessment, surveillance, quality assurance, reward systems and funding policies. I am interested in exploring how these may impact at the micro-level of supervisors and students in supervision relationships.

According to Foucault (1988) there is a personal thrust to all knowing - in a sense, we become what we learn and know so that the only way to interrupt the will-to-knowledge cycle is to take personal responsibility for awakening to unexamined assumptions and

reflecting on them. The outcomes of strategies of power cannot be accurately predicted [32], but alternatives include reproducing forms of knowledge, integrating them or revolting against and changing them. Foucault refers to revolt as "…the insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (1980: 82). Subjugated knowledges are "…those blocs of knowledge that were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systemizing theory and…which insurrect…the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of organized scientific discourse" (*ibid*.: 83-84). Reflection and criticism "…emancipate knowledges from subjection…[and] detach the power of truth from the forms of hegemony…social, economic and cultural…within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault 1988: 133).

The concept of revolt seems to me to combine cognitive realizations with will and emotion, and more specifically, with passion. The connection between will and passion is commonly recognized and it is not unusual to find these concepts linked to ideas about learning and teaching. The beliefs and worldviews of teachers influence what will become known; teachers mould, form, inspire or perhaps even repel us. Teachers who are passionate about and congruent with their teachings are particularly powerful in promoting their vision of truth. A passionate and dedicated teacher constructed by a scientific discourse may strongly influence students to reproduce this discourse including the quality of its rationality and the goals towards which it is directed: extrinsic, objective and utilizable products of knowledge. A passionate and dedicated teacher constructed by a humanistic discourse and who believes that "…education which has no consequences for social action or personal growth is empty" (Morris 1972: 218), may be equally powerful in urging students to intrinsic growth and a tolerance towards subjective and tentatively formulated interpretations of reality; here utilitarian pragmatism is expanded to include personal growth as a valid and valuable outcome. Although different research discourses produce different ways of teaching, teaching practices are not finally determined by will, passion or the discourses which educators consciously or unconsciously favour. As Kendall and Wickham point out: "…teachers' resistance to particular methods, and the acquisition of their own idiosyncratic tactics as a result of experience at the 'chalk face', produce a series of heterogeneous practices which exhibit relative autonomy" (1999: 126).

[32] As discussed in the *Power* chapter, Foucault is firm on this point. It ties into his idea of contingency and his insistence that freedom exists everywhere.

Although one of the main functions of teaching is to train individuals to take up particular positions in society (Foucault 1988), it sometimes happens that the positions, roles and subjectivities or identities into which we are trained, either directly or through the slow and insidious processes of conditioning, are incongruent with who we are or how we want to be. It becomes imperative, then, to examine discomfort, to find new roles and identities - new ways of being - so that we can produce and promote forms of knowledge that are more closely aligned to our sense of personal integrity and authenticity. Some academics have created supervision styles that counter their own experiences of being supervised and would probably relate to Nias's claim: "…to produce creatively, it is necessary not only to transcend the old, but to accept responsibility for its dissolution…learning anything that is new to the world must involve some unlearning" (1993: 45 & 81).

Learning and unlearning are integral to research and, by association, to the research supervision relationship. The learning-unlearning process is related to autonomy-dependency. When we are learning, we are dependent on what we already know and on the forms of knowledge that are being consciously or unconsciously appropriated in the present. When we are unlearning, we are challenging those forms of knowledge and becoming more autonomous in relation to them. I propose that it is in the resistance between the polarities of autonomy and dependency that power relationships between supervisors and their students function. Power relations are at the fulcrum between the old and the new; they initiate new cycles of the will-to-knowledge. Under the headings that follow: **The existence of inequalities: autonomy and dependency**, **Strategies of power**, **Individual and subject positioning** and **The process of constructing**, I draw on relevant information in the reviewed supervision literature to show the ways in which this cycle develops.

### 2.3.3 The existence of inequalities: Autonomy – dependency

Common to all academic supervisory relationships is an unequal power differential between supervisors and students in terms of skill, experience and authority (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). The term

authority has two meanings: the supervisor is "in" authority in as far as he or she represents the university, and also "an" authority in terms of expertise (Peters in Nias 1993). In addition there is sometimes confusion either in the student's or the supervisor's mind as to which forms of academic authority are legitimate (Grant & Graham 1994). This raises ethical dilemmas, particularly for subjects [33] who have learned that obedience is a virtue. Students are advised: "…don't be steamrollered into something…irrelevant to your project but topical to them" (Wisker 2001: 35). Counsel is also offered to supervisors: "…one should not aim to establish anti-authoritarian attitudes, but rather to encourage each student to become an authority in his own right" (Nias 1993: 40).

The autonomy-dependency dilemma often shows itself in supervisors' uncertainty regarding how much guidance and feedback to offer their students. Students come from different worldviews and educational backgrounds and bring different levels of competence, ability, motivation and styles of working to the supervision relationship. All these factors influence the degree of support students require. Whether students are or are not accustomed to the shared values, norms and behaviours of traditional academic discourse, undertaking postgraduate study should offer them access into the academic arena. As Grant and Graham note: "…supervisors are potentially in the position of luminaries who point out a path (more or less clearly) via which students may enter this elite – and judge whether those students are worthy of entry. It is a position of great power" (1994: 175). The South African government's educational restructuring initiative aims to make it easier for students from historically disadvantaged educational backgrounds to gain entry into the discourses and thus echelons of the academy and thus for the country to increase cohorts of academics who reflect more equitably the racial demographics of the country. Translating government policy into three guiding principles: fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation (see p. 65), the recommendations of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003) go some way to de-mystifying (for academics) how this is to be achieved. The documents indicate that it is, as Grant and Graham (*ibid*.) declare, essentially through the input of *individual* teachers and supervisors that entry into the academy will be secured. Ultimately the *effectiveness* -

[33] To recap: subject is the term Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) uses to denote a person or individual who is positioned, targeted and subjected to the values, language and ways of being relevant to a specific discourse (educational, political, social, etc.). I use the term person or individual to denote when people marshal free choice to resist such construction.

in both a professional and a personal sense - of postgraduates at exit-level will depend on the degree to which their own supervisors engage with and support transformation and are willing and able (and remunerated?) to do the work to achieve this.

Students commonly feel unsure of their academic ability and their capacity to create, particularly original work. In many ways they are dependent on their supervisors whom they sometimes see as being all-powerful. If one of the goals of research supervision is to lead students towards academic independence, to reach this objective professional guidance may need to be supplemented with pastoral care. Clegg and Gall acknowledge this: "…problems in [students'] progress often stem as much from problems in their personal life as from academic issues" (1998: 327). This is a somewhat contentious issue:

> …the notion that supervision is a *relationship* has been contested within the academy…[Robert Brown's findings]…[are] supported by our experience of working with university staff who, at times, vehemently contest the use of that word in connection with supervision, insisting that it is an academic matter only…(Grant & Graham 1994: 166).

Resistance to the use of the term relationship to denote the supervision alliance may be a denial or at least an avoidance of the personal needs of students. Perhaps this resistance arises partly from the fact that supervisors and students are differently positioned in terms of the centrality of the work to their lives (Grant & Graham 1994). Many educators endeavour to develop intrinsic and extrinsic qualities in their learners; they guide the whole person. However, supervisors nowadays are working in a pressured commercialized context that is likely to persist and sustaining a balance between dual professional and pastoral supervisory roles can be a tricky tensioning act.

Grant and Graham note: "...supervision can be a great source of motivation…or cause for loss of motivation" (1994:166). In contrast, Mouton argues that the student is responsible for maintaining an interest in and commitment to the research and that the supervisor is there "…merely to provide support (both intellectual and emotional) when the student encounters specific obstacles and problems" (2001: 21). It seems to me that intellectual and emotional support are closely linked to commitment and motivation, and it could be argued that Mouton's argument is contradictory. Perhaps this illustrates contradictions arising out of the autonomy-dependency dilemma that faces almost all supervisors as they

try to decide exactly what and how much they should give to their research students. This research explores the ways in which three research supervisors manage this balancing act.

Postgraduate studies are often a student's first experience of working at a high level of independence and this level increases proportionately as he or she moves from an Honours to a Master's and finally to a PhD degree. The quantity of guidance given also differs in each student-supervisor partnership (Cryer 1997) so that supervisors need to balance a student's specific needs against the consideration that ultimately he or she will have to demonstrate "independence and mastery" (Moses 1994: 13). This may be especially difficult for new supervisors who "…tend to put in more time, effort and guidance than their more experienced counterparts…which can delay or even prevent students' transition to independence" (Cryer 1997: 5). In this regard the research of Lessing and Schultze found: "…experienced supervisors were much more aware of the nature of the criticism they gave whereas the inexperienced group did not seem to have considered this aspect at all" (2003: 179). Cryer makes a perceptive remark regarding overly dependent students: "…belonging to a community, being cared for by a professional, etc…can make [them] not want to get on with the next stage of their lives" (1996: 174).

Nias (1993) proposes that the authority-dependency dilemma is at the heart of difficulties experienced in teaching and learning. Not only does a supervisor who is too controlling prevent students from becoming independent, he or she also inhibits their creativity, their capacity to judge critically and to use new information astutely (*ibid*.). This deprives students of the joy of making and owning their own discoveries. Morris offers a humanist perspective of teaching when he reflects:

> …a teacher who teaches as if he did not know the answers…brings students personally into the act of learning…A learner is…autonomous when it comes to deciding what…knowledge means, and how it fits into a life being lived in this hour by this person. He [or she] is the only agent in the educative process who is in a position to convert knowledge into meaning…(1972: 216-218).

In a South African context, teaching may have to be much more directive than Morris suggests, particularly in the case of students from previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds who may not share a culture of questioning and the transformation, as opposed to presentation, of knowledge. Writing is a means whereby this can be addressed. I discuss this aspect of supervision shortly. In terms of converting knowledge into

meaning, supervisors are advised to encourage students to greater independence by offering them some insight into the process of self-criticism; they should share how they, as academics and supervisors, have learned to evaluate and take responsibility for their own work (Cryer 1996). This widens the focus and goal of supervision to include guidance on both the product of research and the process of doing it. Greene aptly captures the motivation behind this calibre of supervision: "…central to the effort may be the struggle for personal responsibility, the kind of responsibility that still provokes others to seek their own freedom, to take responsibility for themselves" (in Vandenberg 1997: 177).

Most of the supervision management texts reviewed urge supervisors to discuss issues of autonomy and dependency with their students and to negotiate the amount and degree of guidance they are prepared to offer. In the absence of negotiation

> …the general advice seems to be that the amount of work which supervisors do for their students should be a matter of what they can justify with their own consciences and not exceed what would be judged as acceptable if called into question by other members of the academic community…(Cryer 1997: 7).

Reviewed literature and conversations with numerous academic teachers suggest that one of the most important non-negotiable aspects of effective teaching and the means whereby *intrinsic* surveillance, assessment and the nurturing of personal autonomy and responsibility may be encouraged, is to teach students critical reflexivity: "…to constantly question and methodically distrust" (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 248) the theoretical assumptions on which they base research decisions. This mindfulness can alert them to the connection between knowledge and power and the dynamics between themselves, their subject matter and their contexts.

### 2.3.4 Strategies of power relations

According to Foucault: "…we can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy" (1988: 23). As a basis for exploring participants' data I discuss here a *few* strategies: communicating, expecting, reflecting, respecting and changing a supervisor. These strategies fall into the three categories of push, pull and allow (described on page 98).

#### 2.3.4.1 Push-allow-pull

According to Foucault a degree of resistance exists in every power relationship. In the Power chapter I proposed that autonomy and dependency between students, their supervisors and their contexts are kept in a continual state of flux through the functioning of strategies of resistance and that these fall into three broad categories: push, allow and pull. I conceptualized these categories in order to have some way of speaking about *concrete manifestations* of resistance and varying degrees of it. As with almost any conceptual scheme, the categories do not convey the uniqueness and fluidity of relations in reality. In this regard *push, allow and pull work in conjunction with one another as aspects of one whole, intricate and interrelated dynamic.* I emphasize that when discussing participants' data in terms of these categories, I do not judge strategies or categories as right or wrong, good or bad. I aim only to explore how they may work in specific contexts to produce conditions in which different forms of knowledge arise and, in turn, how these adapted forms of knowledge generate new resistance strategies. The forms of knowledge I examine are person-as-product and thesis-as-product. I also examine how a combination of these impacts on the production of knowledge in the university and wider educational domains.

As Gordon observes, strategies of resistance are "…a warren of minute, individual autonomous tactics…which counter and inflect the visible factors of overall domination" (in Foucault 1988: 257). As will be seen in the discussion chapter, each participant uses resistance strategies in a way that is unique to him or her. Accordingly, I offer here only a few generic examples of different strategies to show how they *could* be organized into the categories of push, pull and allow. The examples derive from my interpretation of material in texts on supervising and conducting academic research (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Wisker 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994).

Push may be seen as unfair criticism, telling, questioning, rejecting, ordering and controlling. Examples of pull may be avoiding, hiding behind technical details, delaying reading work, repeatedly cancelling appointments, questioning, silence and neglecting.

Allow may work through listening, questioning, letting-go, accommodating, collaborating and, significantly, negotiating in a way that respects the values, goals and boundaries of self and others. Allocating strategies to categories as I have done above is simplistic, which is why I precede each example with the phrase "may be". Depending on the person, context and conditions of any strategy - and of course the subjective perception of the researcher - it could be interpreted as push, pull *or* allow. For example, I propose that push, allow and pull all include questioning as a strategy. Questioning may be a function of allow, for instance, but it could be used in a way that associates it more closely with the notions of pull or of push. An illustration of the latter case would be when questioning serves to push students to align themselves with arguments with which they disagree, but which their supervisors favour. Wisker (2001: 35) refers to this as steamrollering. It is also possible for strategies to combine and for different degrees of push, pull and allow to exist in the same interchange. For instance, pushing students to question the arguments they encounter in texts may encourage them to pull from their own resources.

To illustrate nuances in how the strategy of support may work: on a continuum between push and pull, I have conceptualized support as a strategy of collaboration that inclines towards the middle way and thus, to allow. But this fails to address the questions: support for whom and for what? Like any power strategy, collaboration can have many different faces. The motivations that lie behind collaboration will depend on who stands to gain. It is possible, for instance, to collaborate with an opponent when you see that his or her actions will lead to his or her downfall - if this is your motivation, the term collaboration has different connotations to the way in which I am conceptualizing it here. Another possible meaning of the term support as derived from the discourse of systemic family therapy proposes that to some degree family members collaborate in and support the perpetuation of overt/covert and painful patterns of interpersonal interaction because these serve to maintain the cohesion of the family as a unit (Becvar & Becvar 1996).

These examples illustrate how the different lenses through which we look at the world will influence what we see. Although I strive to be vigilant of the lenses through which I view the world, my interpretations of participants' strategies in terms of push, allow and pull are subjective and likely to be coloured by the psychological theories that are an integral part of my academic training. With regard to assumptions and the quest for neutrality, it could be argued that the conceptual scheme of push-allow-pull is perhaps too open to arbitrary

interpretation and thus, manipulation. On the other hand, its openness may be an advantage: the constructs of push, allow and pull are neutral enough to enable the reader to develop his or her own understanding of how and why they operate in participants' supervision relationships and to bring his or her understanding into a dialogue with my interpretations. As Kvale notes: "…It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations and to arbitrate between them" (1996: 245).

#### 2.3.4.2 Communicating

In the supervision relationship conflicts and disagreements are common. When these lead to unexplored or unexpressed misunderstandings, power relationships become power struggles. The overt and covert strategies that are then employed to redress the imbalance may prevent the work from moving forward. Silence and avoidance are apposite examples of strategies that potentially stand in the way of communication. Problems can arise for myriad reasons, but it is generally agreed that it is possible to work through pressing problems by keeping channels of communication clear and open (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Wisker 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). As Grant and Graham stress: "…if many supervision problems are to be avoided, good communication – based on mutual respect and leading to mutual trust – is essential" (1994: 168).

Phillips and Pugh find: "…there is usually a difference between what supervisors actually do and what their students believe them to have done" (1996: 103). It seems to me that there may also often be a difference between what students actually do and what their supervisors believe them to have done. Misperceptions such as this commonly arise from a lack of communication regarding expectations, needs, goals and the actions that arise from them (*ibid*.). Students' approaches to their studies are likely to be influenced by what they want: a job, skills development [34] or status. Perhaps they simply have an

[34] In her publication entitled *Developing postgraduates' key skills*, Pat Cryer (1998) discusses the advantages of raising student awareness of the diverse skills they acquire during the course of their registration. She urges supervisors to pay attention to this often ignored aspect of the supervision role and accounts for ways …continued on next page

interest in a problem or a love of the intellectual pursuit. The underlying value of the research for the student is rarely discussed with the supervisor (*ibid*.) and consequently each may reach for a different dream.

Denicolo and Pope offer advice congruent with a humanistic, holistic, narrative research approach that emphasizes the centrality of personal stories and their impact on the research *process*:

> …it is not sufficient to pay lip-service to the need to understand the perspectives of students. A systematic attempt throughout the period of registration to address…personal concerns is required…the emphasis should be on the responsibility of the research supervisor to recognize that conversations with their supervisees regarding…personal issues are a legitimate focus of attention…[These] allow free expression of these lived experiences…(1994: 128).

Informal conversations are recommended as a way of building foundations for getting to know one another and to ease the process of negotiating expectations, wants and needs: "…the more frequent the meetings, the more casual they are likely to be, helping to create a climate for discussion" (Phillips & Pugh 1996: 97). Some students have little idea of the different stages through which their research and *they* will go. If they are offered information on the research process, at least they have some idea of how the work may unfold and how moods and motivation can fluctuate. Having been there before, supervisors generally know that research involves "…keeping…momentum up and understanding how that momentum will change and why it changes" (Clegg & Gall 1998: 330). Sadly, it is not common practice to share this knowledge with students; as Phillips and Pugh have found, few supervisors talk to students about "…anything relating to the *process* of doing a research degree" (1996: 89).

#### 2.3.4.3 Expecting

Supervisor respondents in the research of Lessing and Schultze reported that students "…underestimated the requirements of postgraduate research" (2003: 180) and thus have "unrealistic expectations" of both their supervisors and themselves (*ibid*.). They suggest

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in which skills awareness can benefit how students and the university system are perceived by themselves and the corporate world.

that supervisors "…need to develop their own individual ground plan…[which] should be presented to students in a written format at the start of the research" (*ibid*.) and that this ground plan should include information on departmental and institutional expectations. Research conducted by Grant and Graham concurs: "…many students do not know (and often neither do their supervisors) their department's expectations, nor their rights and privileges" (1994: 169).

> …frequently the underlying issue in breakdown of supervision was an initial lack of clarification of mutual expectations and responsibilities…this process of negotiation often does not take place: perhaps supervisors are too busy to think of it, or, often being people of good will, think it is unnecessary, and we know students are frequently too timid to initiate it…(*ibid*.: 168-169).

They designed a set of guidelines as a basis to initiate open discussion between students and supervisors. Using role-play they trained a group of students in strategies of communication to prepare them for when they tabled the proposed guidelines early on in the supervision process. The supervisors were also prepared by means of a letter explaining the motivations and potential advantages of the project. Students showed

> …a range of reactions…most common is unwillingness to go to a supervisor and put the document on the table for negotiation – many students feel this to be an inappropriate behaviour, one which risks the supervisor's disfavour and thus prejudices the success of the supervision of their thesis…(Grant & Graham 1994: 169).

Despite the skilling sessions most students remained ambivalent and although they liked the idea and the content of the negotiation outlines, only one third of the group implemented them. Some supervisors initiated the implementation to the surprise and relief of the students, but some supervisors brushed it off. Students reported positive and negative effects of raising it. Different students used different power strategies; some avoided using it while some used it to evaluate the openness of supervisors and to inform their choice of with whom they would like to work. A positive spin-off of the project was that students reported that it raised their awareness of important issues; this had a cumulative effect because they passed the guidelines on to other students.

#### 2.3.4.4 Reflecting

For channels of communication to remain open, minds must be open. An open mind is one that turns itself upon "the self" in order to examine assumptions, emotions and motivations and thereby come to new understandings and ways of being (Bleicher 1982). This is the reward of reflexion: "…becoming an observer of your own thinking and action" (Senge *et al.* 1994: 60). Reflexion is the strategy that Foucault (1979, 1980, 1982, 1988, 1996) urges us to practise in order to reach personal freedom and authenticity. Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) encourages it as an avenue to theoretical and methodological clarity.

"Theoretical reflection forces one to be accountable, subjects one's views and actions to the criticism and discussion of others, and thus leads to new perspectives and self-understandings" (Van Manen in Vandenberg 1997: 47). If it is accepted that research involves the whole person and not only the thesis-as-product, it seems to me that "new perspectives and self-understandings" (*ibid*.) may benefit from a combination of theoretical reflexion and the calibre of self-reflexion that aims to question unexplored assumptions (Bourdieu 1987). The problem with Van Manen's statement: "…theoretical reflection forces one to be accountable" (in Vandenberg 1997: 47) is that nowadays "accountability" has expanded beyond the boundaries of individual integrity or the evaluation of selected peers: when the insights of reflexion are opened to *formal* surveillance, assessment and feedback, reflexion as a practice can be subverted and perhaps even institutionalize subterfuge (see p. 79). In this regard Foucault asks: "How is the reflexivity of the subject and the discourse of truth linked?" (1988: 38). From a Foucaultian perspective the link between discourse and truth also relates to *how* the pastoral discourse functions. I discuss this shortly (see p. 120). In the Discussion (chapter four) I also explore Foucault's (1988: 38) question in relation to participants, but offer an example from the literature here. One of the pieces of advice that Cryer offers in her publications on managing common dilemmas in supervision is that students and supervisors need to accept that "…certain emotions are normal…it is counter-productive to let them show, and the chances are that when you calm down, you will realize that they were unjustified anyway…so if it is necessary, mask negative emotions" (1996: 66-67). She counsels students to show gratitude and interest in any feedback and that "…only

when you have taken time to consider can you decide how much to accept, reject or adapt" (*ibid.*). Taking time to reflect before responding is sound advice, but it does not account for spontaneous responses and emotions that *are* justified. I propose that it is sometimes appropriate to articulate and perhaps even show spontaneous emotion and that if students and supervisors adapt by repeating a strategy of masking, it can serve to perpetuate the behaviours and situations from which their thoughts and feelings arose in the first place. Masking may be one of the ways that inequitable practices such as gender, race or age discrimination continue unchallenged. These issues are sedimented in layers of denial and expedient actions that eventually accumulate into the unexplored assumptions of our worldviews.[35] Strategies of power have unpredictable outcomes and in this case masking may distance the student from his or her sense of personal authenticity.

On a subtler note, when Foucault counsels vigilance of the nexus between truth and reflexivity, he is urging us to examine the discourses and reveal the values that underpin *the ways* in which we *exercise* reflexivity. The outcome of such meta-reflexivity is not to free ourselves from the influence of discourse - in this sense we are perhaps never truly free - his point is that unthinking or incompletely thought-*through* compliance can be replaced by choice.

South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee offers a four-fold interpretation of transformation as political change, economic change, social change and transformational learning, which are linked in such a way as to make each indispensable to the other. The recommended best practice for implementing meaningful change in terms of "capacity development" (CHE 2003: 2) and "quality promotion" (*ibid*.) is reflexion. This is in keeping with the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003: 3) approach to teaching and learning on which the seven draft documents are based. The theory underlying this approach "…advocates the development of professional educators who can learn from their teaching practice, engage with educational theory and use self-evaluation to improve professionally" (*ibid*.). The link between theory, practice and the rise of the "savant" (Foucault 1980b: 126) or "specific intellectual" (*ibid*.) has already been discussed (see p. 55). Here I focus more on the ideas behind transformational learning as defined by

[35] I realize that arguing a case for showing emotion is based on assumptions that are rooted in psychology discourse.

Ramsden: "…learning is a qualitative change in a person's view of reality; it involves conceptual change on the part of the learner" (in CHE 2003: 7). Tharp and Gallimore offer this definition: "…learning is the internalization and transformation of social tools of thought which are communicated to the learner through social interaction and instructional conversation" (*ibid*.). The CHE (2003: 8) documents translate these ideas into strategies specific to this practice and which specifically target teachers, who can then represent:

> …tasks to students in such a way that their epistemic character, which is usually implicit or covert, is heightened or made salient…In terms of this approach the locus of the problem which must be overcome, is neither the learner nor the teacher; rather our attention should be focused on innovation within the curriculum and the mediated interaction which occurs between learner and task…(Bradbury in CHE 2003: 8).

This is congruent with systemic thought and particularly with the concept of cybernetics (see p. 44), which regards problems as arising out of relationships and not localized exclusively in people (Becvar & Becvar 1996). Thus changing power relations between people becomes a way to change their *contexts.* Ultimately this influences people *in* contexts. The "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) recommend that students can be brought to understand and work with academic discourse and within the *academy's* discourse when teachers use the following strategies:

- Making clear to students the purposes and outcomes of the learning task
- Achieving 'curriculum alignment' – *i.e*. the learning outcomes are used to determine how to teach and how to assess
- Developing an appropriate motivational context so that the learning is meaningful to students
- Creating powerful learning environments which focus on learner activity, interaction, variation in task demand and the application of knowledge to real world problems in order to facilitate the building of cognitive structure
- Providing opportunities for learners to test, extend, reflect on and revise their ideas through performances of understanding
- Modeling the discursive conventions and epistemic principles of the discipline and making explicit 'the rules of the game'
- Facilitating the development of cognitive structure by 'lending' learners one's own conceptual anchors, cognitive structure and strategies to assist their thinking and acting
- Questioning to prompt learners to undertake cognitive operations that they would not produce unassisted
- Getting students to make connections with previous knowledge and maximizing their awareness of their own knowledge construction
- Assisting students to build meta-cognitive knowledge about their own thinking processes, approaches to learning and learning needs
- Changing students' ways of seeing and thinking about the world (*ibid*.: 8).

I have included all the descriptors because, although at first glance it would seem that many of the strategies may be redundant to supervision of postgraduate research, the strategies work together to address one of the most challenging tasks facing South African academics nowadays: supervising students from previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds whose learning experiences may not have familiarized them with the processes and practices of critical thinking. In this regard, the CHE (*ibid*.) strategies - power relations - work in the gap between process and product; they aim to shift perceptions of and responses to reality and so to transform knowledge.

#### 2.3.4.5 Respecting

Misunderstandings may just as easily be rooted in pragmatic problems with the research (methodology, grammatical style, argument, etc) as in the clashing of personal styles. All the revised texts on supervision mention what could be termed as helpful strategies. Some relate to mainly professional concerns, such as honesty (ethical research behaviour, not plagiarizing, disclosing what has and has not been done), drawing up a research contract, initiating and maintaining contact, giving prompt feedback, offering criticism in a constructive way, respecting boundaries in terms of privacy and space, remaining courteous and so forth. Some strategies address more personal issues such as tolerance, giving due credit, respecting personal boundaries (e.g. no sexual advances) and refraining from emotional and intellectual abuse. Cryer mentions another aspect of the need to understand and respect differences:

> …supervisors also need to be alert to different cultural norms: students showing rudeness or sullenness…might come from cultures where it is considered good manners to be self-effacing and to defer to authority figures…try to see [these] occurrences as potential misunderstandings…(1997: 16).

Regarding respect and power strategies, push and pull may be employed in a respectful manner, but as I interpret it, allow is a strategy that has respect built into it. Allow is more a state of mind and being than a strategy: a deeply embedded ethic of tolerance and open-mindedness that is grounded in everyday practice. Allow is the defining intentionality underlying empathy – the ability to put oneself in the position of the other person. In practice empathy gives rise to compassionate action: the attitude toward self and the so-called other which negotiates and collaborates in a way that seeks to do no harm and to

minimize suffering and which gives due credit to one's sense of self-in-the-world while recognizing and *accommodating* ways of being that are constructed by different ethics, even ethics that are experienced as personally distasteful (Balsekar 1992).

#### 2.3.4.6 Changing a supervisor

As a strategy of power, perhaps one that could be avoided with clear communication of expectations, wants and needs at the outset of the supervision relationship, some students resort to changing their supervisor. Denial of problems or an informal acknowledgement of problems becomes a formal declaration of them: "…whatever the validity of appeals, they are stressful, time-consuming and usually public; and sadly in the eyes of the world, 'mud sticks', even to innocent parties" (Cryer 1996: 69). Phillips and Pugh remark: "…a change of supervisors is the academic equivalent of getting a divorce" (1996: 106). Perhaps this is why so many supervisors and students soldier on in (sometimes mutually) dissatisfying relationships? Members of a U.K. National Postgraduate Committee wryly affirm this: "When a supervisor accepts a student, whatever the formal rules may be, both have entered into an implied moral contract which lasts until one of the three – supervisor, student, or research undertaking – expires" (in Cryer 1996: 58).

### 2.3.5 Individual and subject positions

In the section entitled Power, I introduced Foucault's insights on how individuals are targeted and positioned by discourses within specific domains (see p 30). The supervision literature offers many examples of the way in which supervisors and students are targeted and positioned within educational discourses. These discourses construct roles with prescribed tasks and duties in relation to which the actions of students and supervisors can then be assessed. This sub-section focuses on these recommended tasks and duties. I argue that individual and institutional roles and personal and professional identities are intricately interwoven. Individuals become assigned relevant roles in the institutional domain and are assessed as more or less useful *subjects* in it. In turn, students and supervisors assign roles to one another in an *interpersonal* dimension. These roles also

position them in relation to one another as desirable or less desirable subjects, or more autonomously as desirable or less desirable individuals [36].

#### 2.3.5.1 Positioning students

"There is little doubt that the power relations in supervision tend to be seen by many students as uneven and relatively fixed…they worry about their supervisor's perception of them and how this might affect the supervision" (Grant & Graham 1994: 173). Most supervisors agree that the ideal student should be: "…intelligent…well-informed about the area of research interest…[and show] independence, perseverance, enthusiastic curiosity, and an energetic and systematic application to the work in hand" (*ibid.*). Hill, Acker and Black found: "…persistence and reliability were more important than sheer intellectual brilliance" (1994: 66). Denicolo and Pope (1994) argue that most of the qualities of the good student that appear in the supervision literature are predictable and offer little space and consideration for "unique traits". This argument highlights how problematic it may be for the individual (particularly the unconventional one) to fit in with sanctioned, normative and thus acceptable ways of being; it points to the capacity of the sayable to banish whatever is irreverent, challenging and unpredictable.

Pope and Denicolo designed research aimed at developing "…some understanding of the personal models the client/postgraduate student is currently using to impose meaning on the world" (1994: 121). They hoped that the act of identifying the life experiences that led them to becoming research students and telling their stories would help students to "…clarify [their] thoughts, recognize the significance of the power of these thoughts and form the basis for reflection about potential avenues for change" (*ibid.*). The research was designed using a combination of concepts from personal construct psychology, a narrative approach and methodological tools such as self-characterization sketches, snake diagrams and grids of role relationships. Research findings report that the students found it

[36] To illustrate, I quote an amusing reflection from a student who was interviewed by Delamont, Atkinson and Parry: "Four tutors have supervised my study. Supervisor No. 1 left to take up an appointment overseas after one year. Supervisor No. 2 left to take up an appointment elsewhere after one year. Both were extremely busy men. As a part-time student I was loath to take up their time. When writing or telephoning for infrequent appointments I seemed to be in rather the same position as a National Health hypochondriac with ingrowing toenails pestering a neurosurgeon. I'm sure the supervisors did not intend it to be so" (1997: 19).

"illuminating" (*ibid*.). It brought into consciousness the links between their roles as researchers and their other professional and personal roles. They realized the cost of their postgraduate studies to personal relationships which are potentially put at risk, neglected or lost. It raised their awareness of "…the consequent feelings of guilt; the pressures of conflicting duties or distractions and the anger that this can generate in self and others" (*ibid*.). It was established that

> …some supervisors are able and willing…to provide professionally skilled support, others are sometimes unprepared [untrained, inexperienced, unskilled]…and others…are unwilling…[they] justify taking a more distanced stance by demonstrating that their institution engaged them for academic – not personal – support for their students…(Pope & Denicolo 1994: 126).

I include this description of Pope and Denicolo's (*ibid*.) research as a basis to discuss the reflections of participants on the impact of their research on their professional and personal ways of being. I also relate Pope and Denicolo's (*ibid.*) statement above to the willingness or ability of participant supervisors to give their students pastoral support.

#### 2.3.5.2 Positioning supervisors

The reviewed literature frequently identifies and positions the good supervisor. Mouton observes: "Good supervisors are, more often than not, also good scholars" (2001: 11). The research of Lessing and Schultze found that "…some staff members do not have the ability or interest to be competent supervisors" (2003: 181). They found that students' lack of knowledge in research methods was "…exacerbated by the fact that many supervisors themselves lacked knowledge and expertise in research methods" (*ibid*.: 178), and suggest that mechanisms be introduced to improve supervision practices. Such mechanisms are being formulated by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee: its strategies for improving critical thinking (CHE 2003: 9) discussed earlier (see p. 104), when combined with recommended staff development strategies (*ibid*. 6: 1-12), seek to address cases where supervisors are *not* good scholars. Mouton continues to say that a supervisor should have "…a good track record as a scholar or scientist in a particular field of expertise…be experienced in supervisory practices…show interest in [the] research topic and the envisaged studies…[and] have sufficient time available for supervision" (2001: 20). Clegg and Gall capture the importance of supervisors having

acquired research experience when they say: "…Crucially…you have to have been there before" (1998: 350). The unfortunate aspect of having been there before is the possibility that cohorts of academic supervisors may be reproducing supervision strategies that are ineffective. The fortunate aspects of supervisors' earlier experiences are that they may reproduce effective strategies or develop new and more effective ways of supervising that seek to counter their own negative experiences. I expand on this shortly.

Most of the reviewed texts not only position supervisors in terms of professional and personal qualities, but also link these to specific roles. Mouton (2001) identifies four different supervision roles: advisor (managing the intellectual and research aims of the project); guide (assisting the student through the research process); quality controller (evaluating the product and giving constructive criticism), and pastor (offering emotional support). Wisker and Brown (2001) identify the roles of bureaucrat, initiator, expert, mentor, innovator, friendly helper, motivator, stern critic, evaluator and judge.

One of the roles identified by Burgess (1994) and Clegg and Gall (1998) depicts the supervisor as a parent. Research done by Clegg and Gall found that the supervisor-parent relates to the student "…along a continuum ranging from supportive, nurturing figure to a controlling, critical taskmaster…[who] provides both a caring environment to allow the student to develop new skills and, in most cases, a disciplining framework to keep the student 'on target'" (1998: 326-327). According to the interviewees, tasks along this continuum of parenting ranged between "jollying them along" (*ibid*.) to "kicking them up the backside" (*ibid*.). Other roles were supervisor as a resource, supervisor as a source and supervisor as a sounding board. Interviewees often described the research process in metaphors [37] of journeying where purposes are "destinations" (*ibid.*) undertaken with the supervisor as a navigator, guide or route planner.

One completed South African research project on postgraduate supervision distinguished between design, work and editorial supervision (Van der Westhuizen 1989). Supervision was found to be product-oriented and promoters (a North American term) reported having

[37] Research by Clegg and Gall also focused on the use of metaphor: "Professional problems are constructed in metaphors which frame the particular problem and thus limit the potential solutions. Becoming aware of the underlying conceptualization of their practice may, therefore, allow supervisors to restructure the frame and discover new perspectives on, and increased understanding of, how they operate" (1998: 331).

little formal training for their roles as managers, tutors and mentors. A more recent Australian study attempts to close this gap in training by aiming to formulate a generic model of supervision that integrates two supervisor roles: leader and manager (Vilkinas 2002). In line with a commercial educational management discourse and the product orientation of many studies of supervision, she suggests: "…good supervisor practice can easily be transferred from corporate to academic arenas" (2002: 129). Proposing eight supervisor roles that need to be integrated and balanced to achieve good supervision practice, the research found that one or more of these roles are often not delivered. Given the multitude of different professional and personal factors existing in supervision relationships, it could be argued that the search for a generic model of supervision may be misguided. I concur with Foucault (in Marshall 1996; Hoy 1986) that searching for a grand narrative in our multi-cultural world neglects to celebrate difference. This potentially marginalizes the needs and interests of some students and supervisors, relegating them to the ranks of the other.

#### 2.3.5.3 Supervisor-student matching

Students' and supervisors' styles of interpersonal interaction may vary along a continuum of push-allow-pull (for example controlling-collaborating-neglecting). I am interested to see whether or not these styles show themselves through the manner in which supervisors and students negotiate their power relations and which strategies they use to do so. According to Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) power is productive: different forms of knowledge (see p. 32) develop out of power strategies including the subjectivities, the thoughts, feelings and actions that people assume. Supervision styles and the strategies through which they are expressed sometimes produce clearly visible subject and individual positions (e.g. successful student or busy supervisor). Sometimes they are more subtle or intrinsically visible positions (e.g. depressed student, worried supervisor). Supervision styles may also influence the more pragmatic aspect of production: the thesis. In this regard the process of matching supervisors to students is an important one as it initiates and influences the will-to-knowledge cycle.

Students either come into supervision "cold" (Hill, Acker & Black 1994), where they are new to the university and have not personally met their supervisors, or they come in

"warm" (*ibid*.), where they have met with prospective supervisors, perhaps even worked with them before, or have at least been able to solicit information about them from peers or other academics. Particularly in the case of cold enrolments, an academic manager often arranges the allocation of a supervisor to a student. Priority is given to professional considerations such as common academic fields and shared research interests, but personal factors like supervision style are not generally taken into account. Hill, Acker and Black found that "…students too began their search for an appropriate supervisor at the level of academic interest, although they were more interested in personal compatibility than were the supervisors" (1994: 56). The process of matching was described by one of their interviewees as a "…'weak point' in the admissions procedures" (*ibid*.: 55).

Humans are social beings and it is inevitable that we all assume or choose positions in the world. These are influenced by our life experience. Supervisors are advised to be alert to "non-paper qualifications" (Cryer 1997: 10) of students such as relevant life and work experience. These should inform the choice of which student to work with, as they are factors likely to impact on the quality of the supervision experience. It seems to me that this principle could work equally well for a student choosing a supervisor.

It seems common sense that the better matched a supervisor is to a student, academically and personally, the better it is for the relationship as well as for the thesis. The experience of Chapman and Sork (2001) challenges the advantages of a comfortable match. Their uneasy supervision alliance promoted narrative research methodology and challenged unexamined assumptions and gender inequity. Chapman was interested in

> …how the one-to-one dynamics of the supervisory process can reproduce or challenge the structured power relations of adult higher education and society in general…(and)…how our own gendered assumptions may inadvertently and unconsciously reproduce oppressive categories…(2001: 95).

She and her supervisor used their own supervision relationship as the field of study for Chapman's PhD, offering a lively, thought provoking, and often amusing narrative of their supervisory process. Chapman used an unusual and controversial data collection technique. After each supervision session she and her supervisor would document their thoughts and feelings and then they would exchange their notes. Each would reflect on what the other had written and then they would craft their next exchange. She comments:

> …It's about how we want to define ourselves as same or different from others/supervisors, about how power relations force us to identify (or not) as same, not different. It's about how we represent ourselves and how others more powerful than us represent ourselves. Above all, it's about whether we've fitted ourselves snugly enough in taxonomies and classificatory grids…(Chapman & Sork 2001: 10).

Despite the mismatch, or rather because of it, the result was a productive learning experience for both of them in terms of personal growth and in terms of professional products [38]. Reactions to their research and the subjectivity of the narrative style ranged from " 'It's about time we started talking about this'…to allusions of…'navel-gazing' and 'self-indulgence'" (*ibid.*). I found their work fresh, brave and sagacious.

### 2.3.6 The constructing process

Research has a rhythm and moves through (fairly) predictable stages during which the research, the subjectivities of the research student and his or her supervisor and, by association, aspects of the university domain, are constructed and reconstructed. Information from reviewed literature that recommends how these stages are best managed is presented in this section under the headings of Professional care and Pastoral care. Supervisors are sanctioned authorities who guide research students through the research process and accordingly this section concentrates mainly on the role of supervisors in influencing how students construct and conduct both their research and themselves as researchers. The constructing process described below presents what is sayable (institutionally sanctioned discourse) in the will-to-knowledge cycle (see p. 33), thus much of the information is quoted directly from the texts.

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[38] To illustrate the trials of open communication on an uncomfortable student-supervisor match, I quote an excerpt of their data (Chapman & Sork 2001: 94-95):

> *Valerie Chapman*: "The professor has not been impressed by my style, or my performance, so far. I'd guess we are each other's worst nightmares. My writing, my subjectivities, my views, my ideologies, are not simply opposed to his, but so alien I wonder how we inhabit the same planetary space…I feel intimidated, awkward around him, picking up his reluctance to get personal, which I need, but which makes him uneasy, restless, irritable…"
>
> *Tom Sork*: "I have so many questions about working with her…Why do I have these negative visceral reactions to some of the things she writes and says, and what should I do about them? I have felt uncomfortable working with her on several occasions…I have found her to be more demanding than the typical student and will likely have to discuss the issue of boundaries with her again…"

2.3.6.1 Professional care

Time is a vital factor in the supervision relationship. Students move through different stages in the research process and the greatest degree of guidance most often needs to be given at the beginning of a project (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). Students and their supervisors are advised to contract clearly on how time is to be allocated and managed and supervisors should make their students aware of the unseen time spent either reading or thinking about the work that students submit (*ibid.*). Often supervisors

> …accept postponed appointments or long gaps between meetings with their research students without putting much effort into persuading them that they need a tutorial. This is often due to concern on the supervisors' part that they may be pressing their students and causing undue stress…[however] very few people are able to work well without some pressure (either external or internal)…(Phillips & Pugh 1996: 89).

As a corollary to this, Phillips and Pugh maintain that firm deadlines are vital. They assert that students should have someone to report to once deadlines are reached or overstepped. It could be argued that this is over-controlling and feeds conveniently into a surveillance and assessment pattern of a commercially driven university domain.

Brainstorming is a tactic that many supervisors use to help students through the first research task: formulating a finely honed research focus out of their research interests (Gottlieb 1994). Depending on the teaching style of the supervisor, strategies range from arm-twisting (*ibid.*), to collaborating, to a relentless questioning process. Questioning is a common tactic employed to stimulate students to think deeply and critically about their interests and to generate their own research focus. As Phillips and Pugh note: "…students expect their supervisors to have the flexibility to understand what it is that they are trying to say…the supervisor needs to draw out their ideas…through a constant questioning procedure" (1996: 156). South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee also acknowledges the usefulness of questioning as a strategy for improving transformational thinking, particularly when it is used as a way of "…facilitating the development of cognitive structure by 'lending' learners one's own conceptual anchors, cognitive structure and strategies to assist their thinking and acting" (CHE 2003: 9).

Once a research aim is more clearly formulated, supervisors need to encourage students to plan. Planning and documenting intended steps gives coherence to a process that leads through and into many unknowns. Cryer finds that "…something committed to paper provides a common focus for discussion and shows up any discrepancies in individuals' understandings, which, if left unidentified and unresolved, could lead to serious confusion, delay and expense" (1997: 13). Gottlieb (1994) notes that planning helps to break the task into manageable segments. This helps students to manage apprehension and lack of confidence in the face of what they often see as a daunting task. It also assists students to identify priorities, particularly those that are pertinent to examination of the thesis, and to discard what is superfluous (*ibid*.). I prefer to reformulate this statement by suggesting that at the planning stage students can be made aware of requirements *specific* to an academic thesis; rather than discarding extraneous themes that are superfluous to the scope of the thesis, students should be encouraged to hold them to one side for later exploration. Perhaps this would motivate students to let go of their work when appropriate and help them to see the thesis in its immediate context, as one and not the last step in an ongoing process of learning and achievement.

Supervisors may have less input in planning the research in the case of students who submit research proposals as part of the admission requirements for postgraduate studies. It is still common practice in South Africa for students to be admitted first and then only to design their formal research proposals. Local researchers Lessing and Schultze found that "…students wanted more guidance with regard to the overall planning of the research" (2003: 177), including help with formulating time-frames and that "…only 59% of their respondents were satisfied with the support they received from supervisors in this regard" (*ibid*.). In the case of supervisors who are involved in the formulation of the research proposal, committing plans to paper does not only provide "...a common focus for discussion" (Cryer 1997: 13) but also a platform for clarifying students' understanding. The supervisor also needs to assure that the student's research proposal fulfills the formal requirements and standards of the discipline and the academy. Postgraduate supervision as defined by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee includes activities such as: "…assisting students to defining [*sic*] a research topic and design an acceptable research proposal and getting the proposal approved" (CHE 2003 7: 1). It is in this exercise that what students want to do or envisage doing is most easily shaped and brought into line with system needs. This may have positive or negative repercussions.

Committing plans to paper also begins the writing process early on. Several texts emphasize that the writing-up of a thesis should not be left to one summative task at the end of the project, but should continue throughout the research process (Burgess 1994; Gottlieb 1994; Wisker 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). It is generally agreed that the writing style and grammar in the thesis are the responsibility of the student (Cryer 1996, 1997; Burgess 1994; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). However, it is not just the technicalities of academic prose that students need to master. These are writing tools which serve a far more subtle and vital form of literacy: understanding, assimilating and abiding by the conventions of academic discourse. This literacy hinges on an awareness and understanding of the underlying values, languages and behaviours of academia and on developing the capacity to fit into them, or at least to work with them. In this interplay content and process merge so that *knowing becomes linked to knowing how* (Geisler 1994: 88). Some students' prior educational experiences have not adequately prepared them for a culture in which "…people write texts not simply to say things, but to do things: to persuade, to argue, to excuse" (Geisler 1994: 87). This differs from an approach to writing that recalls and transmits content without reference to conflicting viewpoints or without integrating the writer's prior knowledge and experience (Geisler 1994). Greenfield's insights on educational leadership offer a pertinent insight: prior knowledge and experience inform who we are as people and shape the values that we adopt in the world; these values enable us to mediate the "fact-value dichotomy…[by] making a value choice out of facts" (1993: 268). As applied to writing, particularly for students from a historically disadvantaged educational background, the task is two-fold: they need to present facts and engage with them critically but they also need to integrate who they are as people - and this includes their values - *with* such critical engagement. In this regard "…the literacy practices of experts in the academy are organized around the creation and transformation of academic knowledge; the literacy practices of novices, on the other hand, are organized around the getting and displaying of that knowledge" (Geisler 1994: 81).

As gatekeepers to the academic arena, supervisors are well positioned to help students to negotiate the shift from knowledge telling to knowledge transformation, from novices to experts, from outsiders to insiders. This view of supervision interfaces with, but goes beyond, Cryer's statement:

> …being a gatekeeper for the discipline involves checking each chapter for matters relating to the scholarly norms of the discipline, and then checking the thesis through as a whole for coherence of the threads of argument running through it…(1997: 8).

By offering constructive criticism of written work supervisors can convey - and in some cases initiate students into - the intricacies *underpinning* "scholarly norms" (*ibid*.) and thereby cultivate the shifts listed above. Criticism offers students the opportunity to think and rethink their research, to engage with the ontologies and epistemologies of academia and, significantly, to practise positioning and repositioning themselves *and* their work so that both become favourably situated in relation to the norms of academic discourse. By addressing both the content and process levels of knowledge production through the act of writing, students learn how to think and act as academics and by doing so they rewrite both themselves and their texts. Thus the process of writing has much broader implications than meets the eye. As Gee (1996) asserts, writing mediates knowledge: it *is* learning.

Phillips and Pugh (1996) note that engaging with a supportive and sensitive supervisor who exposes students to constructive criticism helps students to adopt and develop a critical stance in relationship to their work. Phillips and Pugh recommend a conversational approach to giving feedback: "…commenting on work…means talking around it. The script should form the basis for a discussion…[which] furthers the student's thinking about the project through an exchange of ideas with the supervisor" (1996: 151). Although such verbal exchanges are valuable, what is shared in conversation is sometimes forgotten particularly when a supervision session is lengthy and rich in content (Boughey 2004 pers. comm.). Then writing can become a medium of teaching: supervisors who give written commentary on students' texts anchor subsequent verbal exchanges in a way that allows students to return to, reflect on and address specific issues in their texts (*ibid*.). Regarding written and oral feedback, Delamont, Atkinson and Parry counsel

> …careful management of the stark truth…in the early stages…it is very easy to destroy a student's self-confidence by criticism, or to give him or her a false sense of security by too much praise…there are times when the student must be told that the work is fine and that he or she is doing well, because it *is* fine for that stage…and the student must move ahead…The sensitive supervisor will realize that, at the wrong time, thoroughgoing and detailed criticism of the work in progress can undermine the student and bring the process to a dead stop…(1997: 23-30).

Early in the research process students usually require help with the literature review. Here they need to *read* in a way that fosters a critical stance in relation to the many contesting viewpoints they are likely to encounter. Students need to arbitrate between these different viewpoints and to develop their own position. They generally expect their supervisors to direct them towards (at least) key authors and theorists relevant to the research focus. At this stage students are easily lured into sidetracks. Product-motivated or controlling supervisors are likely to find this frustrating or annoying. Cryer's perspective on tangents differs: "…it is often these that can provide 'originality' as well as the fascination with the unknown that ought to accompany research" (1996: 123). Irrespective of their supervisors' opinions, some students become so fascinated by a tangent that they decide to change their research direction, not always to good effect. Again Cryer offers a positive view:

> …Things may go *so* badly wrong on the explorer's expedition that it has to be abandoned with seemingly nothing achieved. Yet with a little thought, he [or she] could still have an important story to tell…the research student [should] be able to capitalize on everything that seems to go wrong…(1996: 148).

While they are reviewing the literature, or earlier, students should be thinking about how to implement their research and will expect supervisors to assist them to select an appropriate methodology (Burgess, Pole & Hockey 1994). Once the data collection starts, students generally have a clear idea about where they are heading and supervision sessions should become less frequent. Supervisors need to recognize the stage students have reached and adjust the amount of supervision accordingly (Phillips & Pugh 1996). Referred to as a "weaning" process, this task involves "…helping postgraduates to become aware that they have sufficient knowledge and ability to trust their own judgment and monitor their own performance (*ibid*.: 163). Phillips and Pugh recommend that students and supervisors negotiate a research contract with "…a structured programme that gradually reduces the amount of contact as the postgraduate gets further into the work…The supervisor should still be aware of the responsibility to 'chase up' a student who does not seem to be keeping to the agreement" (*ibid*.: 91). Not all supervisors agree with the idea that it is their responsibility to chase up students and claim instead that the onus is on the student to maintain regular contact (Mouton 2001).

The data analysis stage can be daunting for students faced with making sense of large quantities of data. Zuber-Skerritt and Ryan (1994) suggest that supervisors should arrange for those who are not familiar with the relevant skills to attend pertinent courses. At the analysis stage, as with all those that precede it, the supervisor's role is to help the student "…to achieve some sense of discrimination…If a student has become unduly attached to the data and the findings, then a good supervisor will have to find a way to help [them] discard some" (Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997: 77). I suggest that the opposite is equally valid: the student researcher must select and edit in a way that is honest to the data even when, perhaps especially when, they challenge the student's expectations or assumptions. Supervisors can also help students to *retain* and work with data that does not fit into students' notions of what they may prefer to find or prove. In this regard the supervisor can help students to interrogate their own positions and to re-perspectivize unexpected outcomes as being part of the process of moving knowledge forward.

At the completion stage energy sometimes lags and with the end goal in sight some students may incline to relent on their pursuit of precision and fail to present finely edited work. Not all supervisors view fine editing or proofreading as their responsibility and in this regard they need to clearly communicate their boundaries of involvement. On the other hand, it is quite common for students to be reluctant to let go of their work (*ibid*.) and perfectionism - in terms of editing, structure, content or argument - may be a strategy that prevents them from having to do so. Ironically, this may arise from the calibre of critical thinking towards which supervisors aim to nurture students in the first place.

Many of the reviewed texts are also aimed at students and provide information on appropriate professional conduct. Cryer's publication *The research student's guide to success* (1996) is one example; it covers a range of topics such as "Settling in as a new research student" (*ibid*.: vi), "Towards recognizing good research" (*ibid*.), "Taking responsibility for your own progress" (*ibid*.: viii), "Developing skills for creative thinking" (*ibid*.: ix) and so forth. Reviewed texts offer useful guidance, particularly for beginner researchers, but for more experienced researchers much of the advice is (in my opinion) common sense, such as the undertaking to work hard, to acknowledge sources and to manage time, so I do not re-produce it here.

Below are two more unusual strategies for managing or educating supervisors. Both strategies are examples of how *pull* may function:

As students progress in their studies, and (ideally) become aware of new developments and cutting edge research in their field, they may come to know more than their supervisors. Sometimes this can be a difficult transition for either or both parties. Phillips and Pugh counsel the student to be prudent:

> …give information in a manner that assumes that your supervisor already knew about the things that are only now becoming accessible to you…instead of being someone from whom you need information and approval, he or she gradually becomes someone with whom you can discuss new ideas and develop your thinking…(1996: 101).

In the advent of unprofessional behaviour from a supervisor, Cryer suggests:

> …the way forward is to train them out of it by ignoring the insinuations and innuendoes, referring only to work and acting in words, dress and manner, totally professionally. Supervisors are unlikely to persist with attitudes and behaviour where research students supply ongoing evidence that these are inappropriate. Sadly, this course of action will take time. Support and advice should be available [and sought] from other research students; members of staff...the heads of departments…formal institutional documents and the students' union…(1996: 67).

2.3.6.2 Pastoral care

Phillips and Pugh note that supervisors need to recognize that for students the research process

> …is an emotional experience, which involves the whole person…it is too often the case that managers choose to ignore the 'whole person' and patch over rather than get to the bottom of, any difficulties that are showing themselves in the individual's work…(1996: 160).

"An effective supervisor…would not merely stick to academic issues but would create regular opportunities to discuss their relationship" (*ibid*.: 153). Academics who contest the use of the term relationship to refer to the supervision alliance, would no doubt object to Phillips and Pugh's (*ibid*.) claims. Hill, Acker and Black found that most supervisors strike a middle path preferring to think that: "…there [is] a boundary

to…involvement…While friendly and informal, it was nonetheless largely confined to issues to do with the work" (1994: 67). Markie adopts a strong stance regarding the boundary between friendliness and friendship: "…establishing and maintaining a friendship with one or more students will severely limit a professor's ability to honour other moral obligations" (in Chapman & Sork 2001: 101). He advises the maintenance of a "professional distance" (*ibid*.).

The draft resource of the South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee entitled "Postgraduate research and supervision" (CHE 2003 7) rarely makes any reference to the personal dimension of the supervision relationship other than to note that the traditional model of supervision is

> …characterized by isolated, intense and sometimes intimate personal relationships based on the apprenticeship model that often sets up a dependency relationship between student and supervisor and unequal power relationships that are easily abused…(*ibid*.: 2).

These issues are addressed through a new model of supervision practice:

> …the practice of supervision is under pressure. Its nature is changing and being replaced by more pragmatic and efficient approaches, based on explicit accountability and contractual requirements for both parties, an emphasis on research skills training and an emphasis on the employability of the graduate…(*ibid*.: 3).

The rationale behind the "…shift to a more formal, contractual and accountable relationship" (*ibid*.) is that it evades "…the dangers of isolation and exploitation" (*ibid*.) associated with the traditional apprenticeship model of supervision. The "…pragmatic and efficient" (*ibid*.) alternative to supervision endorsed by the Committee is more in line with a commercial or managerial model of supervision: it tends to privilege system needs in as far as it renders the supervision relationship accessible to instrumental assessment methods associated with an outcomes-based model of education (see p. 63). By promoting a commercial or managerial model of supervision the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee potentially privileges commercial or managerial discourse. Also, by virtue of its cursory acknowledgement of the personal dimension of supervision, the CHE (2003 7) document marginalizes this aspect of the supervision relationship. Paradoxically the less personalized approach of the managerial model of supervision contradicts the humanistic principles on which the Council's recommendations (*ibid*.) are based. Thus it

appears that there is a somewhat uneasy tension between humanistic and commercial discourses in the CHE (*ibid*.) recommendations. In a sense, the CHE (2003 7) document represents an organizational example of contradictory subjectivity. This occurs when a person assumes roles and ways of being that are incongruent with whom they think, feel or desire themselves to be. By offering this argument, I do not mean to discount the value of the recommendations, which go a long way to translate policy into do-able ground-level interventions. These interventions still need to be piloted and adapted through negotiation with the wider community of academics and academic managers. I aim only to highlight how discourses contest one another and to draw attention to difficulties encountered when contesting values have to be integrated in order to meet system needs. The document does note: "…it is important to preserve as far as possible, the intense one-on-one supervisory relationship" (CHE 2003 7: 3). As I interpret it, it is only in the context of a close *interpersonal* relationship that it would be possible to effect a good many of the proposed transformational learning interventions (see p. 105).

Little information is offered in the reviewed literature regarding incidences when a professional distance has failed to work and although almost all the texts refer to pastoral care, little is revealed about the nature of it, other than the informal communication strategies discussed earlier (see p. 101). Comments mostly resemble that of Phillips and Pugh: "…a significant part of your job as supervisor is one of keeping morale at a reasonable level…there are periods when moods are volatile and a certain subtlety is needed to help a student through the difficult times" (1996: 166). Perhaps because of the highly personal aspect of pastoral care, supervisors' and students' allusions to it are couched in metaphors such as parent, friendly helper and advisor. These descriptions leave much to the imagination. In this research I attempt to reveal something more of the nature of pastoral support and care and how it influences power relationships in each of the student-supervisor pairs.

Foucault meticulously deconstructed the notion of pastoral and psychological or, more precisely, psychiatric care. Consulting archival documents dating back to early Greek culture, he revealed how over small increments in time, people became constructed as subjects of power relations perpetuated by a pastoral discourse. The discourses of Greek philosophers concerning the regulation and care of the state as it interfaces with the care of the self, merged with socio-economic conditions and later, religious discourses,

particularly biblical ones. This merger then converged with medical discourse in such a way as to award modern psychiatry and psychology their present status as professions that sanction and perpetuate confession and penitence and justify the incarceration and care of those whom they label insane. Rouse elaborates:

> …The one who confesses is constrained to produce a discourse about otherwise inaccessible 'inner truths'. [It] does not…reveal that truth directly, however. [The truth] is presented to an interpreter (priest, psychologist, parent, teacher, etc.) whose interpretation confers the status of truth upon what has been revealed…(1987: 218).

Although the majority of humanity is not incarcerated in psychiatric institutions, a good many of us are imprisoned by the urge to self-disclosure: to reveal ourselves, if not privately to psychologists or priests, then to the hairdresser or the supervisor or more publicly through sitcoms, support groups and perhaps even through cellphone conversations loudly conducted in public spaces. Furthermore, what is private or secret may not always remain so, for these have cunning ways of speaking without words: a look, a gesture, an invitation withheld, a promotion denied. In this way, what is not publicly sanctioned as overtly sayable often becomes covertly expressed and often quite overtly visible.

Surveillance and assessment strategies collaborate with self-disclosure in a cycle that turns confession in on itself and justifies the construction of subjectivity - the so-called right way to be. When this is incongruent with what a person believes to be her or his authentic self, contradictory subjectivity may arise. Humanistic discourses of teaching aim to bring the person more in line with his or her authentic sense of self, but from a Foucaultian perspective, this good intention ensures the normalization of the individual and this may not necessarily mean that he or she earns greater freedom or is necessarily better aligned with his or her sense of authenticity. The teacher becomes the parent, the pastor, the friendly helper who guides us to make small incremental adjustments towards an improved self who is better than we would have been without his or her influence: "…it's a matter of constant, individualized, and final kindness" (Foucault 1988: 62). I have already discussed how the pastoral discourse translates hidden and impersonal mega-power relations into structures and systems of assessment (see p. 63) and how, in a South African context, proposed techniques of normalization that are devised to be "…diagnostic or corrective" (CHE 2003 2: 3) are inextricably interlinked with successful throughput and

the democratization of education. Mega-power relations translate into minute and multiple rules that limit the range of acceptable activities for individuals and it is in these small rules that the pastoral discourse links to claims of truth. Foucault comments:

> …what I find most striking about these new technologies of power introduced since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is their concrete and precise character, their grasp of the multiple and differentiated reality…It becomes a matter of obtaining productive service from individuals in their concrete lives. And in consequence, a real and effective 'incorporation' of power was necessary, in the sense that power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behaviour. Hence the significance of school discipline, which succeeded in making children's bodies the object of highly complex systems of manipulation and conditioning…(1980b: 125)

Despite his deconstruction of a pastoral discourse, Foucault emphasizes that discourses and the power relations inherent in them are not essentially repressive. I examine power relationships with both repression and empowerment in mind.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I aimed to bring information from numerous reviewed texts on supervision practice into a dialogue with Foucault's theory of power relations. To facilitate the dialogue I organized information under headings pertinent to constructs presented in the Power chapter. To position this research in its local South African context, comment was offered on recommendations contained in the draft "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003 1-7) compiled by the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee. The research question is restated next, followed by chapter three in which the research methodology is described.

## 2.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

To address the question: *How do postgraduate supervisors and their Master's students experience the supervision relationship and how are the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional power implicated in these relationships?* I used data from exploratory conversations with academics and students as well as information from reviewed literature to formulate a working hunch: *Power relations function through strategies of resistance to situate students, supervisors and their contexts in unequal and ever-shifting positions between the polarities of autonomy and dependency.*

The next chapter describes the methodology used to explore the interface of the question and the hunch.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to address the research question and the research hunch. Drawing on the earlier discussion of forms of knowledge (see p. 41) this chapter begins with a section entitled: **Positioning the research** in which I debate the positioning of the research in relation to different ontological, epistemological and methodological discourses. More pragmatic aspects of the methodology are then described under the headings: **The research format; Sampling; Data collection and processing; Foucault's methods** (Sub-headings: Pyrrhonistic skepticism; Selected aspects of Foucault's methods)**, Data analysis** (Sub-headings: Phase 1; Phase 2; Phase 3); and **Research validity.**

## 3.1 Positioning the research

As this research uses aspects of interpretivist, critical and constructivist research discourses, I argue here that it is positioned in methodological relationalism (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981). More intricately, within the multi-paradigmatic approach of methodological relationalism the research is positioned in critical-constructivist discourse. This positioning falls within the broad spectrum of poststructural-postmodern research ontologies and epistemologies. These regard any interpretation of reality and claim to truth and knowledge as fluid and representing only one perspective in a multitude of equally justifiable ones (Hauke 2000). As indicated earlier (see p. 45), postmodernism does not discard its poststructural nor its structural roots; I therefore also comment on an element of a structural-positivistic discourse in this work.

To initiate the debate it seems pertinent to first note that the research is qualitative. Within qualitative discourse it is positioned within Bateson's interpretations of systemic metatheory, particularly with regard to the principles of reciprocal causality, cybernetics-of-cybernetics and equipotentiality (Becvar & Becvar 1996). Reciprocal causality claims that "…we see every system influencing and being influenced by every other system and every individual influencing and being influenced by every other individual" (*ibid*.: 66). More specifically, within systems metatheory the notion of subjectivity is construed

according to the postmodern perspective of cybernetics called cybernetics-of-cybernetics. From this stance, a researcher observes and describes relationships in a system but is alert to the fact that while doing so, she or he is part of that system and therefore impacts on it and *vice versa* (*ibid*.). Researcher reflexivity becomes a necessary research attitude and in the spirit of transparency the researcher needs to offer insight into how she or he may have impacted on the research, the participants and the research context (Bleicher 1982; Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981)[39]. The principle of equipotentiality proposes that it is not possible to make deterministic predictions about the outcome of any relational process (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 71). This concurs with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) recognition of outcomes being consistent with the conditions and contingencies out of which they arise. In as far as these principles of systems metatheory are congruent with Foucault's theory of how power relations work, both emphasize relationship, reciprocal causality and the unpredictability of outcomes.

A further similarity merits discussion. One critique of systems metatheory is that it tends to privilege the system over the individual. During the course of familiarizing myself with Foucault's work and conducting the research, I reached a similar critique of *his* position, one that is consistent with Kvale (1994) when he notes that Foucault paid more attention to organizations than to the individuals within them. Foucault began his investigations by dispensing with the idea of the autonomous person. He explored institutions that are produced through the ideological accretions of discourse and the structures that emerged from this process – for example, discourses of punishment in the penal institution and the jails that resulted. He then linked these emergent institutions to the construction of subjectivities – people as criminal subjects. In this thesis, I have worked in the opposite direction: assuming the existence of the autonomous person, I began by focusing on the subjective experience of supervisors and their students, and then examined their experience of power relations in terms of the influence of different discourses in the university domain. Of course, it is not possible to divorce these two processes from one another; some initial sensibility of the person must have influenced Foucault's research, as some sensibility of the university as an educational institution influences mine. However, starting from a different place to Foucault resulted in an ongoing difficulty that I

[39] See *Participants' experience of the research process* (p. 290).

experienced in this research – balancing the tension between the individual or person who is free and the subject who is constituted by institutionalized discourse. Moreover, by adopting a constructivist position, I share an uncomfortable dilemma faced by any researcher working in this paradigm: I propose that the linguistic construction of reality is mediated by free will (Steffe & Gale 1995). In this argument, one premise potentially undermines the other. In as far as this difficulty is productive of knowledge and relates to Foucault's injunction to reflect on the power relations inherent in canonized texts, it has allowed me to challenge his ideas.

This research includes a focus on language and discourse; it shares the constructionist-constructivist view of consensus reality as an unstable representation of the real world which has become naturalized - consciously or unconsciously - through the ideologies embedded in language (Connole 1998; Steffe & Gale 1995). However, echoing Foucault's injunction to "…take responsibility for inventing or producing one's own 'self'" (1996: 167), I did not adopt a hard constructionist approach where language and discourse are held to be omnipotent in the construction of subjectivities. Nor did I use discourse analysis, which is arguably more closely aligned with a constructionist approach than is my constructivist position. Instead, I formulated my own way of examining *interpersonal* power relations (push-allow-pull: see pp. 20, 98, 106) and operationalized Foucault's insights on *institutional* power relations into a list of factors to assist the identification of different discourses operating in the educational domain. The list is presented later in this chapter, in Selected aspects of Foucault's methods (see p. 142).

An important aspect of working in constructionist-constructivist as well as critical discourses is that researchers need to be vigilant of the production of meanings and the close associations between language, knowledge and issues of power (Connole 1998; Kvale 1996; Steffe & Gale 1995). This applies to research foci as well as to research processes including the power dynamic between a researcher and his or her participants. As Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) points out, the power dynamic between the researcher and his or her context, including the research methodology he or she uses, also has repercussions on the social context of the research - in this case on the educational domain and discourses within it. One pragmatic way I address the personal and methodological reflexivity that constructionist-constructivist and critical discourses demand is that I avoid putting words in the mouths of my participants (Connole 1998).

Where I felt I might have been remiss, I consulted with participants; raw data from these exchanges are presented (see p. 290). Attention to the power-knowledge nexus also operates in another dimension - that of the power of interpretation.

Interpretivists claim that research is essentially subjective. From this perspective, interpretive researchers exercise a great deal of power over the research. We select. We select what we believe to be appropriate research topics. When we review literature we select aspects that we judge relevant to our purposes. During data collection we craft our questions accordingly and are likely to hear most clearly those statements from participants that dovetail with our research expectations and perhaps even our personal preferences. During analysis we create meaning by finding the connections that help to justify, and of course mediate, our interpretations with the reality - the content - of the data. Much of this may be unconscious. Nonetheless, as an interpretive researcher I exercise a considerable degree of power. This began at the outset of the research when I started to create meaning by choosing my topic and conceptualizing the research.

My conceptualization steered the formulation of the research question: How do supervisors and their postgraduate students experience the supervision relationship and how are the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional power implicated in these relationships? Exploring experience presumes that I am hospitable to an unfolding unknown both in terms of the information that participants offer, as well as in terms of the research process itself. I have already proposed that all research practices involve interpretation (see p. 46) but the open-ended attitude that I refer to here is specific to an interpretivist research discourse in as far as meanings are (should be?) *explored* in a way that allows research findings to emerge from the data. In this approach the quality of listening to and hearing what participants say about their experience of supervision is accorded primacy. This allows space for the co-existence of multiple perspectives where "…knowledge acquired from personal experience…[is] valued as highly as knowledges produced from abstract or conceptual frames" (Chapman & Sork 2001: 98). Although I attempt to avoid pre-empting interpretations, it is idealistic to expect that prior conceptualization of the research will have no impact on the research process (Bleicher 1982; Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Ritzer 1981). A postmodern perspective recognizes that "…knowledge acquired from personal experience" (Chapman & Sork 2001: 98) includes my experience as a researcher, so that interpretations are not

arrived at through a suspension of my subjectivity nor through a suspension of research intentions acquired through prior theoreticizing.

My intentions offer a glimpse into the influence of a structural-positivist discourse in my research design and implementation. This brings me to reflect on the second dimension of my research question which indicates that I move from an open-ended exploration of participants' experience of supervision to an anticipation of power existing in the relationships and, moreover, to the notion that power has both interpersonal and institutional dimensions. Clearly, this focus is led by some theoretical position. Structural-positivistic research starts with clearly defined research hypotheses and appropriate methodology is selected to prove or disprove them. I do indeed start with a research hunch (see p. 19) and this informs my methodology, for instance the design of questions posed to participants during interviews and my subsequent interpretation of their responses. However, I do not aim to prove or to disprove my hunch, but rather to use it as a means to explore power relationships. Nonetheless, by viewing the experience of participants through pre-existing theoretical constructs, I apply a deductive and arguably reductive rationality characteristic of a structuralist-positivistic discourse. In this regard, Foucault's ideas on power - my prior knowledge "…produced from abstract or conceptual frames" (*ibid*.) - may eclipse the primacy that interpretivism accords to participant data. However, by remaining open to the unexpected and exploring irregularities I also allow interpretations to arise inductively from the data, thereby informing and challenging my theoretical bases. To this end I make a determined effort to apply Pyrrhonistic skepticism in order to generate as many alternative interpretations of the data as I can. (Pyrrhonistic scepticism is described later in this chapter.) Also, during and after interviews I asked participants to clarify my understanding of what they said and often shared my interpretations of their statements. By using this approach I acknowledge the "…intrinsic, irreducible, and mutually transformative relationship" (Brooke 1991: 7) between my subject matter, my participants, the research context and myself. This is consistent with the epistemologies and methodologies of interpretivist, constructivist and critical research discourses which promote the idea that interpretations should represent, at least to some extent, a co-constructed reality. Consistent with the injunction of methodological relationalism to methodological reflexivity (and seeing as this research is led by Foucault's insights on power which confront the power-knowledge issue head on – the additional issue of theoretical reflexivity) I acknowledge that participants did not have

anywhere near the same influence as I did on the final analysis and discussion of their data and thus on the construction of knowledge in this thesis.

Blending my own and participants' understandings of what was said generates multiple-meanings. This is an advantage in terms of the postmodern penchant for inclusivity, intersubjectivity and the open-minded valuing of local knowledges. However, the generation of multiple meanings also poses some disadvantages. Postmodern research discourses, Foucault's work and systemic metatheory argue that *all* perspectives and positions are valid in as far as they are congruent with the conditions and contingencies out of which they arise. This highlights a difficulty that Connole (1998), Grice and Humphries (1997) and Kvale (1996) point out: how can researchers rationalize any value position they adopt in postmodernity? These authors also point out that in order for research to move beyond an a-positional, armchair variety of emancipation and effect change in the world, it is vital to choose a position. This brings me to a discussion of my value position in this research. As indicated earlier, I am strongly influenced by humanistic discourse and my research approach is positioned predominantly in critical discourse. Researchers working in a critical discourse regard knowledge and the educational as political. They aim to empower people to *change* reality: "…knowledge becomes emancipatory, enabling both researcher and researched to free themselves from limiting social forces" (Connole 1998: 19). To some extent my research intentions are emancipatory and heuristic - I aim to uncover the power dynamics inherent in supervision relationships and to extend current praxis by identifying situations and strategies that help or hinder a profitable supervision experience. This presupposes that I regard some teaching and learning practices as more tenable than others. To manage this bias, when discussing participant data in conjunction with theory I try to suspend or bracket these presuppositions by aligning myself with the neutrality of systems metatheory and Foucault's research approach. I attempt to expose the dynamics of power without judging participants' actions or outcomes of these in terms of the dichotomies of good and bad. Instead, I aim to show how some approaches are more useful or less useful than others in terms of challenging or reproducing different forms of knowledge and the discourses from which they arise. This research intention is congruent with foci pertinent to constructionist-constructivist discourse (exposure of power relations), critical discourse (action for change) and Foucault's work: "…the ownership of knowledge generated, the social, political and economic interests of those who own it and its potential to oppress or

emancipate those who are being researched" (*ibid.*). This is also consistent with a critical research approach in that it addresses the *association between processes and products.* In this regard I explore power relationships at the interface of extrinsic-objective knowledge (the *thesis* as an extrinsic product of the process of education) and intrinsic-subjective knowledge (the *person* as an intrinsic product of the process of learning). In terms of the subjective-intrinsic product of supervision – the thesis-as-person – I also draw attention to the impact of more useful and less useful teaching and learning practices in terms of the degree of happiness or discomfort, satisfaction or dissatifaction that participants report experiencing.

There are features of a critical discourse that I do not share. Critical researchers tend to see reality as riddled with conflict and governed by veiled power structures. Although I agree with the idea that power structures are often opaque, in keeping with Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) I do not assume that reality is conflict ridden nor do I presuppose binary oppositions or essential conflicts (Grice & Humphries 1997) between supervisors and their students. Instead of the concept of conflict, I use the concept of resistance, and my conceptual scheme of push-allow-pull includes a broad range and varying degrees of power relations including conflict, accommodation and compliance. Applying this at another level of my conceptualization: although I use the term polarities to stand for the seemingly binary oppositions of autonomy and dependency, I assume these to be complementaries. While different, they are not mutually exclusive and degrees of one exist in the so-called other. As Wheatley (1999) notes, polarities or complementaries are indispensable to each other and neither can be accorded primacy. In response to critics who argue that researchers in a critical paradigm use "…anachronistic…terms such as oppression, emancipation and domination" (Grice & Humphries 1997: 413*)* and that these concepts privilege values that are based in and endemic to the same grand narrative myths which critical researchers seek to destabilize, again I am aligned with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) approach. He does not view power relations or dominant discourses as merely repressive products of grand narratives (as, for instance, some Marxist theorists do [40]), instead he acknowledges

[40] See Kendall and Wickham (1999) for a discussion of this. Also see Foucault's interviews (1980b, 1988, 1996).

the positive aspects of power relations and draws attention to the way people mutually negotiate their power relationships:

> …Of course states of domination do indeed exist. In a great many cases power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom…[but] the idea that power is a system of domination that controls everything and leaves no room for freedom cannot be attributed to me…(Foucault 1996: 441-442).

Foucault's approach is more in line with the statement of Grice and Humphries who identify "…the role of critique as a troubling of the certainties that underpin practices such that, at the very least, people are forced to consider in more depth the reasons for such practices" (1997: 416).

I now turn to discuss the methodology of this study. Because I have chosen Foucault's work as the theoretical basis of this thesis, I have not appropriated any of Bourdieu's (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) philosophical insights on the constitution of subjectivity, which are arguably more firmly embedded in structural ontology (see footnote 18 p. 44). However, in the postmodern spirit and in keeping with Bourdieu's recommendations, I have appropriated his methodological insights. As described earlier (see p. 51) Bourdieu (*ibid*.) counsels researchers to remain focused on the business of conducting research instead of debating and refining conceptual frames – disciplinary, theoretical and methodological – to the point of "fetishism". He views this as a form of over-intellectualization that potentially leads to "methodologism" (Wacquant in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 28). This lures researchers to "…cultivate method for its own sake" (*ibid*.). Instead he recommends a multi-paradigmatic and multi-disciplinary research approach where researchers are encouraged to borrow from different discourses in order to craft their methodology in line with a pragmatism appropriate to research in a real world. This is essentially a realist approach to research (Swann & Pratt 1999). Bourdieu argues that by using a methodological relational approach researchers can remain open to new insights and creative ingenuity (*ibid*.). When conceptualizing and designing my research, it was after careful reflection on alternative avenues that I settled on what I assessed to be a comfortable fit between my research focus, systems metatheory and Foucault's insights on power. With respect to the time I took to do this I probably erred on the wrong side of Bourdieu's recommendation. Perhaps this originates in a personal disposition that favours aesthetics, theoretical clarity and intellectual play? Certain methodological choices were

also made at the conceptualization stage, for instance the decision to use a qualitative research discourse, the case study format, interviewing as a data collection procedure and the application of a hermeneutic approach. Regarding analysis, the conceptual scheme or analytical tool of push-allow-pull was also beginning to take form at this stage. In the more commonly understood or general sense of analyzing data, I read relevant texts but did not decide on which specific techniques I would use. Although it may seem as if I formulated most of my research approach at the beginning of the study, in fact to a great degree both process and product evolved almost intuitively, moment-to-moment. Intuitive insights were largely the outcome of a hermeneutic oscillation between evolving interpretations of text and context, theory and data. During the collection, analysis and discussion of data I had already intuitively appropriated what I considered to be relevant aspects of the various discourses, assimilated these with prior learning and used this mixture in service of the study. With respect to this creative borrowing, assimilation and appropriation I probably "erred" on the right side of Bourdieu's recommendations.

In response to the issue of validity, methodological relationalism dictates that choices arrived at through intuitive and eclectic assimilation should be controlled and rationalized by a rigorous application of personal, theoretical and methodological reflexivity (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981). In support of my eclecticism, I stress that while intuition played an integral role in my research process, decisions based on hunches and prior learning were only made after considerable personal and theoretical reflexion. It was my experience that reflexivity in terms of methodological choices naturally followed reflexivity on theoretical choices, as the former either resonated or were discordant with the latter. I completed writing the entire first draft of the thesis before rationalizing the positioning of this research in terms of how different epistemologies impact specifically on its methodology. It was an outcome of constant reflexion during the research process that the first draft of the thesis already contained insights fertile for this debate on epistemological and methodological issues.

Reading and applying Foucault's work on relations of power - including their influence on the construction of knowledge - primed me to develop a degree of awareness of issues of power as they apply to interpretative power and the asymmetrical configuration of power between myself and my participants. Despite priming, it is more difficult to nurture vigilance in terms of the knowledge-power nexus as it pertains to the legitimization - the

*naturalization* - of dominant discourses and how these influence me in my role of researcher. In other words, it was challenging to view the research process with a meta-methodological gaze.

On that note, I conclude the debate on the positioning of this research: it is positioned in poststructural ontology, in critical-constructivist epistemology and in methodological relationalism. The discussion now moves to another aspect of methodology: the application of hermeneutic principles.

My interpretation of participants' data is reciprocally influenced by my interpretation of Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights on power relations, information in the reviewed literature on supervision practice and the main tenets of selected discourses in the educational domain. This dialogical process between data, theory and interpretation is referred to as the "hermeneutic circle" (Bleicher 1982). Hermeneutics focuses on the interpretation of meaning. Kvale assesses it as being

> …relevant to interview research…first by elucidating the dialogue producing the interview texts to be interpreted, then by clarifying the subsequent process of interpreting the interview texts produced, which may then again be conceived as a dialogue or a conversation with the text…(1996: 46).

A hermeneutic approach was used in all stages of this study. Before beginning the research, I engaged approximately thirty students and academics in informal conversations about supervision. My intention was to hear as many stories as possible in order to acquire a basic grasp of some of the important factors, and the difficulties and triumphs in their supervision experiences. At the same time, I was reading literature on supervision and found commonalities between the peoples' stories and content themes in the literature. My research question was not yet clearly formulated, but it was becoming obvious to me that the issue of power and particularly the notions of autonomy and dependency are of central concern to students and academics alike. I began reading power theories. I noticed that academics and supervisors also often expressed complaints about commercial pressures in the university context, which then led me to read literature relevant to this phenomenon. The hermeneutic process occurred as I began to combine my initial review of different theories of power and my growing grasp of supervision practice with peoples' accounts of supervision and their opinions of working and studying in a university context.

In a "…continual oscillation between text and context, comparing one with the other" (Clarke 1992: 45), my fresh interpretations of what I heard and read conspired to unfold - or rather, construct - new meanings for me, which I then tested against those that preceded them. As a result of this oscillation, I eventually selected Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) work to lead my research. After several more months of exploration - reading, listening and reflexion - I was able to formulate a focused research question as well as a core concept: the tension between autonomy and dependency.

Early informal exploratory conversations also helped me to identify criteria for participant sampling. I learned that supervision practice in the sciences is different from that in the humanities. I decided to focus my research on supervision in the humanities, largely because I could easily relate it to my own learning experience, affording more common ground for understanding the experience of participants. Conversations also gave me information on who may be most amenable to participating in this study. Everyone I spoke to had a story about supervision, but it struck me that unless I heard the 'other side' of the stories, I would have no way to compare the perspectives of both the parties. So I decided to choose matched supervisor-student pairs for the research population.

A hermeneutic approach was also used at the stage of data collection and processing, when participants edited, validated and commented on all of their interview transcripts before re-circulating them to me. In the spirit of transparency and in order to create space for the co-construction of knowledge, all participants were handed a copy of my research proposal so that they were informed about the research context, aims and methodology. Also, during the interviews and our less formal conversations I shared some of my interpretations with participants in order to include their criticisms and insights in the construction of my knowledge.

The hermeneutic process also informed data analysis, where theory was brought into an ongoing interpretive dialogue with participants' research data.

### 3.2 The research format

Research methodology texts indicated that a focused, exploratory-descriptive case study format (Edwards 1993b; Yin 1984) would best suit the presentation, description and exploration of research data. This case-study format allows the data of a few participant pairs to be explored in depth (*ibid.*). It also accords with enquiry into little-known phenomena and suits my heuristic aim of extending supervision practice (*ibid.*). The case study format also allowed me to present participants' data in a way that their stories remained coherent wholes and allowed their individual voices to be heard.

### 3.3 Sampling

As explained above, sampling was purposive (Bromley 1986; Creswell 1994; Huberman & Miles 1994) and arose out of information gathered in informal exploratory conversations that allowed me to target certain disciplines and individuals within them. I drew up a call-for-participant document and distributed it to selected academics and students and then made appointments to consult those who responded favourably to the document and to my research proposal, which was attached. After willing participants were identified, confidentiality contracts between them and myself were drawn up and signed. These outlined ethical considerations and constraints and formalized the rights of participants in terms of, for example, confidentiality and participation.

The population of this research is Master's supervisors and Master's research students over the age of 21 who are currently in one-on-one supervision relationships and who belong to the education and humanities faculties of one South African university. These disciplines were chosen because of my familiarity with them at undergraduate and earlier postgraduate levels. The university is based on a traditional Oxford model. Students and supervisors at the Master's level were chosen because it is a fairly large and easily accessible population. I also hoped that my past experience as a Master's student would help me to listen to and empathise with the stories of Master's students and their supervisors. Participants in one-on-one supervision were selected because of the close interpersonal relationship that characterizes this partnership (Burgess 1994; CHE 2003 7; Cryer 1996; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). As explained earlier, I

chose to research matched student-supervisor pairs in order to evaluate and compare the perspectives of both supervisors and students. The data of three matched supervisor-student pairs are used in the thesis. Extra data were collected, but not used, and I have elaborated on this omission in a section of the discussion chapter entitled 'Participants' experience of the research process' (see p. 291).

As described in the context section, supervision practices appear to differ when students are conducting group research as opposed to individually conceptualized research. Readings on the influence of commercialization on the educational domain suggest that the scientific model of research, which favours group research, is becoming more common (Aguinis *et al.* 1996; Altbach 2001; Cooper & Randall 1999; Gibbons 2001; Giroux *et al.* 1996; Halpin & Troyna 1994; Lemmer 1997; Marginson 2001; Morgan 1992; Morris 1972; Phillips 1990; Rouse 1987; Tisdell 1993; Walker 2001). I chose supervisor-student pairs where students are conducting independently conceptualized research to see if and how commercialization may effect their relationships.

Participant selection did not specify gender or ethnicity nor the level of experience of supervisors. The time-stage of students in their research process was also not specified. Although I am aware that these factors impact on the supervision relationship, they were omitted as selection criteria because the research does not focus directly on these issues. In addition, the supervision relationship is a potentially sensitive area to research; frankly, after some of the informal conversations with students and academics, I considered myself lucky to find willing participants and thought it best not to limit my range of potential participants by imposing any further selection criteria.

### 3.4 Data collection and processing

Data were collected in a series of sixteen semi-structured, in-depth, audio-recorded interviews (Kvale 1996; Seidman 1991). Two students had three interviews each and one had two interviews; two supervisors had three interviews each and one had two interviews. Each interview lasted between 60 and 75 minutes. The audio-recordings of these interviews were transcribed. Soon after each interview the transcripts were handed to participants to validate and clarify. Additional information was gleaned in the discussions

that took place between interviews, when we shared and commented on any new reflections. Some of these conversations were brief and others much longer and although I sometimes took notes during these conversations, they were not audio-recorded. These informal meetings served as a scaffold between interviews (Seidman 1991) and facilitated the exchange of transcripts.

Interviews were chosen as a data collection method because they allow for flexibility and offer the potential of gathering rich data (Kvale 1996; Seidman 1991). My interviewing style was open and conversational (*ibid*.). I refer the reader to the section in the discussion chapter entitled: 'Participants' experience of the research process' (p. 290) for a detailed description of some of the positive and negative responses to and repercussions of my informal interviewing style.

A day or two before each interview, participants were handed an outline of some of the issues that I planned to discuss. It was hoped that the interview outlines would assist them to focus on concerns pertinent to the research question and help to neutralize anxieties (mine and theirs) that sometimes attend the interview process (Kvale 1996). Although the outlines served to guide the interviews, I did not allow them to restrict us from digressing into apparently tangential areas. In hindsight, these tangents very often yielded unexpectedly rich data - an advantage of semi-structured interviewing (*ibid*.).

The first two interview outlines were the same for all participants. The questions were:

- What motivates you to supervise Master's students/study for your Master's?
- What are your expectations of yourself and your student/supervisor?
- How did you come to be working together?
- How have you experienced the supervision process so far?

The second interview outline requested participants to construct metaphors for each of the following:

- Their supervision relationship
- The research topic
- The research process
- Their relationship with the university.

The third interview outline was customized and personalized, depending on information offered in preceding interviews.

I conducted one set of pilot interviews to practice interviewing techniques and the construction of interview outlines.

### 3.5 Foucault's methods

There is some dispute as to whether there is any such thing as a Foucaultian *method* (Kendall & Wickham 1999) and that his is best referred to as a research *approach*. Some critics argue that his work is the outcome of an arbitrary and methodologically dubious postmodern position. Marshall comments: "Academics seem exasperated that Foucault does not appear to fit into recognizable categories and does not employ reputable or even recognizable methodologies" (1996: 4). Other commentators, including Marshall, focus on the validity of his investigative rigour:

> …His work is not the product of idle speculation or groundless grand theorizing, but emerged from a huge amount of very careful research. It is also the case that Foucault's work does not fit very well into either the camp of 'critical research'…or the camp of 'liberal' research – by which we mean that Foucault's thoroughgoing skepticism about such notions as 'truth', 'progress' or 'values' means that it is difficult to see his work as building on other work in similar areas…(Kendall & Wickham 1999: viii).

Nonetheless a considerable amount of work in different areas has been and is being built on *his* research. In this regard, numerous comments in the reviewed literature refer to academics who cite Foucault's quotes and insights, but who then neglect to apply them to the business of conducting their research (Kendall & Wickham 1999; Hunt & Wickham 1994; Marshall 1996). Marshall (1996) comments that aside from this name dropping, with few exceptions his work and methods remain largely ignored by educationalists – teaching practitioners, academics and researchers alike. I am not entirely in agreement with this criticism, as my experience of reading and listening suggests otherwise. Perhaps my observation derives from an inclination to regard educationalists as belonging to a multi-disciplinary community as opposed to working only in education departments. In this regard, the premise from which Marshall argues is not clear.

Two aspects of Foucault's research approach are integral to this study: firstly, his research attitude, which was informed by Pyrrhonistic skepticism, and secondly, specific analytical foci that guided his inquiries (Kendall & Wickham 1999).

### 3.5.1 Pyrrhonistic skepticism

Pyrrhonistic skepticism aims to achieve an ethical stance that is ideally neutral (see footnote no. 9 p. 24). This aim is similar to what phenomenologists term bracketing (Brooke 1991; Giorgi, Fischer & Von Eckartsberg 1973; Kruger 1988). The difference between bracketing and Pyrrhonistic skepticism is that the former aims to suspend prior knowledge and preconceived ideas by cultivating conceptual silence while the latter cultivates conceptual noise. By generating as many interpretations as possible, skepticism increases the number of rival arguments:

> …The idea is not to affirm or deny any proposition, but to move away from the possibility of doing so and toward the desired suspension of judgment. By continually seeing only oppositions the mind will, it is claimed, eventually stop judging…(Kendall & Wickham 1999: 10).

Using skepticism is more easily said than done and I often found that it increased the number of my problems and amplified them. However, it assisted me to *approach* a stance of neutrality and to consider many more interpretations than I would have done had I not tried to apply it.

An important injunction of Pyrrhonistic skepticism is to be aware of and preferably avoid making second-order judgments (Kendall & Wickham 1999). First order judgments occur through the simple act of perception; these are almost automatic and, for the most part, unavoidable. Second order judgments occur when mental or intellectual calculation is then applied to initial perceptions, for instance, when a researcher looks for hidden meanings in data (*ibid*.). An example would be attributing reasons for a participant's actions or attitudes according to the personal proclivities or the unexamined theoretical assumptions of the researcher (*ibid*.). Looking for and finding hidden meanings usually signals that a researcher is viewing the data through a discourse that is relevant to him or her, but not necessarily to the data. An authentic depiction of participants' experience becomes lost. In my case, second order judgments might occur when I view participants'

data through the lenses of psychology discourses, which are integral facets of my academic training. In this research I am already viewing participant data through the lens of Foucault's power theory so perhaps it would be more pertinent to refer to this potential error as a third-order judgment.

### 3.5.2 Selected aspects of Foucault's methods

Hunt and Wickham (1994) and particularly Kendall and Wickham (1999) authored the two texts that assisted me to distill and operationalize Foucault's research approach or method for the purposes of this study. I have customized as follows a selection of key analytical foci he used to guide his investigations:

- Trace the connection between the two poles of knowledge: what is sayable (said in words and texts) and what is visible (made manifest out of what is sayable).
- Analyse how statements relate to each other (participants' statements about each other and the university, but also statements from the university and broader educational domain about supervisors and students).
- Pay attention to the repetition of statements.
- Analyse the way different statements position people differently in relation to themselves, to one another and to the educational domain (subject positions).
- Describe authoritative institutions that limit what is sayable and visible (discourses in which participants are embedded and dominant discourses in the university domain).
- Analyse how these discourses target participants and how this targeting affects power relations between them.
- Describe and explore strategies of power used by participants in relationship to themselves, to each other and to the university and broader educational domains.

## 3.6 Data analysis

Kvale describes data analysis as a process that "…involves developing the meaning of the interviews, bringing the subjects' own understanding into the light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher on the phenomena" (1996: 190). In this regard, data interpretation was led by a technique of constant questioning and cross-questioning

(Bleicher 1982; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Cresswell 1994; Huberman & Miles 1994; Kendall & Wickham 1999; Kvale 1996; Strauss & Corbin 1997). Despite a rigorous literature search, I could find no research that resembles my own and from which I could borrow ideas about how to analyse my data in keeping with Foucault's power theory, information on the educational domain and research practices within it, and my research question. I had to generate my own process of analysis. Consistent with methodological relationalism, I analyzed using a mixture of standard techniques (Huberman & Miles 1994; Strauss & Corbin 1997) and the operationalized list of Foucault's key analytical foci as shown above.

The first standard analysis technique used was a process called data immersion (Cresswell 1994; Huberman & Miles 1994; Strauss & Corbin 1997; Yin 1984, 1994). In this process the researcher reads and re-reads the data many times in order to get a sense of the whole of the material until she or he becomes intimately familiar with it. I chose to transcribe all the data myself, considering this to be essential to the process of immersion. By the time the analysis was completed, I could recite much of the data verbatim.

After data immersion, analysis was conducted in three phases during which two analytical grids were developed, one for data presentation and one for the final discussion of the data. Although I have attempted to isolate and then describe each phase as clearly as possible, the phases are inextricably interwoven and it is difficult to present the process of analytical engagement in a linear and one-dimensional sequence, as this written description demands. To augment the following description of analytical processes, the first raw data transcript in the appendix shows the coding processes of the first two analytical phases.

The three phases of analysis use three coding strategies that are customarily associated with the grounded theory analysis (Huberman & Miles 1994; Strauss & Corbin 1997). A grounded theory approach aims to build theory from data (*ibid*.). As pointed out earlier I worked predominantly in the opposite direction, having started from a theoretical base in Foucault's work. However, using a hermeneutic process I also worked from data to theory. The three coding strategies are elaborated on as they occur in each phase of analysis, but by way of introduction they are: Open coding (a data reduction technique that allocates a conceptual label to each participant statement); Axial coding (a data expansion

technique that examines relationships between open codes and statements); and Selective coding (a data integration technique that develops a storyline) (Strauss & Corbin 1997).

### 3.6.1 Phase 1

Open coding is a process in which data are reduced by breaking down participants' statements in order to examine, name and categorize phenomena expressed in them. Each phrase, paragraph or statement is allocated a conceptual label or code that represents its central idea (*ibid*.). To a great extent, my conceptualization had already established the avenues by which I would approach this process. From the beginning I had a very clear idea of what I was looking for – anything that relates to my core concept – power relations that influence the tension between autonomy and dependency. Autonomy and dependency can only be identified, evaluated and discussed in the context of specific actions and situations, so I needed to identify these. Once again, I had already conceptualized a scheme whereby actions or, rather, strategies of resistance fall within the broad categories of push-allow-pull. During the literature survey and early exploratory conversations I began to recognize common threads weaving through the written and spoken texts. *Expectations* was one thread, sometimes spoken about in relation to *abilities*. *Support* was often mentioned, sometimes related to professional issues such as help with finding appropriate literature, rationalizing research choices or simply structuring the thesis. Support was also talked about on a more personal or pastoral level, for instance being given space and understanding when life disrupted the research work, or the experience of feeling confirmed or repudiated as both person and researcher. So I began my analysis with codes already in mind: autonomy, dependency, strategies of resistance, expectations, abilities, professional care and pastoral care.

On all the interview transcripts I used colours to flag statements that relate to these codes. To remain open to the unexpected, I used grey to code any statement that did not fall into any of these categories: grey denoted something undecided, the vague shadow or shape of some unanticipated category or theme. There were many false starts in the coding process and it took many revisions before all the codes were formulated and finalized. Constant comparison between statements and codes sometimes led to new conceptual codes and, in some cases, the collapse of several codes into an existing or new one.

For example, once all the raw transcripts had been coded I re-examined areas marked in grey to see if and how they linked in terms of commonalities and differences. I found that many were associated with feelings. Some spoke of conflict: expressions of unhappiness or fear, instances where the stories of the supervisor and her or his student conflicted, instances where the information offered by a participant would conflict with what she or he had said earlier, also conflict between what was said, expected or desired and what was done. Some of the feeling-statements spoke of happiness: positive new developments, instances where the accounts of supervisors and the students agreed, or when what was said or desired corresponded with what was done. After adding two new codes, one for conflict and one for agreement, I was able to address most of the statements in the scripts although some areas coloured in grey remained. Some I discarded as extraneous, but I retained many, keeping them grey and re-examining their significance during subsequent phases of the analysis.

### 3.6.2 Phase 2

In the next coding process – axial coding – data are expanded by postulating relationships between open codes and statements and also between theory and information from reviewed literature (Strauss & Corbin 1997). In terms of "…building a logical chain of evidence and making conceptual/theoretical coherence" (Kvale 1996: 204), my most important consideration when looking for relationships between codes and statements was to try and unravel *how* power works in the Foucaultian sense of the sayable (written and spoken texts) producing the visible (things made manifest). Accordingly, this phase of analysis was led by my operationalization of Foucault's steps as listed on page 142.

Returning to the data transcripts which had been colour-coded during the open coding process I now used symbols to flag relationships between themes in the data, the reviewed literature, exploratory conversations and *processes* [41] relevant to the functioning of power relationships. Coding involved examining *where* statements occur, including the contexts in which they are embedded - the sense of literal, metaphorical and psychological space. *When* they occur in time was a further consideration - what precedes a coded statement

[41] Key concepts in this paragraph are shown in italics

and what follows it. Attention was paid to the *repetition* of statements. Also, I examined how participants position themselves and each other as their relationships progress - the different *subject positions* they adopt. This includes participants' *initial positions* in terms of their *worldview*, *motivations* and how they came to be working together or to be *matched*. During the first phase of coding, I had already identified strategies of resistance, but now I needed to look at these *patterns of interaction* in terms of how participants manipulated or influenced one another. To do this I had to pay close attention to the influence of *different discourses* on participants' attitudes and actions. Discourses point to the working of *institutional* and *interpersonal power relations* so there had to be a focus on which discourse may be targeting a participant in a statement and what is *covertly and overtly sayable* in a statement. What is *produced* or becomes *covertly or overtly visible* in terms of thesis-as-product and person-as-product needed to be explored.

I decided that the best way to go about this axial coding task was to ask myself questions specific to my customized list of Foucault's research foci. The questions are as follows:

**What is sayable about <u>Interpersonal</u> power relations?**

- How does the person think of and construct him/herself as supervisor/student? (worldviews, motivations, matching)
- How does he/she position her/himself and the other? (subject positions)
- How does he/she experience the supervision relationship? (resistance strategies; processes of constructing the other and being constructed by the other)
- What discourses are at work and how do they target the participant?

**What is sayable about <u>Institutional</u> power relations?**

- How does the supervisor/student relate to the university domain?
- What discourses are at work and how do they target the participant?

**What is visible?**

- What is produced in terms of the thesis?
- What is produced in terms of personhood?
- What is produced in the university and/or broader educational domains?

After coding axial statements with symbols, a grid was formulated to integrate information from the open and axial coding phases. This grid forms the framework for organizing and presenting each participant's data in a synopsis which is close verbatim (Yin 1984). Synopses were handed to participants to check and validate. It was essential to present the data in individual synopses because the participant-researcher confidentiality contract stipulated that during the research process the data of supervisors would not be shared with their students and vice versa. This first grid is shown at the beginning of the section in the appendix entitled Data presentation (see p. 336).

### 3.6.3 Phase 3

Strauss and Corbin (1997) call the third phase of analysis selective coding. In this process information from the reviewed literature, theory and data are integrated into a coherent and cohesive storyline that moves the research argument forward. This is a complex dialogical process in which the researcher moves backwards and forwards through the data, and backwards and forwards between data, theory and the reviewed literature, searching for evidence that supports or challenges an interpretation (*ibid*.). This process often informs a different reading of the literature, theory and data, so there is a continual hermeneutic oscillation occurring between these.

The major task of this analytical phase was to integrate the data synopses of individual participants into an analysis of power relations as they work *between* each supervisor-student pair. This integration of synopses was an intricate balancing act; the difficulty at this stage was that data were often reversed, so to speak. For example, the student's expectations and positioning in the relevant sections of his or her synopsis would most often be contained, or played out, in a *different* section of his or her supervisor's synopsis.

While comparing the data of the first participant pair, a working grid emerged, which I then tested on the second case study. After making several adaptations, I generated a grid that worked well for both case studies and then applied this to the third case study. After a few further adaptations, I generated a grid that worked well for all three of the case studies. *My guiding aim was to explore how the process of power (the tension between autonomy and dependency) may work to balance what participants expect against the care*

*they give and get, and to identify the forms of knowledge that result.* Because the reviewed literature is so silent on the actual functioning of pastoral care, I examined professional and pastoral care separately. I hoped to gain more insight on pastoral care and to explore how it may interface with professional care.

The second grid shown below is the final analytical template used for the discussion of each participant pair. Regarding *how* I generated this grid: it emerged out of analytical thinking, reflexivity, patience and creative inspiration. As Atkinson (in Strauss and Corbin 1997) notes, the final act of integrating theory, data and argument into a unified storyline is not like solving a puzzle or a math problem - it has to be created, not cracked.

**1 Interpersonal power relations**

1.1 Initial positioning
1.2 Worldviews & motivations
1.3 Professional and personal matching & research topic

1.4 Expectations & abilities - Professional & pastoral care
(The process of constructing self and other in the will-to-knowledge cycle)

1.4.1 Professional expectations & abilities
1.4.2 Professional care

1.4.3 Pastoral expectations & abilities
1.4.4 Pastoral care

**2 Institutional power relations**

2.1 Competing discourses
2.2 Expectations
2.3 Care

**3 What is produced?**

3.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?
3.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?
3.3 What is produced in terms of the university domain?

In order to discuss each supervisor-student case study coherently, it was necessary to include the bulk of participants' data as presented in their individual synopses. In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, I have shifted the synopses to the appendix and do not present them in the customary fashion, as a separate chapter.

### 3.7 Research validity

To some extent this research may fall prey to a critique of interpretivist research discourse: that it tends to yield impressionistic descriptions that are idiosyncratic, not generalizable and therefore of little use. In defense of qualitative and descriptive work, I offer the example of Foucault's published research: most of it is written in a way that makes it *appear* to be almost purely descriptive, yet it derives from relentlessly rigorous analysis (Kendall & Wickham 1999; Marshall, 1996) and, moreover, the arguments embedded in his descriptive style move knowledge forward. To counter the injunction to generalizability, I offer a systemic and interpretivist perspective: my interpretation of theory and participants' data is necessarily subjective and represents only one way of perceiving and understanding the phenomena examined, thus research findings cannot be generalized. As Kvale notes: "…It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations and to arbitrate between them" (1996: 245).

Qualitative researchers aim for research authenticity as opposed to validity, generalizability and reliability, arguing that the latter trio belong to a quantitative-scientific research paradigm (Kvale 1996; Seidman 1991). They propose instead that research should be validated in terms of its own discourse. I am aware that this stance could be problematic when arguing for a research position that is methodologically relational: the validity criteria of all the discourses I draw upon are pertinent. I construe research authenticity in line with Kvale and Seidman's (*ibid.*) proposed assessment for interpretive research: validity is an effect of the researcher's faithful articulation of participants' experience and the capacity to make meaningful connections between their data and the relevant literature. Validity is also premised on methodological reflexivity (Bleicher 1982; Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992; Denzin 1978; Ritzer 1981). In this regard, when discussing participant data I indicated instances where I was aware of

conflicts or gaps between theoretical constructs and practical findings. I also debated the influence of theory and the different research discourses used in this study.

In terms of research validity or rather - authenticity - Kvale comments that in interpretive qualitative research "…the emphasis is moved from inspection at the end of the production line to quality control throughout the stages of knowledge production" (1996: 236). As discussed earlier, throughout the study I applied Pyrrhonistic skepticism to the best of my ability in order to problematize or falsify (Kvale 1996) my interpretations and to increase the number of rival understandings (*ibid.)*. I followed up on surprises in the data, looked for and discussed contrasts or "negative evidence" (Huberman & Miles, 1994). As previously mentioned, when I thought I may have inadvertently influenced participants' responses during data collection, I would articulate my concern and ask them to carefully consider and delete any parts of their transcripts which I suspected may have fallen into this trap.

All audio-recordings were transcribed and every interview transcript was handed to participants to criticise, check and validate. Where I was unsure of my interpretation of what participants were saying, I would ask for clarification. All audio-recordings were kept, should any of the participants wish to listen to them. I paid close attention to how meanings may have changed when data were shifted from their original textual contexts. In this regard, presenting raw data allows the reader to test my interpretations against what participants said. Raw data are included in the appendix and referenced to the participants' statements in the discussion. Editing to the raw data comprises the omission of statements that have no relevance to the research focus and editing relating to confidentiality such as the use of pseudonyms, the omission of the actual titles of students' research topics and personal, departmental or funding information.

In terms of the control of analysis and the reliability of coding, Kvale (1996) advises employing a second person to code data. I chose to work independently. This decision arose out of a concern to guard participant confidentiality as closely as possible. Confidentiality agreements assured participants that I would be the only person with access to *unedited* raw data. The first raw data transcript in the appendix shows how data were coded in the open and axial coding phases of analysis.

With respect to the truth of what participants said during interviews, I did not presume to judge their statements as true or false, but accepted what they said as valid interpretations of their own reality. Where participants' statements conflict with what they say elsewhere in their interviews, I included this observation in the discussion of their data, pointing out how their differing interpretations may impact on the way they strategize and negotiate power relations. Kvale refers to this as a "symptomatic" reading of data: this focuses "…on the interviewees themselves and their reasons for making a given statement" (1996: 243).

Kvale comments that in qualitative and particularly interpretive research "…the quest for absolute, certain knowledge is replaced by a conception of defensible knowledge claims…validation here comes to rest on the *quality of craftsmanship* in research" (1996: 240). In this regard, evaluating the validity of this research relies on whether or not my methodology, interpretations and findings communicate a sense of coherence and truth to *you*, the reader.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed the methodology used to address the research question: How do supervisors and their postgraduate students experience the supervision relationship and how are the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional power implicated in these relationships? After debating the ontological and epistemological positioning of the study and linking this to methodology, it was concluded that the research is situated in poststructural ontology, in critical-constructivist epistemology and in methodological relationalism. The application of principles of hermeneutics was then discussed. Following this, pragmatic aspects of the methodology - the research format, sampling, data collection and processing, a description of Foucault's methods, data analysis and research validity - were addressed. I now proceed directly to a discussion of the case studies.

# CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

This chapter uses the second analytical grid presented in the Methodology chapter (see p. 148) as a template to organize a discussion of the processes of interpersonal and institutional power relations of each participant pair. The discussion integrates processes of power with the themes of expectations, abilities and professional and pastoral care.

Every participant statement in this chapter is referenced to a page number in the raw data transcripts, which are contained in the appendix. *Page numbers referring to raw data are shown in the left hand column on each page.* Done this way, statements are easily found in the appendix and the flow of the discussion is not disturbed.

The chapter is divided into five sections entitled: **Howard and Ray; Luna and Nadia; Molly and Andy; Towards a synthesis of the three case studies;** and **Participants' experience of the research process.** An overview of the chapter is given below:

**Howard and Ray, Luna and Nadia, Molly and Andy**

The discussion begins with an exploration of *interpersonal* power relations in each matched supervisor-student pair. Participants' worldviews and motivations, the students' research topics and the professional and personal matching of students to supervisors are examined in order to ascertain their initial positioning in relationship to themselves, to each other and to their respective research interests. I then examine how participants use power relations - specific resistance strategies that fall within the broad categories of push, allow and pull - to go about constructing one another.

The discussion of the constructing process first juxtaposes participants' professional expectations and abilities against the professional care they give and get. Thereafter, their pastoral expectations and abilities are juxtaposed against the pastoral care they give and get. In keeping with Foucault's notion of the will-to-knowledge, I show how participants are targeted by and positioned in discourse and how they re-position themselves and one another by using strategies of resistance. As previously pointed out (see p. 97) discussing

power strategies in terms of the categories of push, pull and allow depends on my interpretation of the data so that this discussion represents only one of countless possible readings.

The discussion then proceeds to look at *institutional* power relations in each relationship: how discourses in the educational domain influence participants and how, through strategies of resistance, they influence these discourses. This section is presented under the sub-headings: Competing discourses; Expectations; and Care.

In keeping with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) claim that power relations produce knowledge, I then note what forms of knowledge (visibilities) are produced in each relationship in terms of the thesis, in terms of personhood and in terms of the university and broader educational domains.

Finally, a brief summary of each participant pair is presented.

**Towards a synthesis of the three case studies**

Data of the three participant pairs are then compared and integrated into a brief synthesis organized under the sub-headings: Matching; Reflection; Authority; Levels of guidance and support; and Power relations in the university domain.

**Participants' experience of the research process**

In keeping with the principle of reciprocal causality that threads throughout Foucault's work, systems metatheory, interpretivism and critical research as well as the injunction of methodological relationalism to render personal, theoretical and methodological reflexivity visible, I offer a fairly detailed discussion of participants' and my experience of the research process.

Page ref. to raw data

## 4.1 HOWARD and RAY

### 4.1.1 Interpersonal power relations

4.1.1.1 Initial positioning

4.1.1.2 Worldviews & motivations

Originally Ray came from a historically disadvantaged educational background. He was a student activist, engaged in battle and living with the problems of an inequitable education system. Now, as a school teacher and an office bearer in the trade union, the
469 struggle continues: "This was the so-called perfect world that we are fighting for…Is it being realized?…Are we moving towards that?" Ray is undertaking a Master's by thesis, not to accumulate paper or prestige, but to galvanize his new knowledge for
469 dissemination in the workplace: "…to share [it] with people who are perhaps not in a position to acquire that knowledge…to make other people part of it…but *with* them, on an equal basis. I want to be recognized as being a good educator, without necessarily occupying a power position. I would rather serve. I believe that the power lies in the
469 people that I want to serve".

Ray remarks on Howard's experience in the education field: "…[Howard is] coming
468 from the same place where I'm at…at one time or another he was an educator, moving through the ranks…had similar experiences, probably had similar questions". Howard
438 finds "... the anarchic argument appealing…I base my own management and leadership style on that…It's about the tension between agency and structure. In my opinion, the
438 only structure that makes sense is the structure that agency brings about…Academic institutions are beautiful examples of that, and academic departments…if you overload
438 them with structures you've had it". His worldview is echoed in the way he supervises Ray. While his governing motivation is to guide Ray to self-actualization both as student and as person, Howard endeavours to balance and integrate this student-centeredness with the changing needs and expectations of the contemporary university and the structures within it.

4.1.1.3 Professional-personal matching & research topic

Howard's and Ray's alliance started in a series of group meetings. This arrangement contains [42] the uncertain and sometimes unnerving process of matching, when students potentially feel dependent. Being in a group also orientated Ray to the research
457 process: "…we started to brainstorm…if I had an idea, I could rely on my peers to feed
457 my ideas…to question my ideas and stimulate my thinking". The group meetings also gave supervisors and students a chance to get to know one another and to decide who preferred to work with whom. The reviewed literature often notes that group structures such as student and staff forums assist students and supervisors to network, overcome isolation and share information (Cryer 1996, 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994) (see p. 66). However, I found no instances in the literature that mentioned group meetings being used to combine an introduction to research with choosing a supervisor or student, as in the case of this participant pair. This is a non-threatening and creative way to address the process of matching which, as an interviewee in the research of Hill, Acker and Black comments, is a " 'weak point' in the admissions procedures" (1994: 55).

Howard chose Ray, partly because of Howard's expertise in Ray's field of research, educational leadership. Personal affinity also played a part in his choice: "…you just
433 take to some people much more easily than you do to others. If I get a really good vibe from someone early on…I'm going to try and get that student, quite deliberately...almost make *sure* I get that student to supervise". In the matching process priority is customarily awarded to professional considerations such as common academic fields and shared research interests. Personal factors are less often taken into account. Cryer (1996) comments that these factors *should* inform supervisor-student matching as they are likely to impact on the quality of the supervision experience. Congruent with humanistic discourse (see p. 76), which values the *person* as an intrinsic product of the process of learning, Howard considers both academic and personal factors when choosing Ray as a student. Ray, apparently unaware of being
456 chosen, thought the allocation process was "automatic". Nonetheless, he was given the

[42] The term containment comes from psychology discourse. Loosely interpreted, it is a form of support that is constant, caring and solid yet does not control or constrain.

457 alternative to work with one of the two available supervisors that he felt "comfortable with". He chose Howard. Thus, at this early stage in their association, both Ray and Howard are at ease with one another as people. From a professional perspective, Ray assesses and positions Howard as having expertise and interest in Ray's research field. Howard assesses and positions Ray as having come from an historically disadvantaged educational background and expects that their forms of rationality may be different, particularly with regard to the practice of critical thinking.

From this first phase of surveillance, assessment and feedback in the supervision process, the tone is set for a collaborative positioning - aligned closely to allow on the push-pull continuum - between Ray and Howard in terms of autonomy and
456 dependency. Ray sees Howard as "…a person of authority in the sense that he knows
477 his field. He sets a platform of equality. We are equal when it comes to the learning process, although our contributions may differ, based on our levels of knowledge and experience". Ray clearly values his ability to contribute to a shared learning experience. This balances the unequal power differential commonly understood to exist between supervisors and students in terms of skill, experience and authority (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). Although Howard is aware of being "an" authority (Peters in Nias 1993), he works in a way that aims to counterbalance being "in" authority (*ibid*.): "I don't think one can get
442 away from the power-distance aspect of supervision, but I try to play that down as
443 much as possible…I don't want that to be uppermost in what we do, and how we do this thing".

Howard and Ray are also positioned congruently in terms of a shared humanistic worldview. In this discourse people are guided to an understanding of their unique worth and encouraged towards emancipation and individual autonomy. From this perspective "…education which has no consequences for social action or personal growth is empty" (Morris 1972: 218). Howard is aligned with this view: "…studying
443 with me [Ray's] not going to just get a degree. If I don't see evidence of [personal] development and growth we're not going to get there". Practise of a humanistic discourse within the disciplinary domain of education means that professional and personal factors are practically indivisible. However, for the purpose of this thesis I examine them separately.

Howard and Ray also both work within interpretivist (see p. 47) and critical (see p. 48) research approaches. Both approaches recognize the centrality of the person to his or her work. While a critical approach directs research towards effecting societal change, I suggest that any research endeavour, including those using an interpretivist approach, may also effect change on the micro-level of the personhood of the researcher. As Foucault remarks: "…this transformation of one's self by one's own knowledge is, I think, something rather close to the aesthetic experience. Why should a painter work if he is not transformed by his own painting?" (1988: 14). In terms of the pertinence of Ray's research to bring about educational change, Howard appears pleased that Ray's
449 project examines a pressing educational issue and is not "blue-sky research". Ray
477 concurs: "…it's a national issue…it's in the interests of the country…education relates to everybody, irrespective of who you are".

More intricately, their interpretivist-critical approach centers around and is produced by what is sayable in the anarchic educational leadership discourse (see p. 70). Although this discourse does not deny the existence of institutionalized structures, it resists the authority of extrinsically enforced rules and structures which remain rigid in the face of the changing needs of those who people them. As Grice and Humphries articulate it, this stance "…explicitly attempts to move outside institutionalized managerial values…[to address] the opposition between the purposefulness of individuals and the seeming givenness and narrow instrumentality of work-process relationships" (1997: 417). Greenfield elaborates: "…certainly organizations are control orientated, but my theme is that they should not work through a mechanistic kind of control, but rather through a lawful, personal, responsible form" (1993: 259). The development of personal autonomy and intrinsic integrity are considered integral to developing locally relevant structures that are appropriate to the needs of people in their contexts and circumstances-as-they-are at any given time (Senge *et al.* 1994; Wheatley 1999). Thus creativity within evolving structures supplants re-production within the constraints of fixed structures. In this discourse, emerging structures have similar qualities to those that Foucault attributes to power relations: they are "…mobile, reversible and unstable" (1996: 441). Supervisors working in an anarchic educational leadership discourse need to cultivate flexibility and open communication and participate with their students to foster a shared vision (Wheatley 1999) of the research. These factors are common to interpretivist and critical research approaches (see pp 47 & 48).

Howard and Ray are positioned congruently in terms of their shared interest and immersion in an anarchic educational leadership discourse. Moreover, its principles are the central focus of Ray's research topic, which centers on leadership in the context of the implementation of the South African government's new Curriculum 2005. He is
470 interested in "self and group management": in how teachers and school managers balance the expectations of the system with the needs and constraints of the workplace,
470;475 in essence, their emancipation from structures that are "confined and rigid" in order to
470 formulate "…workable solutions". He elaborates: "…It's about turning the thing around and saying: 'You're the people, you're in the situation. What do you think your own procedures should be?' Allow people the opportunity to take risks so that they themselves can become empowered and capacitated and ultimately make the systems and procedures work for *them*". For Howard and Ray the double alliance of theory and topic is likely to influence power relations between them and significantly strengthen both personal and professional dimensions of the sayable and visible aspects of an anarchic educational leadership discourse.

Perhaps the personal and professional dimensions of the match, and Howard and Ray's collaborative power relations that work to evenly balance autonomy and dependency, are most evocatively expressed in the similarity of the metaphors they offer for their supervision relationship. Echoing a journeying metaphor often associated with the research process and the supervision alliance (Clegg & Gall 1998), they both speak of
476;445 one another as "fellow travellers" on a "journey". Ray sees himself in a boat "…like an
475 explorer…sailing around [an] iceberg" that represents the tip of "…the magnitude of the question I am going to research". Howard sees them hiking in a terrain "…full of
445 hazards and cross-trails…I am the guide…the one walking in front, finding the track and saying 'go with me, you better know which are the right paths, and for a while I'd need to show you the way'…But there will certainly be a point soon when *he'll* be the guide, *he'll* be so far in his studies…it will have taken its shape, and he'll know what to do. Because in fact after a point, I *won't* know. It's not my research…it's *his*. And that's important for me". In letting go of Ray's outcomes, Howard works within anarchic discourse: he presupposes change and is prepared to work with shifting outcomes. Ray appears to sense this: he knows that "…it's not always smooth
476 sailing…[and] the hard days still lie ahead", but anticipates that Howard will

477 "…navigate me in the direction that he imagines and perceives that I am heading, but also to allow me to move on my own".

This concludes the discussion of Ray and Howard's initial positioning in relationship to themselves, to each other and to their respective research interests. Having explored their worldviews and motivations, their professional and personal matching and Ray's research focus, I now turn to examine how Howard and Ray use power relations - specific resistance strategies that fall within the broad categories of push, allow and pull - to go about constructing one another. In keeping with Foucault's notion of the will-to-knowledge, I also show how Ray and Howard are targeted by and positioned in discourse. The discussion of the constructing process that follows immediately hereafter juxtaposes Howard and Ray's professional expectations and abilities against the professional care they give and get. Thereafter, their pastoral expectations and abilities are juxtaposed against the pastoral care they give and get.

#### 4.1.1.4 **Expectations & abilities - Professional & pastoral care**
(The process of constructing self and other in the will-to-knowledge)

##### 4.1.1.4.1 Professional expectations & abilities

All the reviewed supervision literature comments on the importance of expectations being clearly expressed and negotiated. From the outset the formal expectations and
458 requirements for the Master's degree were made clear to Ray. He says: "...I know what is it that is expected of me…what a proposal should entail, where to start from and where [I] need to move towards". These institutionally sayable expectations merge and collaborate with his personal interpretation of supervision, which is influenced by a humanist educational discourse. This recognizes that learners have freedom to choose how they use information in the construction of their own sense of meaning: "…I expect…to get the necessary guidance…to make meaning for myself and to make sense
458 of my research…to make the links…but ultimately, to come up with the questions myself". His *push* to autonomy and self-reliance is demonstrated by his declaration
458 that "…ultimately I will be the one that does the research".

Ray knows that autonomy is expected of him and that ultimately he will have to demonstrate "independence and mastery" (Moses 1994: 13). Using the third [43] person
467 to articulate this injunction, Ray asserts: "…you have to keep on your toes. You are on your own. You are supposed to do this on your own. You have to become, in a sense, independent. Rely on yourself. Put things in place for yourself". To comply Ray
467 realizes that as a student "…you have to be disciplined…develop your own set of rules, knowing your deadlines, knowing that for every follow-up appointment *this* is what you need to achieve and stay committed to the process…You know that you're accountable". It appears that Ray has been made aware of all the major factors that the reviewed literature refers to as being pertinent to the discussion and negotiation of professional expectations. This is consistent with one of the strategies recommended by the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee: "making clear to students the purposes and outcomes of the learning task" (CHE 2003: 8).

436 What Howard expects from Ray, as from all his students, is "…critical engagement with *everything* that [he] reads". The reviewed literature consistently refers to critical engagement and reflexivity and the need for supervisors to encourage students "…to constantly question and methodically distrust" (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 248) information they encounter. Encouraging students to practise reflexivity is one of the transformational teaching strategies that South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee articulates as: "…getting students to make connections with previous knowledge and maximizing their awareness of their own knowledge construction" (CHE 2003: 8). Fostering critical reflexivity is regarded as one of the most important aspects of effective teaching and the means whereby *intrinsic* surveillance, assessment and the nurturing of personal autonomy and responsibility may be encouraged. Foucault regards questioning and reflexivity as essential to alert us to the connection between knowledge and power and the dynamics between our subject
434 matter, our contexts and ourselves. Howard regards "critical engagement" as a necessary process whereby Ray's personal as well as his professional horizons can be broadened. Perhaps his interest in *personal* horizons explains Howard's reluctance to
445 think of himself as Ray's mentor: "…for me mentoring means deliberately grooming

[43] When Ray uses the word *you*, he does so in a way that is synonymous with the word *one*: he is referring to himself, but indirectly. This is why I say he is using the third person.

someone into a kind of pre-determined place". He does point out that in supervision
443 there is an element of apprenticeship: "…you can't ignore it, because it's about learning conventions". Howard does not undervalue the conventions associated with producing a thesis nor does he undervalue the thesis as a pre-determined place towards which Ray
435 is currently working: "…the products are important. The university wants them, and of course the students want them. The world wants them…[However] I'm not
444 consciously making him more promotable. I'm not introducing him to an academic life. I doubt if he'll ever leave teaching, he loves teaching". Instead, Howard wants to
435 facilitate a process in which "…real growth" has occurred in Ray's critical capacities and his personhood. Congruent with what is sayable in a humanistic discourse, "…this is much more than a modern, professional understanding expects of the education profession. That is restricted to a science-oriented, mainly…instrumental training in specific job competencies" (Lippitz in Vandenberg 1997: 82). If Howard were to direct
435 Ray only in terms of the product: "'*This* is what you need to do…chapter one should be like *that*, chapter two like *that*…Do that, and we'll give you your Master's'", in his opinion Ray would run the risk of producing what Howard terms "a piece of dead
435;435 research". Howard comments: "…I would not be satisfied …It's not a good sense of
446 fulfilment. I'd feel like I failed…it's just the product…Got a degree. Great. So what".

#### 4.1.1.4.2 Professional care

When he began the supervision Ray was very strongly positioned to *push* for a cause.
433 As Howard articulates it: "…he came in with a very strong agenda. [He] wanted to do
434 research for the wrong reasons…to show officially and formally how *strongly* [he] disapproves of what's happening". An integral part of the research process is keeping an open mind, one that ensures that one's positioning as a researcher does not escape scrutiny (Bourdieu 1987). After assessing how Ray positions himself, Howard's first hard *push* aims to dislodge Ray from his platform and lead him to scrutinize his own stance. As pointed out in the Power chapter (see p. 27), systems of reward or castigation may be overt (e.g. awarding marks) or covert (e.g. subtly praising or withholding approval). In this way surveillance, assessment and feedback serve to re-produce the principles of the discourses they espouse. Howard teaches Ray a lesson in critical thinking, couching it in a way that targets him directly yet refers to him

obliquely. Ray recalls Howard as having said: "…when a student speaks like that, they already have all the answers. 'You don't need to do *research*…go and write a book!'" Ray recalls associating this comment with himself and his own approach, which at the time made him feel "…kak [shit]…and a little bit embarrassed".

Although Ray sometimes experiences Howard's questioning as "…fearful…I get a sense of insecurity", this is not based on the manner in which Howard gives feedback or offers criticism: "…it was not levelled as a personal thing, so that made it acceptable". Although challenged by it, Ray experiences Howard's strategy as constructive and respectful. Ray responds accordingly, taking some time to reflect on and assess Howard's criticism. The capacity to reflect is one of the attributes that supervisors customarily aim to develop in their students. As Van Manen points out: "…reflection forces one to be accountable, subjects one's views and actions to the criticism and discussion of others, and thus leads to new perspectives and self-understandings" (in Vandenberg 1997: 47). Reflexion is an important and necessary response to criticism. Ray elaborates: "I went home to think about it…then…OK…it's *truth* in what he's saying…So I accepted it…because research is supposed to answer the things for you. You don't have preconceived answers to it". Ray positions himself and Howard in terms of learning and knowing: "…we are co-learners, co-constructors of [my] knowledge, not necessarily [Howard's] knowledge as a supervisor". In the face of criticism Ray stands firmly in his sense of self. This positions him to claim his own power in a manner that is in line with Foucault's view of it as being "…a relation which exists between two individuals who are both capable of acting" (Grant & Graham 1994: 167). True to their evenly balancing autonomy and dependency, Ray accepts Howard's criticism, but *resists* it and acts by *pushing* with some of his own: "afterwards I went back to him and said: 'Look, you need to have *some* of your own prejudice that you will take into the research. I have experience of what is happening in schools and this is my understanding of what needs to happen. So I'm not entirely accepting what you're saying, but I accept…that I need to have an open mind'".

Vance Packard remarks that in traditional university hierarchies "…the flow of communication, which is an instrument of power and which functions as a coordinating agent of people and processes within any system, comes from the 'top' and policy is most often modified from the top only" (in Morris 1972: 27). A Foucaultian view

recognizes that policy influences practice - what is sayable influences what is or becomes visible. I suggest that it is possible that a top-down management or leadership style is likely to become assimilated into teaching and supervision praxis. What is sayable in humanistic as well as anarchic leadership discourses counsels abstinence from managing or leading from the top-down and promotes instead an ethic of participation. Accordingly, as a supervisor constructed *predominantly* in anarchic educational leadership and humanistic discourses, Howard needs to train and lead Ray towards a more rigorous application of critical thinking, yet refrain from telling Ray what to think. Howard needs to *show* the discourses in action - in a sense he has to represent the visible product of the autonomy these discourses demand - to serve as an exemplar of the principles he aims to teach. This is a tricky tensioning act. Howard positions himself: "…Sometimes…where it's so obvious what a student should be
442 doing and he's not doing it…I won't tell him 'This is what you should do…' I really want him to find out either what *I* think he should do, or something else that *he* thinks he should do which will lead him out of the problem…of being stuck, perhaps". Morris offers a humanist perspective when he reflects:

> …a teacher who teaches as if he did not know the answers…brings students personally into the act of learning…A learner is…autonomous when it comes to deciding what…knowledge means, and how it fits into a life being lived in this hour by this person. He [or she] is the only agent in the educative process who is in a position to convert knowledge into meaning…(1972: 216-218).

According to this discourse Ray must make his own discoveries and assimilate them in a way that helps him to cultivate his personal nucleus of meaning. Howard acts as a
429 catalyst in this process: "…That's really why we learn, and why I am teaching…to help people find out who they are". Again Howard's approach is anarchic in the sense that he pushes Ray to control and construct his own process and to find his own way through the chaos of this early and uncertain stage of research. Ray recalls how
467 Howard *pushed* him towards such autonomy: "…go and do prior research by yourself [and] develop your own position".

Supervisors commonly experience difficulty in balancing autonomy and dependency and deciding what and how much to give their students (see p. 94). As Nias (1993) points out, the autonomy-dependency dilemma is at the heart of difficulties experienced in teaching and learning. As visibilities of their knowledge, supervisors are positioned

to re-construct themselves and others. They also reconstruct the discourses in which they are embedded (this is the cyclic process of the visible doubling back on the sayable). This is a position of great influence. Howard finds students' dependency
439 "…the most worrying part of the job". To some extent he needs to be directive: "…If
440 you don't actually map out the next step, they've had it". However by applying principles of humanism and anarchic educational leadership, he uses a judicious combination of directing and questioning to lead students like Ray towards an intrinsically generated practice of critical thought. Howard affirms that by supervising
440 in this way: "…in a remarkably short period of time they can turn a corner".

Ray is dependent on himself now; he has been instructed to *pull* from his own resources. Howard has *pushed* him towards discovering a research focus that combines his own voice - his authenticity - with his wish to effect educational change and, for Ray, this begins a new struggle at a new site: himself. He now needs to resist and defeat false philosophies - both personal and professional ones.

Part of testing philosophies and assumptions and looking for answers and counterarguments is the process of doing the literature review. Ray experiences this period as problematic and confusing. His difficulty at this stage is demonstrated in the
461 way he sees and positions himself: "…I'm very much unorganized…I can't focus on one thing…I will read different things, and without the necessary, predetermined purpose…I will just go on and on". While it was useful to Ray in the brainstorming
467 process of the group sessions to depend on other students and to "…float around between [my] proposal and what [I was] hearing from other people", being dependent on the opinions of others becomes a problem during the literature review. Brainstorming is a tactic that many supervisors use to help students through the first research task: formulating a narrow and sharpened research focus out of their research interests (Gottlieb 1994). However, now Ray has to brainstorm with the literature, with no arbitrators immediately on hand to assist him in his interpretations and understanding. The way in which he alternates between articulating in the first and third person speaks evocatively of his struggle to position himself: "…when you are
465 reading conflicting theories, at times you paint yourself into a position where you think '*This* is the one I want to side with.' Then somebody else comes up with another perspective that puts you totally off. So that raises possible insecurities in me…at

times it's difficult for me to make up my mind…where does it place *me* now?" At this point Ray is in a lonely position and is feeling insecure - perhaps even inadequate - in terms of establishing his identity as a researcher: "…knowing, if I adopt a certain position, I will need to justify it". It is in that justification that critical reflection comes into play and the process of balancing supervisor-student dependency and autonomy intensifies.

Ray's literature search and his struggle to find and justify a valid positioning for himself takes him on tangents. Openness to change involves viewing chance and contingencies, risks and mistakes as potentially fruitful. Ray acknowledges that during the literature review his sidetracks sometimes lead him awry. Cryer offers an encouraging perspective on this:

> …Things may go *so* badly wrong on the explorer's expedition that it has to be abandoned with seemingly nothing achieved. Yet with a little thought, he [or she] could still have an important story to tell…the research student [should] be able to capitalize on everything that seems to go wrong…(1996: 148).

Ray experiences Howard as accepting of this process: "…maybe he draws on his own experience…that was the route that he probably also followed…so he could identify with it and not see it as a fault". Clegg and Gall note that supervisors' research experience is essential in enabling them to identify with their students' struggles: "…Crucially…you have to have been there before" (1998: 350). Ray recalls Howard's empathy: "…it didn't feel like [Howard] was putting pressure on me". Instead Ray experiences Howard as communicating that "'…it's fine…it's natural…it's OK to be like that…you can do it, but keep in mind that sometime or other you need to come back…don't linger too much on the outside'". Recognizing tangents as part of the impulse to discovery, Howard balances the dual strategies of *controlling* and *letting go* in order to keep Ray on track; he *allows* and contains Ray during this exploratory stage and then *pulls* him back from the peripheries, in order to *push* him forward.

Ray is feeling insecurely positioned when he presents Howard with the first draft of a proposal: "…I didn't know what to expect…there's always trepidation". He is very dependent now on Howard's assessment and feedback. Handing in written work is part of the process of writing practice and, importantly, of finding and committing to a

position. Cryer comments: "…something committed to paper provides a common focus for discussion and shows up any discrepancies in individuals' understandings, which, if left unidentified and unresolved, could lead to serious confusion, delay and expense" (1997: 13). Howard empathizes with the way it might feel for Ray to hand in
436 written work: "Can I show this to anyone? And then…ouch…cringe while they read
436 it". He assesses and positions Ray: "…I think [he] was very short on confidence
436 there…it's delicate of course…a tricky area. Ray's put himself on paper…exposed himself…[he's] very vulnerable". Although Ray confirms that he is "insecure at a level
466 of knowledge" he appears to trust Howard enough to risk being vulnerable:
461 "…Ultimately that's why I'm *here*…to find new ways…to learn from the situation". In
455;456 this regard he thinks of both himself and Howard as "life-long learners". This term is often encountered in educational discourse and it also links to an anarchic leadership discourse in that it relates to the ongoing growth and development of individuals as co-constructors of evolving organizational structures, which are regarded as "living systems" (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989).

At the beginning of their relationship Howard positions Ray as "…a natural
435;436 inquirer…[who is] inclined to scholarship…very able…[and who] seems to want to
430 work hard". These are attributes that most supervisors wish for in a student (see p. 108). Nonetheless, he also anticipates that because of Ray's educational background and the daily realities of his teaching post, his first proposal is likely to be rhetoric. His expectations concur with his assessment. He positions and evaluates Ray's work:
436;437 "…[it] was rubbish…the rhetoric of politicians…[yet] there was an inkling, an idea that I liked". In the process of intellectual engagement, feedback influences how and what students learn and, by association, what forms of knowledge they are likely to produce, including forms of their personhood – the identities that they assume as subjects or as individuals. In humanistic teaching discourse as well as anarchic educational leadership discourse, knowledge is not communicated by controlling and limiting what is learned by reiterating extrinsically generated rules or what is legitimized as sayable. Rather, teaching and leading are subtler processes of influence requiring strategies of listening, empathizing and encouraging the person to participate (see p. 74) in the construction of individual and collective knowledge. This engages their creativity and empowers them to relate with intrinsic integrity – to themselves, to their work and to collective goals (Wheatley 1999). Accordingly, Howard positions himself to *push* Ray

away from reproducing rhetoric: "…of course you can't *say* that…you have to lead
434 them towards *seeing* it". Moreover, to lead students like Ray to the degree of reflexive engagement demanded of a postgraduate, Howard needs to push even further: "…They
434 need to go to the next level. They also need to problematize their own position. *Huge!*" The Higher Education's Quality Committee translates this as "…assisting students to build meta-cognitive knowledge about their own thinking processes" (CHE 2003: 8).

Howard uses a strategy of challenging to influence Ray to establish a congruent relationship between his approach as a researcher and what is sanctioned as sayable in the rules of academic discourse. Ray recalls Howard instructing him: "…It's not just
459 writing for writing's sake, you need to have an argument. Reflect on what you are doing. What is it that you are challenging? What is it that you want to unearth? And s*ay* why you want to address these things". It is not enough for Ray to simply display or reproduce knowledge: in order to move beyond the level of a novice, Ray has to transform knowledge. At this level "…people write texts not simply to say things, but to do things: to persuade, to argue, to excuse" (Geisler 1994: 87). Howard alternates strategies giving certain information - in this instance a key article - with strategies of withholding information, to shift Ray towards personal engagement with what and how he learns. Howard's questioning strategy is a way of "testing" Ray by getting him to
436 test himself: "…so *this* is what you think? *Why*? But you could think *that*, couldn't you?" Howard *pushes* Ray so that he can *pull* from his own resources. Howard knows:
436 "...that's not a part of the tradition of the kind of education that Ray would have had, excepting in the Honours year". This is a very challenging position for Ray. In retreating from critical engagement and lapsing back into a way of working that served him in the past: depending on and re-producing rhetoric, Howard observes that Ray:
436 "…fell back on what he knew…[it was] almost as though he shoved the Honours year aside…a sort of reversal". The reversal arises out of Ray's intense struggle to listen to and find himself - his own voice. Howard recognizes this: "…he was
437 struggling…struggling so *much* to work out what he was doing. He couldn't work out what was really at the *core* and the *heart* of his study". Ray confirms: "…you struggle
458 to contextualize your ideas…you can't frame them…you can't put them into a plan". Howard has given Ray a key article – " a conceptual anchor" (CHE 2003: 9) – in order to facilitate his second attempt at the research proposal, but as with the literature

review, Ray still has to depend on himself to develop discrimination and creativity in the way in which he uses these.

437 As Howard remarks: "…it turned out well because our next session was a breakthrough
437 session…Ray is on track…As he walked in, he said: 'You know what's wrong? Our schools are waiting for someone from the outside to change things…to make things happen. It should be coming from us.' And I knew that he was through". Although
438 Howard says: "…I hope he read more", Ray's sudden turnabout remains something of a mystery. This is a pertinent example, perhaps, of Foucault's (1979, 1980, 1982, 1988, 1996) inclusion of the role of chance and contingency, which conspire to render the outcomes of power relations unexpected and unpredictable.

464 Somewhat apprehensively, Ray came to his "breakthrough" session: "…one is never certain when you hand in something…Well, [Howard's] first comment was that it
464 seems that I've hit the road now". For the first time in the process of surveillance, assessment and feedback Ray feels more positively positioned in his professional relationship to Howard, to himself and to his research. He says "…In this session I
464 think there was more positive feedback than what I've become used to from Howard…the cut and dry criticism, although constructive".

The insight that Ray brings to his breakthrough session - that educators and educational leaders need to initiate the changes they require and envision, and proactively formulate context relevant solutions to the challenges of implementing Curriculum 2005 - shows how he is becoming a visible product of an anarchic educational leadership discourse. This discourse recognizes the role of individuals in the co-construction of their organizational identities (Wheatley 1999) and emphasises the importance of participation in addressing "…the opposition between the purposefulness of individuals and the seeming givenness and narrow instrumentality of work-process relationships" (Grice & Humphries 1997: 417). Ray's "breakthrough" statement also reflects the humanistic discourse that constructs both Howard and himself: he becomes congruently positioned to the goal of self-actualization and personal autonomy. Howard
437 experiences Ray's breakthrough as "…amazing…that magic moment…satisfying…it's a very fine thing to see…for anyone…but in the *context* of where he comes from, and where I thought he might be going…those moments are *extremely* profound". Ray

shares the joy: "…when I walked out, there was a sense of achievement…that I've
465 almost accomplished the final product. Yes, a sense of accomplishment". It appears that for both of them and for what is sayable in humanistic and anarchic discourse, the result is a 'win-win' situation.

As pointed out before, change, chance and contingency are central to Foucault's (1979, 1980, 1982, 1988, 1996) theory of power relations. Howard stresses the changing
451 nature of the supervision relationship: "…if that doesn't happen, there's trouble…[supervision is] a relationship that is dynamic…it's a process…not a thing,
452 and it's appropriate in the earlier stages for a supervisor to be quite strongly in control and point the way, and it's equally appropriate to gradually step back…If you are out in
446 front on this journey all the way then you're in deep trouble, both of you, because in the end it's not going to be the student's work, and you can't then say that the student has learned anything or grown". Opinions expressed in the reviewed literature concur that the bulk of guidance a student needs is customarily given at the beginning of the supervision relationship after which it is appropriate to begin a "weaning process" (Phillips & Pugh 1996: 163). This task involves "…helping postgraduates to become aware that they have sufficient knowledge and ability to trust their own judgment and monitor their own performance" (*ibid*.). Howard repositions himself accordingly: he expects to step back now that Ray is "on track".

476 Ray recalls: "…there were times initially that I wondered whether I am at the right place…should I continue with this research? Am I ready for this? Am I equipped for this?" He feels more confident now: "Gauging from the initial stages…if things unfold
476 as they are now…then hopefully yes…I'll get through". However, he does still experience insecurity about the appropriateness of his present position in relation to his research: "…I still don't know *if* I'm heading in the right direction! There's still this
464 uncertainty because I don't think I have an entirely in-depth understanding that 'OK, this is it!'" What Wheatley says in relation to anarchic educational leadership is equally relevant to the research process: "Stasis, balance, equilibrium, these are temporary states. What endures is process – dynamic, adaptive, creative" (1999: 90). Part of the difficulty of committing to a research position is that researchers "…have to leave room for non-knowledge. Take a small step, wait for feedback, and then proceed further" (Schumacher in Capra 1989: 230). Howard understands this: "…[students]

think they're looking for answers but in this kind of research there aren't any answers…there are almost more questions. Because they don't see any answers they get terribly worried". Change and unpredictability are part of the research process *and* the supervision relationship. Any position taken up usually soon involves a repositioning. Howard says: "I don't actually know where he's going. I don't think he does either…we'll both be surprised at the end of next year to see where he's ended up". In this regard, he *allows* Ray to author his own experience and, accordingly, does not predict Ray's process. Instead his questioning strategy positions him like an "equilibrium buster…deliberately looking for information that might threaten stability…and open [Ray] to growth" (Wheatley 1999: 83). Wryly alluding to this, Ray observes: "…Knowing the person who is my supervisor, the research could take other directions".

Having discussed Howard and Ray's professional expectations and abilities and the professional care they give and get, the discussion now proceeds to juxtapose their pastoral expectations and abilities against the pastoral care they give and get.

#### 4.1.1.4.3 Pastoral expectations & abilities

Nowhere in the interviews is there any reference to Howard and Ray *expecting* pastoral care *from* one another, although perhaps Howard expected that he would need to give it. He says: "…the pastoral role increases in an inverse proportion to the level of sophistication of the student's background…if they've come from an impoverished educational background…the dependency level rises hugely". He adds: "…in a remarkably short period of time they can turn a corner". Ray turned a corner in terms of his work. He has also grown in terms of his understanding of himself and others: "…There's a lot that I've discovered about myself…and other people". Despite Howard challenging him, he reports always feeling "comfortable" and "secure" in his interactions with Howard. Gauging from the data, there certainly is a lot of caring in their relationship, but it seems to me that care is practised subtly in this relationship: it is made visible (manifest) in Ray's and Howard's actions, more than it is expressed in words (sayable).

458;466 Ray speaks of Howard's capacity for care: "…his *nature* is so…humane". Ray feels
358 "…comfortable, because although [Howard] has titles behind his name, he's a down to earth type of person…there's no airy-fairy stuff with him. And he's very
462 straightforward…he's the kind of person I can work *with*". Something of Ray's expectations of his own ability to care is captured in the way he links his responsibility towards and care of Howard with his responsibility towards and care of himself: "You
467 know that you are accountable. Not only to yourself, but to a person that's making some sacrifices on behalf of you…who's there to support you and to scaffold you in your learning process. You need to be committed to yourself, to the process and to what you're doing…so as to show that same commitment to the person who's guiding you".

Their professional interaction so far has already established a sense of security for Ray and, as I interpret it, Ray expects that this will continue throughout their relationship.
466 Ray positions himself and Howard: "…in our interaction and in our relationship, never was I fearful of Howard as a person. He was never dominating, never taking a stance where I felt that on a personal level that he will not accept what I'm saying, or try to ridicule me, or make nonsense of my presentation or my contributions…never at all". The supervisor's respect for the personhood of her or his student is a quality that the literature mentions as conducive to establishing and maintaining an equitable and successful supervision relationship (Grant & Graham 1994). South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee articulates this as "…developing an appropriate motivational context so that learning is meaningful to students" (CHE 2003: 8). Student participants in the research of Hill, Acker and Black mentioned that one aspect of motivation relates to being "…made to feel that what they were doing was
466 worthwhile" (1994: 63). Ray continues: "…So I've never felt threatened in the relationship. In an environment like that there is a sense of security more than insecurity". Cryer speaks of the need to take cognizance of a student's life experience - his or her "non-paper qualifications" (1997: 10) an aspect of Ray that Howard
442 celebrates: "…generally a Master's student is starting from a long way away as an academic. But at the same time Ray brings so much anyway, as a rich person himself, which may not be what is normally valued as *academic* knowledge…he brings his own experience and his own gut-feel and his interest and who he is as a person". This attitude matches South Africa's Higher Education's Quality Committee's

recommendation that academic teachers should acknowledge the importance of students' prior learning and encourage them to assimilate it with new knowledge they encounter (CHE 2003: 8). That Ray shares this perspective is shown in statements where he repeatedly acknowledges the value of his own personhood and perceptions. In this regard, both Howard and Ray are congruent with sayable values of a humanistic discourse.

The data presented above indicate that Howard and Ray's ways of being and interacting
462 do, as Ray says: "…complement each other". In their personal affinity and the way they value one another, there appears to be an unspoken expectation of mutual respect. With professional and pastoral expectations and abilities so closely aligned, it is a strong possibility that they (as visible subjects of the discourses that produce them), and the thesis (the sayable product of these discourses), will feed back into, strengthen and re-produce the humanistic and anarchic leadership discourses in which Howard and Ray are embedded. This is the cyclic process of the will-to-knowledge (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) in which subjects are targeted and positioned in discourse so that they are simultaneously produced *by* it and producers *of* it.

#### 4.1.1.4.4 Pastoral care

Parenting metaphors are often referred to in relation to the supervision relationship (Burgess 1994; Clegg & Gall 1998) (see p. 110). Howard positions himself as a
443 nurturing parent: "…I'm parenting him through this process, because he's opted to go into a period of growth…I think there's quite a strong nurturing element…and I mean that in the best sense of that word. I don't think it has a bad sense, it's such a nice word…nurturing. I think students need nurturing. I think we all need nurturing, actually, all the time. But only, here's a particular case where a student is embarking on a fairly big piece of research and there has to be quite a lot of caring going on". He
443 positions Ray as: "…this wonderful man, who I think at heart is a gentle person…and kind of easy to nurture, for that reason". He reflects on their likely future positioning: "…I think I might get really close to him as the process goes on. And we'll be good friends, I think, forever after that".

According to Foucault the discourse of pastoral care is "…a matter of constant, individualized, and final kindness" (1988: 62). He elaborates:

> …the shepherd has a target for his flock. It must either be led to good grazing ground or brought back to the fold…The theme of keeping watch is important. It brings out two aspects of the shepherd's devotedness. First, he acts, he works, he puts himself out, for those he nourishes and who are asleep. Second, he watches over them. He pays attention to them all and scans each one of them. He's got to know his flock as a whole, and in detail. Not only must he know where good pastures are, the season's laws and the order of things; but he must also know each one's particular needs…[this is] the development of 'pastoral technology' in the management of men…(Foucault 1988: 62-67).

Translating this process into an educational context: the teacher becomes the parent, the pastor, the mentor, the guide, the psychologist, the "friendly helper" (Burgess 1994; Wisker & Brown 2001) who guides the student towards an improved or authentic self who is fuller and better than he or she would have been without the teacher's influence. What is sayable (disclosed to the teacher-guide in words) and what is visible (made manifest and visible to the teacher-guide e.g. in deeds, attitudes or things such as academic work) have the status of truth or non-truth conferred on them, purely through the authority of the teacher-guide (Rouse 1987). In this way disclosure of the sayable and visible serves surveillance, which serves assessment, which serves feedback, which usually serves (overtly or covertly) to direct people along a certain path.

This leads me to explore Howard and Ray's power relationship in terms of Foucault's question: "…How is the reflexivity of the subject and the discourse of truth linked?" (1988: 38). Howard remarked that Ray initially expressed his protest in work beset by the empty "rhetoric of politicians". After being *pushed* from this position, Ray went home and reflected. By the time they had their "breakthrough session", Ray had integrated his own voice - his protest against the persistence of an inequitable education system - with his work and presented these in an academically acceptable way. He also became a visible product and active producer of the humanistic and educational leadership discourses that construct them both. Howard as supervisor and teacher-guide is - by look, word or deed - in a position to confer truth on Ray's experience and his work, and can influence both to grow in a certain direction. However, as I interpret the data, Howard's guiding principle appears to be the emancipation of the individual, even from the *teacher*. I get the sense that Howard marshals humanistic-anarchic

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educational discourse to help Ray to free himself and find his own truth, *whatever* that may be, and *wherever* it may lead him. Greene aptly captures the motivation behind this calibre of supervision: "…central to the effort may be the struggle for personal responsibility, the kind of responsibility that still provokes others to seek their own freedom, to take responsibility for themselves" (in Vandenberg 1997: 177).

Is pastoral technology, in Foucault's (1988) sense of the word, operating in this case? I question this because of the nature of the discourse within which Ray and Howard are embedded. It is humanistic and also anarchic in the sense that it *resists* the extrinsic construction of subjectivity: instead, it promotes the emancipation of the individual by endorsing meaningful participation as the means whereby intrinsic motivations can be integrated with extrinsic structures, rules and circumstances. There is one question that bothers me (as it would, perhaps, all people who believe strongly in the healing power of psychotherapy, which also teaches emancipation). Are Howard and Ray *subjects* constructed by and *subjected to* a pastoral ethic within an anarchic-humanistic discourse, or are they *individuals* who emerge from the freedom that this discourse and its ethic, opens out?

I suspect that Foucault would assert that they are subjects, subjected to and re-producing the pastoral element inherent in the discourses that construct them. Throughout the research process, I have grappled with this subject-individual dilemma. As will be seen in the following two case studies, I begin to approach a somewhat more satisfactory unraveling of it, or at least, a more clearly articulated critique of Foucault's and my own positions. However, at this stage I prefer to leave the subject-individual debate wide open [44] and offer some extra data on which to reflect: Howard describes his role as teacher "…it's kind of who I am…I *do* think that I am able to kind of unlock
429 what people *already have*…to know and find out ways of developing that…That's really why we learn, and why I am teaching…to help people find out who they are". This concurs with an anarchic leadership style:

[44] Part of my difficulty, I think, is because the subject-individual debate poses an ongoing and unresolved challenge to me as researcher and as person. Although Foucault's texts are elegant, scholarly and very persuasive, I do not accept his ideas unequivocally and believe they should remain open to debate. Accordingly, I have resisted rewording some sections in this thesis, preferring to leave the subject-individual issue unresolved.

> …Without a clear sense of who they are, and what they are trying to accomplish, organizations [and people] get tossed and turned by shifts in the environment. No person or organization can be an effective co-creator with [the] environment without clarity about who [they] are intending to become…(Wheatley 1999: 39).

Howard positions Ray in the future "…with people like Ray, there comes a sense of change. He can actually become a different person". Again, I reflect; who is this "different person"? Can it be claimed that Ray reaches a more authentic way of being? Ray offers a poetic description of his relationship with Howard, which seems to suggest that he does, and that his experience of Howard's way of supervising bears out Vandenberg's declaration: "…education is…the discovery of one's own possibilities of being" (1997: 14). Ray reflects: "Howard has crystallized a lot of things for me. He was able to…I don't want to say assist…but rather *clarify* my thinking without influencing it…I see my supervision as a process of crystallization. And you know…it doesn't matter how small a crystal is…if you expose it to light, it will reflect that light…and shed out different beams…so it can show you new directions".

This concludes the exploration of interpersonal power relations. The discussion now focuses on *institutional* power relations: how discourses in the educational domain influence Howard and Ray and how, through strategies of resistance, they influence these discourses. This section is presented under the sub-headings: Competing discourses; Expectations; and Care.

### 4.1.2 Institutional power relations

#### 4.1.2.1 Competing discourses

Howard comments: "I think [this university] has tried hard to transform, to accommodate students who come from educationally impoverished backgrounds. Still a long way to go of course!" In Ray's opinion: "We all know that [this university] is entrenched in tradition …and it's not keen on shedding its roots easily…or allowing new voices". As a student from a historically disadvantaged educational background Ray appears to feel somewhat marginalized. As discussed in the university domain chapter (see Innovation and reproduction p. 56), university management is not always

receptive to change or to hearing new voices despite the potential of these to assist the university to gain a competitive edge in the educational marketplace. Traditional university structures and managers are more often adapted to conserve principles of management that are formulated according to Newtonian principles: "…the progressive realization of a stable rationality…[where] manifestations of entrepreneurship must be absorbed and neutralized" (Morris 1972: 29). Addressing change, Howard proposes that for students from backgrounds such as Ray's, education needs to make "…an
430 ontological contribution…and it's quite an important one. It can be the one to get them over the hump of how they've been taught themselves". This entails: "…a broadening
429 out…of self expression, in a philosophic sense…because a research culture springs from that…from roots". Howard recognizes: "…the change includes taking on board
434 an academic discourse…interacting, correcting, processing…and you can't *do* that unless you are *there* as a person". Ray needs to become that person. Before he can be accepted and valued as 'that person' by academic gatekeepers, he needs to take on and personally assimilate the values and practices of academic discourse. Boughey (2000) points out that becoming a member of a world ruled and constructed by a specific discourse entails more than adapting to its language or ways of speaking: it is also requires an understanding and appropriation of the feelings, behaviours and values of the discourse. As Geisler notes, in this process of adaptation, knowing becomes linked to knowing how (1994: 88).

Several issues make it particularly important for Ray to master academic discourse. The most obvious is that he wants to get his Master's degree and needs to produce work of an appropriate standard. The next issue pertains to the field of his research: his topic addresses the role of leadership in emancipating teachers from the legacy of historically disadvantaged educational structures and their attendant personal strictures. As an office bearer in the trade union movement, Ray contextualizes the new knowledge that he has gained from his Master's studies so far: "…I feel that in a sense I'm empowered to engage [government's] Department of Education officials and say: 'If we look at educational leadership, these are the kinds of things that we could
468 do…this is how you need to interact with educators…with schools. If we say that we want to turn education around and address our past…our legacy of problems…this is a way to go'". Thus Ray's influence extends beyond the university domain to impact on the broader educational domain. If he is to produce research that is plausible,

commands attention and earns respect in the broader educational domain, Ray will need to demonstrate that he is conversant with academic discourse and able to work within the norms of the academy. Ultimately this will make it possible for him to disseminate the knowledge he gains in order to improve current praxis, or in his own words: "…to
469 share [it] with people who are perhaps not in a position to acquire it…to make other people part of it". Learning "scholarly norms" (Cryer 1997: 8) and the discursive intricacies *underpinning* them is Ray's first step to working effectively *within* the academy and thus becoming favourably positioned - given his anarchic inclinations - to challenge the system from *within*. As Foucault remarks: "…the university recruits and enrolls…people already undergoing a proletarian conversion and who consequently arrive at the university bearing a revolutionary potential" (1996: 70). Regarding Ray's revolutionary potential, Howard positions Ray in the future, anticipating that: "…he will *always* be a pain in the ass to so called institutions and power, which is really what
430 everyone in education should have in common…to prod…at improving and asking questions".

Another important reason why Ray needs to master academic discourse is that Ray is not only studying educational leadership, he is an educator himself. As I interpret it, as a teacher Ray is positioned in the educational domain as a "specific intellectual" (Foucault 1980b: 126). Specific intellectuals are the "savants or experts" (*ibid*.) who work "…within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them" (*ibid*.) and who are required to work "…in a new mode of the 'connection between theory and practice'" (*ibid*.). Foucault's insight is corroborated by the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee which advocates: "…the development of professional educators who can learn from their teaching practice, engage with educational theory and use self-evaluation to improve professionally" (CHE 2003: 3). Regarding professional improvement and educational transformation, Grant and Graham note: "…it is from current students that future cohorts of academic staff will be drawn" (1994: 175). Although Ray is teaching schoolchildren and not university students, Grant and Graham's (*ibid*.) observation remains pertinent: future cohorts of university students are drawn from learners in schools. It is likely that Ray's improved grasp of academic discourse - which includes self-evaluation - will not only move *him* beyond the confines of his historically disadvantaged educational background, it will also enable him to lead his *learners* towards the calibre of critical

thinking and engagement that will empower them to become increasingly effective learners. This potentially increases the number of "self programmable" (Castells 1998: 361) people entering the marketplace where their increased capacity to "maximize innovation and flexibility" (*ibid.*) benefits the economy. In fact this is exactly what he
469 wants to do; he says: "I want to be recognized as being a good educator". Being a "good educator" is particularly pertinent in the light of Ray's teaching post which is in a school that is both historically and currently disadvantaged. It is likely that effective teaching practice at school level will impact on the quality of learners entering institutions of tertiary education. When learners are well prepared and proficient it is likely to take some of the pressure off university educators and to create a fertile context for attaining the South African government's goals for social and economic change.

With regard to a student's academic credibility and acceptability to the academy and thus his or her potential to effect transformation from within it: "…supervisors are potentially in the position of luminaries who point out a path (more or less clearly) via which students may enter this elite – and judge whether those students are worthy of entry. It is a position of great power" (Grant & Graham 1994: 175). Howard exercises his power by using the professional and pastoral tools of anarchic leadership and humanistic discourses to reconstruct aspects of Ray so that he becomes initiated, incorporated and favourably repositioned in relation to traditional academic discourse.
434 He *pushes* Ray away from "empty" rhetoric and towards critical engagement with his topic so that Ray's protest can be registered in a manner that is acceptable to academic gatekeepers, including those who may resist new voices. This is congruent with the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's "…promotion of a 'culture' of reflection in teaching" (CHE 2003 6: 4). As a supervisor Howard facilitates the transformation of Ray as a student and an educator and, by association, the transformation of education. Moreover, Howard does so by leading through the praxis of anarchic educational leadership discourse, which is well suited to educators like Ray who teach in contexts where traditional structures need to be dismantled and replaced by flexible, innovative, context-relevant solutions and where autonomy needs to be reclaimed by individual educators so that they can participate in the co-creation of their organizational realities.

In a sense, Ray becomes part of Howard's "flock" to use Foucault's (1988: 62-67) metaphor. Strongly aligned power relations between Howard and Ray - with his newly honed critical capacity - means that their forces combine to re-produce and strengthen humanistic and anarchic discourses. This could then *pull* on traditional structures within the university and the forms of knowledge they privilege, appropriating some of their influence by drawing them closer in line with forms of knowledge associated with anarchic leadership and humanistic practices. This is the cycle of the will-to-knowledge in which "…The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (Foucault 1980: 52).

Anarchic leadership discourse resists rigid structures imposed from above. Instead, it recommends that rules and structures be formulated by people according to their needs. The structures people put in place would need to be sensitive to contingencies as they occur and would need to change quickly, as the situation demands (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Senge *et al.* 1994; Wheatley 1999). The contemporary university is embedded in a commercialized context. Rigid or elitist management structures are *already* challenged to respond quickly and favourably to innovations that have the potential to attract funding. In this volatile climate the relative freedom of mobility typified by anarchic educational leadership discourse, particularly regarding change management, increases opportunities for innovation and thus for the survival of educational institutions such as universities. For an anarchic leader "…predicting becomes less important than reacting" (Welch in Wheatley 1999: 38). It is plausible, therefore, that the visions or outcomes towards which an anarchic educational leader navigates an educational institution, department, programme or student, will have leaped well beyond the confines of proposed outcomes that are formally documented and thus made accessible and assessable to the slower machinations of institutionalized control. Thus potential consequences to university management of adopting an anarchic leadership approach are that it may enhance prompt decision-making and thus innovation, but may weaken institutionalized control (see p. 75). Although anarchic leadership discourse is based on the quantum principle that "…all life lives off-balance in a world that is open to change" (Wheatley 1999: 89), this does not mean that anarchic leaders promote chaos for its own sake or for some idealized - and arguably naïve - form of emancipation that seeks to oust all structures of control. In order to keep an organization growing, anarchic leaders aim to integrate *existing* structures with

the needs of the people working within them as well as with emerging market needs. In Greenfield's words: "…one has to balance values against constraints…one has to take action within a political context" (1993: 257). I present data to show how Howard uses anarchic educational leadership strategies to balance structure, agency and change within the "political context" (*ibid*.) of the university and how, through his relations of power, he integrates competing discourses in this exchange.

450 Howard observes: "…It's still quite rare to have qualitative research be heard mentioned as highly regarded or as respectable as more positivistic or survey based stuff". In Howard's opinion, statistically oriented research methods such as surveys are
449 "…a lot easier to do, because [they're] superficial…but you don't learn anything you didn't know…The difficulty with qualitative research is that it's got to be read…You
450 can't absorb it and know it and see the implications by looking at a page with some neat graphs, and therefore make certain decisions that may influence policy". As Cooper and Randall point out:

> …research information becomes a potential source of power to policy actors…it potentially reduce[s] critical uncertainties for certain policies and stakeholders, and provide[s] policy actors with the raw material from which they can construct arguments to define, justify, and persuasively advance positions in the policy arena…(1999: 26).

By offering policy makers and university managers easily accessible research findings that allow them to make quick decisions, quantitative research has become a privileged research method. Qualitative approaches rarely offer ready-made solutions, rather they tend to expose and often *increase* "critical uncertainties" (*ibid*.) and thus have less appeal than the reassuring logic of research findings expressed in numbers. I suggest that, partly for this reason, qualitative research approaches have become marginalized and are subjugated knowledges: "…those blocs of knowledge that were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systemizing theory and…which insurrect…the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of organized scientific discourse" (Foucault 1980: 83-84). Currently, the systemizing theory of scientific discourse is favoured by educational institutions (Aguinis *et al.* 1996; Altbach 2001; Cooper & Randall 1999; Foucault 1980, 1988; Gibbons 2001; Giroux *et al.* 1996; Halpin & Troyna 1994; Lemmer 1997; Marginson 2001; Morgan 1992; Morris 1972; Phillips 1990; Rouse 1987; Tisdell 1993; Walker

2001). One such institution is the National Research Foundation (NRF) which, according to Howard, is currently pressurizing academic researchers irrespective of their disciplines or discourses to apply for rating as scientists. Howard explains: 447 "…The idea is that once you've got a rating, even if it's a C, you almost automatically get funding". Responding to the National Research Foundation's declaration, which 450 Howard articulates as communicating: "…this is the year of the social scientists, we really want to back you guys. So write your proposals", Howard skillfully integrates qualitative educational research discourse with the methods favoured by dominant scientific discourse. He strategises by approaching colleagues in the sciences and asking them exactly how they go about applying for funding: "…I deliberately learned 447 from them, I asked them 'How do you do it? Tell me what you do.' And they told me. So I put together my Master's students and one PhD and I looked at their fields of interest…*with* them…I didn't sit in an office and do it. [I] looked at [their] interests…w*ith* them as a group. Not the other way around…rather, 'what are *you* doing and how does that make a project?' It worked like a bomb…for me". I comment on the significance of Howard's collaboration with students shortly, but first I address the integration of competing discourses. Foucault refers to forms of resistance or revolt against dominant scientific discourse as "…the insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (1980: 82), but Howard's approach is more aligned with the *integration* of subjugated knowledges than with the insurrection of them.

Through the strategy of collaboration, Howard promotes and advances his preferred discourses and their forms of knowledge. He *pushes* them forward, by *pulling* from the knowledge forms and methodology of dominant scientific discourse. Howard does not destabilize existing structures in a manner that divides him, and by association his goals, from existing university structures or managers who are less well disposed to qualitative research. He consistently applies resistance strategies aligned with *allow* to reach for his goals. As Capra remarks of people in contexts: "…the overall consistency of their interrelations determines the structure of the entire web" (1989: 52). As I interpret it, the intentionality of the anarchic leader provides a focal point out of which this consistency can materialize: like a magnet, power relations arising from her or his intentionality provide the central organizing forces around which people, like iron filings, will arrange themselves. Structures appropriate to the situation at hand and the people involved will then develop and evolve. It is conceivable that by consistently

using strategies of allow, Howard may induce reciprocal strategies from managers, including those who do not favour qualitative research. Not only is the power strategy of allow potentially strengthened through repetition, the forms of knowledge that if serves - qualitative research and researchers - may grow in influence. Howard's intentionality - allow + qualitative discourses + methods privileged by the sciences - could even initiate a new pattern where researchers from different discourses customarily pool their expertise to the mutual benefit of the university system, the researchers and the research endeavour itself. Although this last interpretation - or rather projection - may seem fanciful, it serves to illustrate one in a multitude of possible outcomes of Howard's power relations.

In his power relation with the university domain, Howard not only attempts to secure funding, and by association prestige, for qualitative work, his students will also benefit: "…if I get it…Ray will probably have his fees paid for him next year…It'll make a
448 difference to all their lives" Thus his one agenda is funding, but he also pursues another agenda: emancipation. Howard's anarchic approach can be seen in the manner in which he collaborates *with* his students so that they can pursue their individual research interests under one umbrella, so to speak. As described earlier (see p. 74) participation is central to autonomy and emancipation in anarchic educational leadership discourse. Howard elaborates: "…the science research model is a very
446 successful one from almost every point of view, except the one that matters most, which is 'to what extent does this research mean anything to *you* as a student? Is this *it* for you? Is this where your passion is? Is this where your heart beats?'" In the scientific model of research commercial considerations tend to be prioritized over individual students' research interests. This has implications for academic freedom. Ready-made research projects that produce deliverables sometimes serve to shift students and their supervisors away from "…whatever may be incalculable and unpunctual, irritating and shocking, subjective and ambiguous" (Kariel in Morris 1972: 14), towards institutionally sanctioned and often normative research topics and methods. This adjustment is coerced by "…creating a system and environment which respects and rewards precisely those values, aspirations, skills, etc., that serve *system* needs" (Morris 1972: 17). In the scientific model of research, funding and thus the thesis-as-product tends to be prioritized and students are often expected to slot into existing projects irrespective of whether or not they are interested in the project.

Passion is a construct commonly encountered in humanistic teaching discourses (see p. 92). Merging teaching praxis from humanistic and anarchic leadership discourses with the tools of scientific discourse, Howard crafts his interventions to suit the needs of the system, the interests of the students and the need to advance research of pressing educational issues.

448 Howard concedes: "…there could be an argument for…an approach where students slot into the supervisor's research. I say that because of the context we're in. South Africa in 2002 is a country in deep trouble. The education system is a shambles…it might actually be more appropriate for people like myself who have, I think, more of a bird's eye view of the entire problem and its implications, to guide students quite strongly and 449 say 'Actually, this needs looking at…this is a real problem…We don't want blue-sky 431 research at a time like this'…You've got to be quite strategic and say…well…is it worth doing?" South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee concurs and recommends that research should involve "…the application of knowledge to real world problems" (CHE 2003: 8). I recognize that our world has many pragmatic challenges which researchers are called upon to address and that blue-sky research appears impotent against these urgencies. However, I argue that it is possible that such research may render visible philosophical anomalies that lie at the root of and influence social problems and our responses to them. Does the pressure of political correctness that urges researchers to focus on projects that benefit society express something ominous about the value of the group as measured in relation to the individual? Research of aesthetic issues such as beauty, hope, joy: these could easily be marginalized as indulgent, blue-sky and having little practical applicability. This raises issues concerning the value of many human endeavours: does art, for instance, have practical applicability? Perhaps it is becoming unacceptable for research to be pursued simply for the joy of exploring in a systematic way, or for its educative value to the researcher. Aiken concurs: "…the free-lance inquirer who investigates whatever he pleases, in accordance with whatever procedures and standards of truth and meaning he may consider appropriate, is to be viewed as intellectually irresponsible and hence socially undesirable" (in Morris 1972: 113-114). I am led to wonder whether blue-sky research may be an example of what Foucault refers to as "subjugated knowledges" (1980: 82), in which case it may be useful to reflect on resistance to it.

Maintaining a tension between the needs of students-as-people and the needs of society and educational domains within it is a tricky balancing act, one that demands consciousness of our assumptions and worldviews and how we apply these to our fields of work. Howard *collaborates* with - or allows - different discourses in the university
447 domain, but he also *pushes* against dominant linear, scientific rationality: "…I tackle the hard scientists…on things like research, for example, and we start talking about the ethical implications of what they do and the philosophical underpinnings. They usually don't know what I'm talking about. I think the success of the scientific model in some
447 way links with who they *are*, who they've *chosen* to be…and they're just different people, actually". This statement dovetails with Foucault's (1988) claim that we become what we learn and know, that discourses produce subjectivities and that there is a personal thrust to all knowing.

With regard to competing research discourses, Ray positions the university as
471 "…making a great fuss about its standards…and its own level as a research institution",
472 but he thinks that management ideas are outmoded: "…there are people here with gray beards and gray hair with their own perceptions and positions about what research is". On the other hand, it appears that Ray and Howard's department is relatively
471 autonomously positioned in relation to the university system. Ray reports: "…Our department was given their own Higher Degrees Committee…I am free to do the
478;471 research the way I want to do it…as long as you remember that there needs to be a
478 standard that you need to accomplish…so as a student my autonomy is guaranteed and safeguarded. The university does not have power over you…it has power as far as its own academic standards are concerned, but your own ideas and thinking is entirely up to you. You have your own voice…if you have a story to tell, tell it". Again, his articulation slides between the first and third person: perhaps this hints at the difficulty that an outsider from a disadvantaged educational background experiences when he or she attempts to gain entrance into and establish a legitimate position within the hierarchy of the university domain. Although Ray is assertive regarding his right to freedom, he tempers this with the recognition that there are reasonable academic standards that he must aspire to and uphold. His comments show that he uses a responsible and balanced application of the anarchic approach, which supports open communication and equitable participation in the negotiation of conflict and the communication of challenges (Senge *et al.* 1994; Wheatley 1999) to the university

system. In this regard, Howard could be said to have successfully fostered in Ray an attitude that Nias exhorts supervisors to nurture in their students: "…one should not aim to establish anti-authoritarian attitudes, but rather to encourage each student to become an authority in his own right" (1993: 40).

#### 4.1.2.2 Expectations

Commenting on the expectation that supervisors should move students through the
431 system quickly, Howard confirms: "…You have to produce a certain number of
432 successful Master's candidates…we're all talking about cost…and how can we increase throughput". In response to global trends of "…neo-liberal economics and quasi-corporate management" (Marginson 2001: 2), universities worldwide are reconstructing themselves around the notion of "performativity" (Bloland in Lemmer 1997: 22). This is: "…the capacity to deliver outputs at the lowest cost" (*ibid*.). Bloland adds: "…education, at all levels, is being rapidly commodified" (in Lemmer 1997: 25). Howard and his colleagues make the demands of peformativity clear to students: "As a
432 department we're very up-front when it comes to making students aware of the time-funding issue". For students to be made aware of expectations is important. However, it could be argued that dissemination of this information is more important for the perpetuation of commercialization itself. In Foucault's opinion:

> …we cannot fully separate the existence of a form of knowledge from the various practices through which we encounter and deal with it, perhaps especially from the forms of constraint through which it is simultaneously enabled and compelled to show itself in specific ways…(in Rouse 1987: 216).

"Forms of constraint" (*ibid*.) such as assessment, surveillance, quality assurance procedures, reward systems and funding policies are systematic ways in which subjects are targeted and rendered accessible by discourse (Foucault 1979, 1980, 1982, 1988, 1996; Hunt & Wickham 1994; Kendall & Wickham 1999). These factors establish and entrench normative behaviour and act on supervisors and students as if they are raw materials (Kendall & Wickham 1999) that can be shaped to better serve dominant discourse. In the South African context, forms of constraint such as the assessment criteria proposed by the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE

2003) translate government's democratic ideology and (currently) neo-liberal economic imperatives into minutely detailed rules that support and promote the professionalization of education. These rules target university management, then supervisors and finally students in a cycle that serves to watch, assess and then punish or reward subjects according to how well they conform to the dictates of dominant discourse, in this case, a discourse of commercialization. As I have pointed out before (see footnote no. 13 p. 31) there is a tension in the CHE (2003 1-7) documents between two strands of quality assurance: the need to develop and increase self-surveillance and the need to implement institutionalized mechanisms of accountability. Thus the documents are not exclusively premised on values associated with commercial educational management discourse. Nonetheless, I argue that when monetary pressures in the form of throughput expectations are passed down to students they run the risk of being positioned as commodities rather than as clients. Ray comments: "You only have to open up a newspaper nowadays to see how the acquiring of a certificate is attached to material gain…how it can open up doors for you…how it can improve your life…so it's very much commercial. It's about making money. Many institutions, when they advertise a Master's degree…in the end it's attached to how many fees they can extract from a student and how much funding they can get, and that is not always directed towards the student…sometimes it's more for the well-being of the institution".

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Ray adds: "…ultimately you need to design your proposal so the research will sell…in terms of publication or putting the university on the map". This is the only time in the research interviews that Ray refers to publication. Howard comments that one of the commercial spin-offs of the scientific model of research is that it impacts on publication: "…It works in the sense that it's *productive*. People get through their research and they publish. And the supervisor gets to publish as second author, and sometimes first, because the postgraduate students are publishing". The research of Hill, Acker and Black also found that there is a link between teaching styles, completion rates and access to funding: "publication brought greater kudos" (1994: 59) than teaching and "…some supervisors developed a more structured approach coming from need to be goal oriented" (*ibid*.: 64). They found that this loss of autonomy is connected to the injunction to publish or perish.

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451 Howard thinks of supervision as "…both public and private…The public side lies in the accountability and the quality control…Now supervision reports are the rule…It's a new expectation. So there's the public side…I will therefore, at the end of this year officially get feedback from all the students…and they'll get to see my report on them". 439 Although Howard approves of quality control: "I believe that we should look for ways of ensuring and guaranteeing quality", he appears to show some reservations regarding 439 the surveillance techniques implicit in the current "…worldwide obsession and preoccupation with quality assurance". He elaborates: "…'internal auditing' becomes pers. comm. 'public openness'". As a subject of humanistic and anarchic discourses, Howard is positioned to favour intrinsic over extrinsic measures of quality control. Reservations about the merit of extrinsic surveillance, assessment and feedback systems are echoed in the reviewed literature (see The group, the individual and academic freedom, p. 60).

The outcomes of the new supervision surveillance system have still to be assessed but to broaden the base of this debate, I offer the following statements from Ray and 439 Howard. Despite the formal supervision surveillance procedure, Howard comments: 463 "…it's very rare to get *real* feedback from students about how I'm doing. It's *hard* for them to give feedback". Ray says: "…as students, our support is confined to the supervisors". I argue that it is understandable that students who share Ray's positioning (however secure they may feel in their supervision relationship) may be reluctant to alienate their only support system, even within a confidential report. 439 Perhaps the formal format of a written supervision report detracts from the efficiency that surveillance seeks to achieve? If Howard does not get "*real* feedback" through formal supervision reports and students do not give it, then it becomes pertinent to ask the question that guided much of Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) research: Whose interests are served? According to Foucault: "…The men who hold political power are not the shepherds. Their task doesn't consist in fostering the life of a group of individuals. It consists in forming and assuring the city's unity" (1988: 67). If some students and supervisors choose not to divulge problems in their supervision relationships in the formal written format offered to them, then university managers' perceptions of the "city's unity" (*ibid*.) may well be premised on faulty factual foundations.

4.1.2.3 Care

453 As a supervisor, Howard experiences: "…'the university' as co-operative, helpful, supportive". Coming from an anarchic position, he claims: "…the issue is clouded by
453 the fact that there is no university. There are only people and the structures they put in place…The powerful structures at this university do not neatly fit into one pattern, and so they function differently, have different expectations, and affect me differently".

As indicated by his statements cited above, Ray does not feel altogether favourably positioned in terms of university support. However, this appears to be counterbalanced
476 by his strong alliance with Howard: "…my only interaction with the department and the university is Howard…so I can only talk about my interaction with him". Ray's dependence potentially puts extra pressure on Howard. South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee appears to favour the current shift away from the traditional model of supervision and its "…intense and sometimes intimate personal relationships based on the apprenticeship model" (CHE 2003 7: 3) and towards "…more pragmatic and efficient" (*ibid*.) approaches. However, the Committee does acknowledge that "…it is important to preserve as far as possible, the intense one-on-one supervisory relationship" (*ibid*.). As I see it, it is only in the context of a close interpersonal relationship that it becomes possible to effect the quality and quantity of professional and pastoral support required to train a student from a previously disadvantaged educational background. Howard is the only person who is initiating Ray into the norms of academic discourse and the values and behaviours underpinning it. He is also a source of pastoral support for Ray who registered part-time and works off-campus during the day and therefore is unable to get ongoing support from his peers. Ray's access to the greater community of postgraduate students is further limited because he is unaware of the newly formed postgraduate forum. When asked
463 about his contact with the forum he remarks: "It's the first time that I hear about that". Cryer (1996, 1997) and Mouton (2001) both refer to the loneliness experienced by postgraduate students. Grant and Graham (1994) and Zuber-Skerritt and Ryan (1994) document the advantages of student and supervisor forums (see p. 65). Institutional payoffs of such forums are "…enhanced achievement of goals and objectives and the creation of an environment for equity, affirmative action and the continuous

improvement of high quality learning and teaching" (Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994: 87). By not being made aware of and thus missing the chance to participate in the postgraduate student forum, Ray cannot gain from the benefits it may offer and by association, the university also cannot gain.

This concludes the discussion of institutional power relations between Howard, Ray and the university domain. The following section briefly notes what forms of knowledge (visibilities) are produced in this relationship in terms of the thesis, in terms of personhood and in terms of the university and broader educational domains. Thereafter, a short summary concludes the discussion of Howard and Ray.

### 4.1.3 What is produced

#### 4.1.3.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

Howard reports: "…Ray has finished his proposal and it's bloody good…excellent…that breakthrough he had was just exactly right. He submitted another draft with very few problems and then the final one came in a couple of days ago, and it's ready. We're sending it through to Higher Degrees". He formulates a new set of expectations, which begins a new cycle in the will-to-knowledge, which in turn initiates a re-balancing of autonomy and dependency. He confirms: "…I expect now not to have too much guidance left. When [Ray] hits his data analysis he'll probably need a workshop. And then my role will be smaller after that, more like a reader…read, comment, read, comment. Maybe a final few comments and then a final hard look".

Ray reformulates his expectations and this starts a new cycle of the will-to-knowledge for him. He is still unsure of whether he is on the right track and anticipates that his research may take a different direction. He acknowledges that "…challenges are going to be there", but reflecting on his progress thus far and the security he experiences with Howard as fellow traveller, he asserts: "Yes…I will get through".

#### 4.1.3.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

Howard experiences satisfaction when Ray integrates his personhood with his intent to improve an inequitable education system. He is pleased and relieved that Ray is bringing his critical thinking in line with the expectations of traditional university discourse and that he has produced a clearly defined research proposal. Ray becomes a visible manifestation of what is sayable in the humanistic and anarchic discourses that shape both of them and Howard experiences Ray's breakthrough insight (the personal and professional alignment between Ray's autonomy and the need for autonomy in school leaders, which is the ground of Ray's research topic) as: "…amazing…that
437 magic moment…satisfying…it's a very fine thing to see…for anyone…but in the *context* of where he comes from, and where I thought he might be going…those moments are *extremely* profound".

Measurable products such as books and journals enter the public domain, but some things researchers learn remain private. A significant example in terms of person-as-product is a greater understanding of oneself (Smith & Brown 1995). Ray shares some
468 of his experience of personal growth: "…the whole process is a process of empowerment…I gain from the readings and from the insights that Howard shares with
476 me. There's a lot that I've discovered about myself…and other people. It's almost as
468 if I'm on a daily journey of research".

#### 4.1.3.3 What is produced in terms of the university and broader educational domains?

Throughout the supervision process Howard's humanistic and anarchic educational leadership endeavours are apparent. What he says and believes is congruent with what he does: by translating philosophy into action he reproduces and strengthens the discourses that construct him. Howard applies for a research grant that, if successful, may help to pay Ray's fees. To craft his grant application he uses techniques from the scientific model of research and integrates them with humanistic values. He then uses this merger to push forward humanistic values and qualitative research. In this

interchange Howard finds a new power relation and an innovative form of practice to assist him to achieve his goals.

Ray's struggle to redress inequitable educational discourse continues. His aim is to
469 share his information with others: "I believe that the power lies in the people that I want to serve". He is pushed forward by what he has learned and in turn pushes to reproduce his new knowledge. He strategizes by bringing his new knowledge into his power relationships with others in the broader educational domain, seeking to pull them
468 towards the discourse he favours: "…My thinking on educational management has been very much influenced by this process…and not only at the workplace level. I'm serving as an office bearer in the trade union movement, and on a regular basis we interact with the Department of Education, so I feel that in a sense I'm empowered to engage departmental officials and say: 'If we look at educational leadership, these are the kinds of things that we could do…this is how you need to interact with educators…with schools. If we say that we want to turn education around and address our past…our legacy of problems…this is a way to go'". As an educator, Ray's growing grasp of critical thinking also positions him to train his school-level learners more effectively. It is conceivable that some of the learners Ray currently teaches will enter tertiary education in the future. Thus Ray's improved praxis potentially impacts on the future cohort of university students.

Howard successfully implements the recommendations of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's draft "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003), particularly those pertinent to the transformation of education through transformational learning practices (see list p. 105). Another of government's goals, which the Committee translates as "Fitness for purpose" (CHE 2003: 3-4), includes the expectation that teaching practices improve equity within "…a national framework of differentiation and diversity" (*ibid*.). Howard accomplishes this by improving Ray's academic and personal capabilities and thereby redressing inequities in Ray's early educational experiences. The final goal: "Value for money" (*ibid*.) concerns delivery of "effectiveness and efficiency" (*ibid*.). Howard's supervision practices also comply with these requirements. Moreover, his anarchic leadership style does not threaten the financial stability of the university, but enhances it instead,

offering an interesting alternative to practices associated with a commercial educational management discourse, particularly in relation to innovation and change management.

With interpersonal and institutional power relationships between them merged towards common goals, Ray and Howard strengthen humanistic and anarchic educational leadership discourses in the university and broader educational domains. This potentially increases resistance to entrenched discourses by empowering people, including Ray and Howard, to challenge existing educational structures and management models and push for change.

### 4.1.4 Summary

Ontologically, Howard and Ray are aligned: they both believe that reality is shaped by human agency. Howard gets what he expects and desires, both professionally and personally. Ray expects to learn about education, to be able to apply his new knowledge in his workplace and to make progress in his Master's studies. He gets what he expects. Ray expects guidance in this process, but he also desires to have autonomy. He gets both. In the process he learns a lot about himself and other people. Expectations are also met in terms of the traditional aims and values associated with a university education: to offer a quality learning experience in which students are urged to think critically, to develop themselves to their fullest potential, and to contribute meaningfully to society. Importantly, these aims are integrated with anarchic leadership discourse in a way that offers new avenues for existing educational structures to engage constructively with challenges and changes pertinent to local needs.

Because of the philosophies of the humanistic educational and anarchic educational management discourses in which Howard and Ray both operate, pastoral and professional care are intricately interwoven. The discourses converge to successfully and congruently target both person-as-product and thesis-as-product. Howard and Ray are well matched both personally and professionally: they have common goals, share mutual respect, like one another and get on well. Along the continuum of resistance (push-allow-pull) between the polarities of autonomy and dependency, their power

relationship inclines towards allow. Recurring power strategies are (professionally) listening, questioning, reflecting, collaborating and (interpersonally) accepting, respecting, reflecting and collaborating.

From this small slice of their supervision relationship, it is possible to see how power relations work between Ray and Howard to re-produce and strengthen humanistic and anarchic educational leadership discourses in their interpersonal relationship and in their relationship to the university and broader educational domains. The alliance of humanistic and anarchic leadership discourses strongly challenges dominant university management structures and the forms of knowledge customarily associated with the status quo. By using the rationality of dominant knowledge forms to achieve the aims of subjugated knowledge forms and by familiarizing Ray with this strategy, Howard uses collaboration in a reasoned and elegant form of revolution.

Page ref. to raw data

## 4.2 LUNA and NADIA

### 4.2.1 Interpersonal power relations

4.2.1.1 Initial positioning

4.2.1.2 Worldviews & motivations

Nadia registered for a Master's (comprising coursework, a half-thesis and an
506 internship/apprenticeship) because she enjoys "…academic and theoretical things…I'd quite like eventually, to just write around particular issues and publish…perhaps work
507 as an academic". For Nadia her work would need to have "…some sort of
506 developmental outcome that benefits people in a humanitarian way". She is interested
506;506 in "…anthropological perspectives, context based things and socio-cultural
521 approaches…and particularly…in the mediation of knowledge". Nadia is "inspired"
507;520 and "passionate" about the methodology that she has chosen. It has challenged her
514 very being: her belief systems, her religion, her sexuality and her ethnicity. For Nadia "…*that* was scary! I thought: 'Am I shattering my own beliefs?' and so then 'Who am
520 I?'" Ultimately, however, Nadia feels that her critical methodology has given her "…a new sense of clarity…it helps me to question how I see the world, and how I live in it…it's something I resonate with…in a way it's *who I am* as a person. It comes
521 intuitively to me".

Luna describes herself as: "…a person who wants to make a difference, to analyze
492 things and get it into action". She is very enthusiastic about research: "…to have those things that go 'Wow!'…things that jump out at you as you analyze…it's just so
484 wonderful". As a supervisor, Luna says she is "…not into a particular theory necessarily, I'm a methodologist, so supervision brings me into contact with lots of
479 areas that I would not normally get involved in, and I like that wide spread". For Luna supervision is about "…the conquest of the learning and seeing certain students grow".
492;479 She derives "…a lot of satisfaction" when students develop their capacity for
492 "…thinking analytically".

4.2.1.3 Professional-personal matching & research topic

Luna explains: "…There was a shortage of supervisors…or at least people with a good
480 grasp of methodology and developing the proposal and things like that…so there was nobody else to supervise Nadia". Nadia concurs: "…There was no choice really. All
507 of us were being supervised by Luna initially…And she kind of asked 'Is that fine?' but there wasn't any one else you *could've* asked, so you just said: 'Yes' and that was that".
479 Luna positions herself: "…I'm supervising projects because I'm a nice person or because they've asked me to…but one, I'm not really their choice and two, it's not my
479 area…they're just stuck". Despite enjoying the "wide spread" of topics that she encounters as a methodologist, it appears that Luna, like most academics, does prefer some areas to others. Mouton notes that supervisors need to "…show interest in [the] research topic and the envisaged studies…[and] have sufficient time available for supervision" (2001: 20). It appears that a shortage of staff affects the matching process. This is likely to impact on Luna's teaching load and the amount of time she has
479 available to supervise Nadia. Moreover, if Nadia's research focus is not Luna's "area"
479 and as supervisor she is not "really" Nadia's choice, their relationship may be compromised from the outset. The process of matching supervisors to students is an important one as it initiates and influences the will-to-knowledge cycle. The research of Hill, Acker and Black found that students and supervisors began their search for an appropriate supervision partner at the level of shared academic interest, although students "...were more interested in personal compatibility than were the supervisors" (1994: 56). It would seem that in this case it was not possible to implement either personal or professional matching strategies advocated in the literature. Neither Luna nor Nadia have much autonomy in this situation, but I suspect that Nadia is more dependently positioned: even before matching she positions Luna as "in" authority
511 (Peters in Nias 1993): "…I feel respect for my elders and for supervisors".

Some students base their theses on research projects that are funded and in progress, but Nadia chose to formulate her own research focus. Luna is not opposed to individually conceptualized research. She elaborates: "…You can push [coursework
484 students] into a research that you want to do, but if they're not happy about it, they can't just leave, so then they do a thesis that they don't like doing, which is not very

nice. You have to be passionate about your research…for the method or the content…but something enjoyable has to be there". Nadia has a degree of autonomy in this regard and it appears that Luna *collaborates* with her.

Luna and Nadia both work in a critical research mode in as far as they both want to translate research findings into interventions that effect change in the world: Nadia is
522 interested in researching the potential of "…cultural interventions" for HIV/Aids and
492 Luna wants "to analyze things and get it into action". Their research intentions appear to be aligned and it would seem that a solid *enough* professional foundation for the supervision relationship is in place. Yet deep divisions exist between them.

According to Nadia, "…Luna's...expertise is in another methodological approach…she
508;508 doesn't agree with the ideas [of my methodology]…she feels safer in her area of specialization". Having already positioned Luna as being "in" authority (*ibid*.), Nadia now positions Luna as a supervisor who is not "an" authority (*ibid*.) and furthermore,
508 not feeling "safe". Mouton's (2001) statement regarding a supervisor needing to have expertise in their student's field of research could be extended to include the need to have expertise in the student's chosen methodology. Nadia concedes that Luna
508 "…tried to read and do some extra". To some extent Luna is aware of how Nadia positions her, but she offers a different perspective on her knowledge and attitude: "…I
498 like [Nadia's] methodology…and I think I do know what [it] is about. She thinks I
483 don't know". From the outset then, there is a difference of opinion regarding one another's abilities, perceptions and attitudes. They do not openly communicate this to one another which potentially jeopardizes the development of the basis of security and trust that Grant and Graham (1994) claim to be essential to a successful supervision relationship.

483 Luna feels positioned by colleagues as "old fashioned" in terms of new research
483 paradigms: "Nowadays ninety percent of our students work in postmodern
485 paradigms…We have project meetings and people want to sit and say for a whole hour how they feel about things…and that's fine, that's a different research methodology. And I say 'OK, what kind of data did we find here? How can we catagorize it? Shall we talk about this one or that one?'…Then they say I'm old fashioned…'now we do
483 the narrative approach. And if you're not in that paradigm you can't tell us what to do

482;482 because you don't know about these things'". Luna uses the term "old fashioned" three
483 times in the interviews. It seems that in Nadia and Luna's educational context postmodern research discourses are conflicting with modernist and more structural research discourses. Different research discourses have different forms of rationality. Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) proposes that in the cyclic process of the will-to-knowledge, forms of knowledge tend to re-produce and entrench the ontologies, epistemologies and paradigms and, by association, the rationalities out of which they originated. All of these impact on and are embodied in *people* who become the vehicles - the subjects - on whom forms of knowledge and their rationalities work and through whom knowledge is mediated. Luna's statement implies that the epistemology and methodology she prefers applies scientific rationality. As discussed in the chapter on the educational domain, scientific rationality is instrumental, structured, linear and objective: it compartmentalizes the world, as Luna does, into categories: this *or* that (see p. 42). As in any model, incentives and agendas are closely related. A scientific approach aligns closely to commercial educational discourse and tends to privilege the thesis-as-product. Nadia's research methodology falls within postmodern or poststructural approaches that are more often linked to holistic rationality - subjective, intuitive and differently structured: this *and* that (see p. 45). Critical researchers using a postmodern approach work at the interface of extrinsic-objective knowledge and intrinsic-subjective knowledge (Connole 1998) and are most often concerned with the association between processes and products. Accordingly, teaching and supervision praxis in this approach includes a focus on the student or researcher - on person-as-product. Nadia's repeated references to being interested and
506 immersed in "humanitarian" issues indicate that her critical approach is strongly constructed by humanistic discourse. I suggest that because Nadia and Luna work in different discourses they are likely to be applying different forms of rationality in their understanding and construction of research processes and products.

As different discourses have different values and goals (Boughey 2000; Kendall & Wickham 1999; Steffe & Gale 1995) it is likely that Nadia and Luna will differ in this regard too. This ontological clash becomes apparent in the context of the research topic. On the one hand Luna declares that the difficulties in the relationship do not
498 reside in Nadia's topic: "…It's not the topic…Her topic I'm sure I could be very interested in…I'm doing things with other students in similar areas". On the other hand

she says: "Some topics I don't find interesting and then I sometimes say 'So what?' I mean it's a bit cruel to say, but…we've got that information. And it's not necessarily bad, but sometimes it can become a little bit wallowing…it's obviously their issue…so they're researching their own problem. And I think up to a certain point we all do things that relate to ourselves, but sometimes it can get a little bit too much. Some research topics are very self-referent…like virginity, and *this* and *that*, and how do I *feel* about it…and then they want to *talk* about it…it's a completely different style…In fact people and their styles of research go together". This observation concurs with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) claim that different forms of knowledge position people differently in the world and that this constructs different subjectivities that give rise to different ways of being and acting. Seeing as Luna has stated that she "…enjoys the wide spread" of topics she comes into contact with, it is unclear whether or not she views Nadia's topic (and Nadia?) as self-referent in the deprecating sense of the word. The interview data do not show this clearly [45]. What Luna's statement seems to show, however, is some resistance to the predominantly humanistic idea that an individual's perception and experience of the world is relevant to others and can contribute to the shaping of society.

Nadia reveals: "…I can honestly say, I'm not highly passionate about my topic…but I *am* about my methodology!" As I interpret it, Nadia's topic and her methodology are intricately interwoven. Nadia might not be passionate about her topic, which is to explore the possibility of finding cultural interventions for HIV/Aids problems, but she applies her critical methodology in such a way that she *becomes* very personally involved in her topic: "…I'm confronted all the time by my own identity…by my sexuality…and by issues like HIV/Aids. Working with this methodology is like deconstructing who I am as a person…not just in a broad social macro-identity but in terms of traits, or things I do". As Greenfield remarks: "…the argument about the social construction of reality brings in very personal issues" (1993: 246). In terms of the self-referential aspect of the research process Foucault comments:

> …Whenever I have tried to carry out a piece of theoretical work, it has always been on the basis of my own experience, always in relation to processes I thought I could recognize in the things I saw, in the institutions with which I

[45] Perhaps because I experienced difficulty in 'going for the jugular' in the interviews?

> dealt, in my relations with others, cracks, silent shocks, malfunctionings…that I undertook a particular piece of work, a few fragments of autobiography…(1988: 156).

As I pointed out in the context, some research projects have their genesis in objectively and extrinsically conceptualized problems. Others arise subjectively and intrinsically from the personhood of the researcher. Some research topics combine these factors. But, according to Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996), what usually happens is that through surveillance, assessment and feedback - processes in the will-to-knowledge cycle - legitimized norms of a discourse target people to re-produce that discourse and this re-production becomes visibly manifest in *people*. What is sayable in discourse operates to construct knowledge through the functioning of power relations that work between people, not only as they relate to one another, but also as they relate to themselves - this is the construction of subjectivity.

Nadia's topic integrates critical methodology with her interest in health issues and
507 "…the mediation of knowledge". She elaborates: "…I'm talking about
522 HIV/Aids…about sexuality…it's talked about mainly as a black thing or a white thing…but what about the in-between groups? We talk about intervention…but what about cultural intervention? What about the lack of education? And what is education? What is reliable information…are parents reliable? Those kinds of things". In Nadia's
511 opinion, Luna is not interested in HIV/Aids research and furthermore, "…I think my project made her feel uneasy, because it has to do with culture and race and ethnic groups and all these sorts of things that she doesn't like". Nadia positions Luna as "not
511 interested" in, and "uneasy" about the *core*, the heart, of Nadia's research. Furthermore, they view the construct of culture differently. Nadia clarifies: "I mean
509 how do you write about something when someone keeps saying: 'Culture is everywhere…it doesn't exist in the same sense that you're talking about.' I think she
508 felt that I was being very ethnocentric or culturally biased. But from the perspective of my paradigm, culture's *there*". What Nadia may be talking about, is that if she is researching culture from the perspective of a particular ethnic group, the statement
509 "…culture is everywhere…it doesn't exist in the same sense that you're talking about", may deny the existence or the difference, perhaps, of the very ethnicity that Nadia is researching. As she says: "…in a way [my topic] is confrontational and it's a protest
522 against 'Why is this ethnic group being left out?'" Nadia is responding to what she

522 perceives as the marginalization of "in-between" ethnic groups - what Foucault calls the "…cracks, silent shocks, malfunctionings" (1988: 156) in the fabric of society. She
522 describes her research as "a protest". This not only links to the aim of critical research approaches to redress social anomalies, but also to revolt against marginalization of the local knowledge of a particular racial group, which Foucault speaks of as "…the insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (1980: 82). By translating her protest into research, Nadia positions herself as a vehicle to "…emancipate knowledges from subjection…[and] detach the power of truth from the forms of hegemony…social, economic and cultural…within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault 1988: 133).

As I interpret it, Nadia and Luna's differing positions on the construct of culture is an integral factor that intensifies conflict in their relationship. Even though Nadia uses a methodology that explores and deconstructs cultural assumptions (including her own), if she and Luna continue to interpret the construct of culture differently, they are likely to approach the research topic from different ontological and epistemological positions. It is also likely that they may be less inclined to be willing to learn from each other. As will be seen, from their contesting ontological, epistemological and methodological positions they resist by *pushing* against one another. The thesis (the topic, the methodology and the evolving product) as well as the supervision relationship become caught in the middle of this resistance.

Part of the difficulties of this match also arise out of conflicting roles. Nadia observes:
512 "…There are conflicting roles between being a Master's student and an intern…Luna's role as our intern supervisor as well as our Master's supervisor…comes into play as well". Delamont, Atkinson and Parry (1997) find that when students are employed as research assistants, problems commonly arise from their daily proximity to their supervisors. As an intern, Nadia is a research assistant on group projects that are neither related to the focus of her thesis nor to her interests. Nadia elaborates:
506 "…When I initially signed up for the course I thought it's going to be helping communities and it's activist kind of work, which is what I'm interested in". In this regard, Nadia is targeted by and constructed in humanistic discourse. She goes on to
506 say that she found instead an emphasis on "…commercial research projects…[and]
506;506 organizational issues. I'm more interested in humanitarian issues. Quite a different

506 agenda…I realize *now* that commercial research is not for me…unless there's some sort of developmental outcome that benefits people in a humanitarian way". Organizational and humanistic discourses both address human issues, but do so in potentially different 506;506 ways [46]. It seems that, as a Master's intern, Nadia's experience of "commercial research projects" leads her to interpret them as having mainly organizational targets and that the goals of commercial and organizational development conflict with those of humanitarian development.

492 Luna describes and positions herself as "…an organizational development person". 493 Compared with supervising an academic thesis, Luna says: "…I much prefer supervising when we do consulting work, because that leads to something". This resonates with the inclination of university managers to award status to research projects that have utilitarian value in as far as they attract funding. As Neave claims: "the power of the purse" (in Lemmer 1997: 26) has become a dominant motif in the new university culture. This accompanies a growing preference for corporate-style managerialism and the methodologies and principles of science and technology. Together these contribute to the rise of the professionalization of education, which Luckett describes as the "new vocationalism…the integration of education and training…[and the collapse of] what are considered to be functionally obsolete distinctions between theory and practice, knowledge and skill and mental and manual labour" (2000: 62). Luna's wish to nurture growth in her students is genuine and well intentioned and congruent with *her* vision of survival and success in the world: "When 502 I think of supervising I think of having somebody to mentor…I want to prepare my 503 students for life and life is not separate. When they go with me on client consultations, it's about how they look at me…how I move my hands and my feet…and when and how I say things…that's what research is about". Luna's approach is in line with the product orientation of supervision praxis exemplified by Vilkinas's claim: "…good supervisor practice can easily be transferred from corporate to academic arenas" (2002: 129). Although one of the main functions of teaching is to train individuals into taking up particular positions in society (Foucault 1988), it sometimes happens that the positions, roles and subjectivities or identities into which we are trained are incongruent

[46] As discussed in the case of Howard and Ray, organizational discourse can also take an anarchic form that aligns it more closely to a humanistic discourse and thus to humanitarian issues.

with who we are or how we want to be. Nadia does not wish to work in a corporate or commercial context: her vision of survival and success in the world does not concur with Luna's. Translating government's goals for education, South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee articulates transformation as "…developing the capabilities of individual learners for personal enrichment, as well as [meeting] the requirements of social development and economic and employment growth" (CHE 2003: 4). To the extent that Luna focuses on deliverables, she is aligned with those recommendations of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003: 8), which are premised on improving the marketable exit-level qualifications of graduates. However, it appears that the goal of Nadia's "personal enrichment" (CHE 2003: 3-4) becomes compromised in this process. As Foucault comments: "…ideology stands in secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant" (1980b: 118). In this regard, Luna's intent to prepare - or rather mentor - Nadia "for life" has unintended consequences (Lukes 1992, 1996; Scott 1996) for their relationship.

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Having declared herself to be "an organizational development person", Luna somewhat ambiguously continues: "…Although everybody here in the department thinks I'm very organized and organizational…I'm a very chaotic, holistic type of person". Discourses refer to other discourses (Parker 1999): similarities and continuities exist between them. People are influenced by many discourses: they often apply a mix of rationalities and adopt several different subject or individual positions to construct their ways of being in the world. In this regard, I do not question whether or not Luna is a "holistic type of person". Instead I argue that, bearing in mind the scientific rationality of Luna's research approach and her preference for mentoring consulting projects over supervising academic theses, in the context of *this supervision relationship*, she is predominantly targeted by and constructed in scientific and commercial educational discourses. As I interpret the data, Luna and Nadia are subjects targeted by two different discourses and many of the difficulties in their supervision relationship arise from a clash between the discourses that construct them in this relationship. Nadia is predominantly positioned in and targeted by a humanistic discourse; she merges postmodern rationality with critical methodology to advance her research goals. Luna is predominantly targeted by and positioned in a commercial educational discourse; she favours methodology that is more structural than postmodern (see p. 45) and she

applies a predominantly scientific rationality to advance research goals. In the next section I elaborate on how conflict arising out of competing discourses influences relations of power between them so that Nadia and Luna respond to and construct one another in ways that, on a personal level, conflict with their sense of who they are. As Kendall and Wickham point out: "…for a Foucaultian account of the 'subject', attention must be drawn to the way in which power relations differentially position subjects in discourse even when (perhaps especially when) this produces 'contradictory subjectivity'" (1999: 54).

It seems pertinent at this point to offer data to show the match on a personal level, although as mentioned before, the professional and personal are interwoven. Luna's and Nadia's ambivalence towards one another is captured in the way they position each other in these statements. Nadia says: "Luna is a likeable person and she can be fairly easy to work with…She's got a good side and a bad side of course…but in my experience, I feel more negative than positive". Luna says: "I don't think that you should supervise people with whom you don't really get on…(sigh)…In a way I'm quite fond of her".

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This discussion of the intricacies involved in the matching of Nadia and Luna has been a long way around to arriving at Nadia's wry evaluation of the situation: "…It was a bit difficult, but we settled on working together".

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This concludes the discussion of Luna and Nadia's initial positioning in terms of their worldviews and motivations, professional and personal matching and Nadia's research focus. I now turn to explore how Luna and Nadia use power relations - specific resistance strategies that fall within the broad categories of push, allow and pull - to go about constructing one another. In keeping with Foucault's notion of the will-to-knowledge, I also show how Luna and Nadia are targeted by and positioned in discourse. The following discussion of the constructing process juxtaposes Luna and Nadia's professional expectations and abilities against the professional care they give and get.

#### 4.2.1.4 **Expectations & abilities - Professional & pastoral care**
(The process of constructing self and other in the will-to-knowledge)

##### 4.2.1.4.1 Professional expectations & abilities

509 Nadia clearly articulates what she expects from herself: "I think the main thing that I expect of myself is to work hard and…to pay attention to criticism or critique…because I think it's useful, it's valuable". Nadia is also clear about what she expects from a
509 supervisor: "…I expect support. Support is a big thing. More than anything, more even than expertise. I think support comes first…which I felt a big lack of this year.
509 Then the second most important thing is expertise in the methodology and then third, an interest in the topic". Nadia's experience of lack of support relates to both the professional and personal dimensions of it: lack of the former influences lack of the latter and vice versa. By exploring professional and pastoral support separately I aim to render more visible the manner in which these dimensions of care interact in this supervision relationship.

482 Luna expects students to take responsibility for their own motivation: "…I'm like one of those old fashioned academics…I'm the supervisor and then there's the student who wants to work with me and then…everybody must just work hard and get there". Mouton stresses that students are responsible for maintaining an interest in and commitment to their research. He argues that the supervisor is there "…merely to provide support (both intellectual and emotional) when the student encounters specific obstacles and problems" (2001: 21). It seems to me that intellectual and emotional support are closely linked to commitment and motivation, and it could be argued that Mouton's argument is contradictory. Furthermore, he is not clear on what he means by "specific" difficulties. Perhaps this illustrates contradictions in the autonomy-dependency dilemma that challenge almost all supervisors as they attempt to decide on exactly what kind of support and how much of it they are prepared to offer students.

511 Nadia expects "…some sort of mutual respect". On a professional level, this relates to her expectation that she and her methodology will be met with tolerance. In the light of their difficult matching circumstances and particularly their competing discourses,

Luna and Nadia are unlikely to support or motivate one another towards common ends and tolerance is likely to be low. As will be seen in their power relations, resistance between autonomy and dependency takes a different strategic form to tolerating and allowing. Instead they strategize by opposing and pushing against one another.

Luna expects students to acquaint themselves with university and departmental
482 expectations. She says: "…I don't talk about expectations…or about any of the things in the book [the Higher Degrees Guide]…I have read [it]…but I don't know anything about it". Luna expects students to show autonomy and take responsibility in this regard. To some extent she acquits herself from similar action, but I get the impression that this is done less from neglect of duty than from resistance to extrinsically enforced rules. As I interpret it, Luna's position is that expectations and the actions that arise out of them should be intrinsically led from professional and personal integrity (inner authority). Cryer (1996) urges both students *and* supervisors to familiarize themselves with their roles as formally laid down by the university. Luna's statement, however, is closer to the research findings of Grant and Graham: "…many students do not know (and often neither do their supervisors) their department's expectations, nor their rights and privileges" (1994: 169). Cognizance of departmental and institutional rules is only one aspect of expectations. Different people bring a range of personal expectations into the research relationship [47]. Regarding expectations Grant and Graham found:

> …frequently the underlying issue in breakdown of supervision was an initial lack of clarification of mutual expectations and responsibilities…this process of negotiation often does not take place: perhaps supervisors are too busy to think of it, or, often being people of good will, think it is unnecessary, and we know students are frequently too timid to initiate it…(*ibid.*: 168-169).

Luna does not discuss professional expectations or motivations with her students. To
479 some extent a shortage of staff positions and targets her in *time*: "…I don't think I'd choose to supervise as many students as I do…I think I'm too busy or I'm doing too
482 many things to do any of them really punctually, according to the rules and the
509 regulations". Nadia agrees: "Luna is very busy…she's supervising a lot of students". The time factor may be exacerbated by a commercial educational discourse. This targets and monitors supervisors according to throughput requirements. Whether they

[47] This is developed in the section on pastoral expectations and care.

are coerced into doing so or whether they willingly comply, supervisors have little choice but to meet this demand. By doing so they consciously or unconsciously repeat and entrench the reasonableness - or truth - of the demand. In this way the power relations inherent in a discourse are re-produced in people, who become simultaneously the subjects and the vehicles of a discourse.

484 Luna works closely with students at the proposal stage, and after that "…they just work and I wait until they come to me with something. And when I happen to look and see 481 that she or he hasn't come with their work, and I think 'let me just find out what's happening.' If they don't hand in I say: 'Well, it's up to you, if you don't finish it's not 491 my problem.' I feel I'm like a resource …I can offer people to come to me, but if they 486 don't want it then that's fine as well. I put a lot of responsibility on them". Luna positions herself in line with roles identified in the reviewed literature: supervisor as a resource and supervisor as a source (Clegg & Gall 1998; Vilkinas 2002). Arguably these terms have been appropriated by (and perhaps even indicative of the operation of) a commercial discourse, in which people are constituted as human resources. With regard to chasing up a student Phillips and Pugh recommend that students and supervisors negotiate a research contract with:

> …a structured programme that gradually reduces the amount of contact as the postgraduate gets further into the work…The supervisor should still be aware of the responsibility to 'chase up' a student who does not seem to be keeping to the agreement…(1996: 91).

Not all supervisors agree with the idea that it is their responsibility to chase up students and claim instead that the onus is on the student to maintain regular contact (Mouton 509 2001). Nadia relates her experience of this arrangement: "…It was very rarely that I'd 512 have supervision. Initially it was assumed that it would be once a week…the internship 509 one week and then the thesis the next week. It never did happen. It would be like: 'Oh, we haven't seen you for a while, I think we should have a supervision meeting'". It would appear that Nadia may prefer a more structured approach to supervision sessions and may be uncomfortable with the increased autonomy that less structure provides. Communication and negotiation may have deflected this extra irritant in an already difficult match, but Nadia would need to take the initiative, which many students are

not prepared to do [48]. South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee recommends that rights and responsibilities should be communicated and negotiated "…in the form of a supervision/learning contract" (CHE 2003 7: 6). Grant and Graham's research, however, found that students experienced difficulty tabling a written document outlining their expectations with their supervisors. Students showed:

> …a range of reactions…most common is unwillingness to go to a supervisor and put the document on the table for negotiation – many students feel this to be an inappropriate behaviour, one which risks the supervisor's disfavour and thus prejudices the success of the supervision of their thesis…(Grant & Graham 1994: 169).

It would appear that by allowing students to decide if and when they require supervision, Luna does not position herself as being "in" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority. She declares: "…I've tried in certain situations to put rules down, but it's not me…I've always done my supervisions the way I've done them. And I know that if I would have been a more administratively sound supervisor, I would have made all those plans. So [this relationship] has really shown that there *is* a need for that administrative aspect of being a supervisor". If Luna regards the discussion of motivations and expectations and the schedules and deadlines that derive from them as "administrative", it could be argued that she denies - or at least fails to recognize - the personal dimension of these activities. Luna positions herself as being less "administratively sound" than preferred. But preferred by whom? As I interpret it, she is experiencing - and adopting the position of recalcitrant subject of - the sayable rules of supervision praxis as institutionalized in legitimized (predominantly humanistic) discourse and expressed in texts on supervision and the guidebook outlining her university's expectations. Regarding the link between reflexion and the discourse of truth (Foucault 1988: 38): Luna reflects on her approach to and practice of supervision, and despite experiencing some reservations regarding these, she maintains her customary way of supervising. As I interpret it, Luna is experiencing contradictory subjectivity.

[48] Like the student who felt as if he was "…a National Health hypochondriac with an ingrown toenail pestering a neurosurgeon" (Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997: 19) (see footnote no. 36, p. 108).

The notion of contradictory subjectivity suggests that the surveillance, assessment and feedback processes involved in self-evaluation are led from personal reflexivity *in conjunction with* reflexivity regarding what is sayable in institutionalized discourse. Power relations at the interface of the individual and discursive rules influence whether actions and attitudes change, but it is debatable whether or not the choices or decisions that result can be said to arise from the autonomous and free individual. How free is Luna if she experiences a degree of guilt with regard to her practices, as I interpret her statements to indicate? I begin to formulate a position for myself in this debate: that there is no such thing as a fully autonomous and free individual. Perhaps autonomy as a concept should be reformulated as a constrained form of independence. And I say independence because freedom as a concept seems to me to be a utopian ideal that contradicts the idea of humans as social beings. Inevitably, the choices available to us are partially constructed at the interface of the linguistic possibilities (Parker 1999) of the discourses in which we are embedded, and the knowledge and preferences that we accumulate from living in a particular social context - our subjective experience of the world and the thoughts, reflexions, actions and emotions these engender. To the degree that Luna experiences discomfort when she evaluates her practices as falling short of the rules inherent in institutionalized (humanistic) discourse, she remains a subject of those rules, and cannot, in my opinion, be said to be free. At best her actions are a form of constrained independence.

This constructivist perspective is captured by Becvar and Becvar when they say: "…we create [behaviour]…and how we language it becomes crucial" (1996: 85). In Luna's case, the way she languages her behaviour shows the manner in which her reflexivity
481 interfaces with what is sayable in supervision texts. She judges herself as a "very lenient" and "bad" supervisor. "…I don't really set deadlines for [students]. I might sit
481 with them and say: 'Lets make a year plan', but then I don't enforce it". Foucault's question: "How is the reflexivity of the subject and the discourse of truth linked?" (1988: 38) is particularly pertinent to the manner in which Luna assesses herself in relation to what is posited and condoned as truth in supervision discourse. Accordingly, I ask: according to *whose* truth does Luna assess herself? I propose that Luna subjects *herself* – through reflexivity – to the injunctions of legitimized supervision discourse: this is the sayable doubling back on the visible. Luna continues:
496 "…I can say 'Look, Nadia, by tomorrow, I need to see what you've got'…from an

496 authority point of view I can do that, but it's not me!…I can't start doing it now, because that's not the relationship we had so far". Luna is caught between what she thinks she *should* do and acting in accordance with her vision of herself as a supervisor. Contradictory subjectivities arise from this dilemma.

Luna and Nadia's positioning in terms of autonomy and dependency as it relates to setting and enforcing rules and obeying instructions is shrouded in ambiguity. According to Nadia, Luna used collaborative strategies in the past, but she changed her
511 tactics more recently: "…Last year we were almost like [Luna's] colleagues and she would ask us: 'What should we do about the course? How would we like the structure?' We grew very used to that collaborative approach, but this year it became very different. It became top-down…we were told to do *this*, told to do *that*...and all of us had…huge issues with it…there's still that problem now". Luna and Nadia's stories not only differ in content, but also in *time*. I do not question which of the stories is closest to what really happened, but am interested in the effect of the different subject positions - the subjectivities - that are adopted when different discourses of supervision praxis collide. If Luna changed tactics, then why did she do so? Is she constructed in time by the pressures of demands in a commercialized educational domain? Or does she resist sanctioned praxis and construct herself more autonomously in keeping with Foucault's words: "…the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation" (1988: 50). In this case Luna's re-positioning (and pragmatism?) concurs with Kendall and Wickham's observation: "…teachers' resistance to particular methods, and the acquisition of their own idiosyncratic tactics as result of experience at the 'chalk face', produce a series of heterogeneous practices which exhibit relative autonomy" (1999: 126).

Having explored Luna and Nadia's initial positioning, the matching process and the professional expectations that they bring to the supervision relationship, I turn now to look at how they go about constructing one another professionally.

4.2.1.4.2 Professional care

Embedded in different discourses, Nadia and Luna begin to resist and *push* one another from the outset of their relationship. Nadia comments on her choice of methodology:
510 "…there are valid limitations of every methodology, but I've chosen [mine]…I've got
511 to live with it". Although she says: "I'm willing…and fairly open to other paradigms as well", Nadia is not prepared to relinquish her passion. She suspects that she is being
508 coerced to do so: "…Luna's expertise is with a particular methodological approach and everyone was doing that approach excepting for me. And she kept on asking me if I didn't want to use it too. I think she felt safer with that as well but I couldn't agree to it". Nadia resists and stands firm. This accords with Wisker's advice to students if faced with unwelcome pressure from their supervisors: "…don't be steamrollered into something…irrelevant to your project but topical to them" (2001: 35). Perhaps something of Luna's response to Nadia's resistance may be intuited from her comment:
483 "…Some people ask for too much direction and others don't want to take the kind of things you say. I don't usually make comments about the content because that's what the student wants to say and you have to respect that, but I do make very strong comments about structure and logic and how you build up your argument". Coming from different discourses, Nadia and Luna are likely to have different perspectives on structure and particularly on logic, and as I have already shown, they already have the seeds of a dispute regarding content: the concept of culture.

483 Luna adds: "…They sometimes say (I mean you *hear* what they say about you)…that I impose too much my way of doing things on them…that I say it has to be like *this* or
485 like *that*…that I'm very forceful, that I push things in certain directions. Maybe at a
483 certain point I do. Some people like it and others don't". Nadia confirms that she does
510 not like it. She comments: "…At Master's level you are clear about your ideas…you may not have the expertise and you may not know a lot…but you are clear about what you want to say. I think all of us have done a lot of reading on our topics and we *do* know basics of our topics and our concepts". Nias (1993) points out that a teacher who inclines to be controlling may not only prevent students from becoming independent, he or she may also inhibit their creativity, their capacity to judge critically and to use information astutely. This potentially deprives students of the joy of making and

owning their own discoveries. Luna concedes that as a supervisor "at a certain" point
485 she may sometimes "…push things in certain directions". This potentially aligns Nadia's research and her research findings more closely with the forms of knowledge that Luna privileges. As Kendall and Wickham observe: "…knowledge is…used to select some techniques of power over others and to implement the chosen techniques in the attempts to impose control or management on the objects concerned" (1999: 90). Nadia affirms the breadth and value of her knowledge and asserts her right to ownership and control of her research. She digs in her heels and pushes against Luna in an effort to maintain her autonomy through her right to choice and Nadia resists being redirected along a path that does not accord with her vision of the research.

This interchange is more complex and less transparent than it looks; the tussle between autonomy and dependency has another face. Luna says: "…Students think you've
503 always got things under control …they see you in a particular light that is very different from how I see myself. But [supervisors] are also very insecure about lots of things…it might not be about how to do research. There might be other insecurities…like stereotypes…if you're not a woman you can't do your research on women, if you're not black you don't understand black people. If I think that the student may have that perception, it influences me, and then I go very much like: 'Don't you want to do this? Are you sure about that?' and then they get confused: 'What is she saying? Does she not want me?' The combination of being quite confident about certain things and being insecure about others is very confusing for the student". Depending on the teaching style of a supervisor, strategies of power relations range from "arm-twisting" (Phillips & Pugh 1996: 156): a push strategy, to collaborating: an allow strategy, to a relentless questioning process: a pull strategy that stimulates students to think deeply and critically about their interests and to generate their own research focus. Phillips and Pugh found that "…students expect their supervisors to have the flexibility to understand what it is that they are trying to say…the supervisor needs to draw out their ideas…through a constant questioning procedure" (*ibid*.). From her statement above, it is clear that Luna questions her students to some extent, but I wonder whether Nadia is one of the students whom Luna describes as responding by feeling insecure about Luna's acceptance of her on both the professional and personal levels. Perhaps the use of a questioning strategy may be less appropriate in a climate where trust has not been firmly established. Its use certainly has unintended consequences in this relationship.

Luna evaluates herself: "…So, So I think I'm not containing enough on the one hand and on the other hand not structuring enough…and maybe I'm a bit too forceful with how I see the research".

Despite the fact that Luna's conflicts are not expressed directly, Nadia *experiences* them directly. She has difficulty reconciling the mixed messages through which Luna's conflicts are communicated. This leaves Nadia unsure of how to position herself: "…Luna's ideas are imposed *on you*…it's almost as if, while you feel like you're being given a choice, you're actually *not* being given a choice". At this point, there is no open communication between them. Disagreements and resistances in their power relationship are covert. In the supervision relationship "…conflict and strong disagreements are not uncommon" (Mouton 2001: 22). When these lead to unexplored or unexpressed misunderstandings, power relationships become power struggles. Overt and covert strategies are then employed to redress the imbalance and these may prevent the work from moving forward. Problems can arise for a multitude of reasons, but it is generally agreed that pressing problems can be worked through by keeping channels of communication clear and open (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Wisker 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). Clear communication is not always an easy or pleasant process. As discussed in the context of this document (see p. 112), the focus of Chapman's PhD research (Chapman & Sork 2001) uses Chapman and Sork's own supervision relationship to focus on how dominant discourses in society (specifically gender discourses), filter through the supervision relationship and become manifest in personal styles. More precisely articulated, Chapman examines herself and Sork as visibilities of the discourses that construct them. These discourses are opened out, talked about and researched but apparently it was a very challenging (painful?) process for both of them.

Luna and Nadia's power struggle intensifies when Nadia gets feedback on her draft proposal. To some extent, Nadia has already positioned Luna as "in" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority in terms of age and status. Although this may incline her towards dependency, Nadia is not self-effacing and balances her positioning in relation to Luna:

511 "…I feel that if I can respect her ideas, then she can respect my ideas as well. Instead of that kind of interaction, there were…these little passive-aggressive [49] comments about my paradigm and methodology…those kinds of things were frustrating…but I just kept quiet and let them ride". One of the pieces of advice that Cryer offers in her publications on managing common dilemmas in supervision is that students and supervisors need to accept that "…certain emotions are normal…it is counter-productive to let them show, and the chances are that when you calm down, you will realize that they were unjustified anyway…so if it is necessary, mask negative emotions" (1996: 66-67). This is sound advice, but it does not account for spontaneous emotions that are or may be justified. I suggest that it is sometimes appropriate to show and articulate spontaneous emotion [50] and that if students and supervisors adapt by repeating a strategy of masking, this may perpetuate the behaviours and situations from which the emotions arise in the first place. Nadia appears to tolerate what she perceives as a supervisor "in" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority and intolerant of her methodology, but she masks her frustration and conceals her resistance by using a strategy of silence. Does this arise out of a wish to keep things civil? Or is it *also* passive aggressive, as silence often can be? According to Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) resistance exists in every relationship of power. Even when there is agreement, a degree of resistance is present. I argue that if a student disagrees with her or his supervisor's knowledge and resists being constructed by it, it is likely that strategies of power will become subtle and covert. In Nadia and Luna's case, silence could be construed as resistance; they use it to push against one another and to veil the underlying issue of their dispute: contesting epistemological and methodological discourses.

Earlier, Nadia articulated her positioning in terms of criticism: she expects herself to
509 "…pay attention to criticism or critique…because I think it's useful, it's valuable". Cryer advises students to show gratitude and interest in any feedback and that "…only when you have taken time to consider can you decide how much to accept, reject or adapt" (1996: 66-67). Accordingly, after taking time to reflect, Nadia assesses Luna's

[49] Passive aggression: aggressive strategies that are covert or unconscious and often not readily apparent or visible to either aggressor or recipient.
[50] As pointed out before, this position originates in a discourse of psychology and as far as it constitutes my way of viewing the world, the argument may be an instance of a second (or rather, third) order judgment.

criticism and feedback: "…I'm not saying her advice is not good…she does know a lot…but when it comes to conceptual things about my methodology, that's where it's problematic". The situation is clouded by the fact that not only Nadia's methodology is being contested, but also her conceptual content, which is grounded in the construct of culture. Nadia responds to Luna's feedback on this aspect of her work: "With regard to my views within the thesis, of course, I expressed *that*…she made me take my concept of culture out of my draft proposal [and] I thought: '…she's avoiding the issue, put it back in'". In terms of content - the construct of culture - Nadia's push to autonomy, and Luna's resistance to it is clearly communicated, but resistance around methodology is underlying and indirectly expressed. Nadia articulates her experience of this: "…I felt constantly undermined…I would always come out of a supervision session feeling: 'What have I gained from this meeting? Nothing'". Again, I quote Hill, Acker and Black who found:

> …a high level of agreement amongst students on what constituted good supervision. Students valued interested feedback, constructive discussion, guidance, and suggestions about how to develop their research. A good tutorial was also one where students were made to feel that what they were doing was worthwhile…(1994: 63).

Luna reflects on the way she gives feedback: "…When I give feedback to students I would rather do it in the form of asking them questions…problem posing…so that *they* can do it: 'What is it that you want to say? What do you want to talk about?' But again I feel that it will take too much of my time, so I actually tell them how I think it should be, which I don't think is right. I think, rather than sitting with them for three hours, I should sit with them for *six hours*! and pose questions". Again, Luna's position is constructed in time and again this appears to give rise to contradictory subjectivities (Kendall & Wickham, 1999): she would like to supervise one way, but she does it another way.

The issue Luna's dilemma raises is a burning one: what is the philosophy of learning inherent in a discourse of commercial educational management? A strategy of questioning provides "…opportunities for learners to test, extend, reflect on and revise their ideas through performances of understanding" (CHE 2003: 8). If people are pushed by the exigencies of achieving concrete outcomes - things - and are unable to spend time questioning their motives and the means they use to accomplish these, what

do they learn? Do they learn not to question - to reproduce as opposed to create? How does the instrumentality of a commercial discourse impact on the development of intrinsic integrity? This is an attribute that students need to develop if they are to become creative and independent thinkers who add value to the economy, or as Castells terms them: "self programmable" (1998: 361) graduates. Questioning is a vital exercise in the assimilation of knowledge and the development of intrinsic integrity - our personal locus of control. In the vacuum created by the absence of intrinsic integrity, extrinsic forms of surveillance, assessment and feedback and the values they privilege are likely to be unchallenged, entrenched.

Luna balances the value of questioning against the constraints of time, which are imposed to a great extent by commercial demands - the demand for deliverables. By
491 choosing to tell her students what to do and "how I think it should be", as opposed to leading them to formulate their own responses and construct their own knowledge, Luna is better able to manage her teaching load and throughput is potentially increased. Thus it appears that in *practice* the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003: 3) is at odds with commercial objectives that an outcomes-based model of education seeks to achieve. A further inconsistency is that through the professionalization of education via the praxis of the "reflective practitioner" (*ibid*.) approach to teaching and learning as translated by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee, the benefits of self-evaluative reflexivity, which comprises questioning, is in danger of becoming appropriated to serve extrinsic, institutionalized control (see p. 79). This may occur if self-reflexion is opened out to *formal* assessment as the Committee recommends (CHE 2003 6: 11). This intervention subverts principles of humanistic ontology (self-determination, intrinsic integrity, *etc.*) out of which the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 6: 4) developed in the first place. To the extent that an academic is open and honest in his or her self-evaluative statements, transparency may involve an unpleasant backlash: ironically, such formal assessment could institutionalize subterfuge. This is a pertinent example of the continually oscillating processes in the will-to-knowledge (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) and how what is visible (made manifest as forms of knowledge - including subjectivity - out of sanctioned and institutionalized discourse) doubles back on and reconstructs what is sayable (the institutionalized discourse itself). It also demonstrates the unpredictability of the outcomes of power relations (*ibid*.). As I interpret it, the two

anomalies discussed above represent *organizational* examples of contradictory subjectivity; they point to problems encountered when recruiting humanist principles to meet commercial ends [51].

481;494 493 504 Luna positions herself and Nadia: "…She's terrified of me…and it's difficult to work with someone who's afraid of you". She goes on to say: "…I like critique in a positive way…I would love students to be confrontational". Luna's preference may not be congruent with aspects of Nadia's cultural conditioning. Cultural norms sometimes cause confusion either in the student's or the supervisor's mind as to which forms of academic authority are legitimate (Grant & Graham 1994) and what forms of communication are acceptable. This raises ethical dilemmas, particularly for *subjects* who have learned that obedience is a virtue. In this regard Cryer notes that supervisors: "…need to be alert to different cultural norms: students showing rudeness or sullenness…might come from cultures where it is considered good manners to be self-effacing and to defer to authority figures" (1997: 16). To some extent this may explain Nadia's strategy of silence.

497 493 510;509 Luna continues: "With Nadia, I would say: 'I don't like this or that' and then she would say: 'Well, if you don't like that, then I'll do something else'…instead of discussing. If she had to say: 'I think it might be better this way'…then immediately I would go into 'OK, let's try it' or 'I think it might be difficult because of *this*, but try *that*'". Nadia comments on Luna's wish to discuss: "…there can be debates, but it becomes frustrating when there's constantly an issue…for instance around the concept of culture". At this stage it seems that even the issue of debate is debated. Instead of discussing, Luna and Nadia talk past one another. The possibility of open discussion is subsumed in their battle for control.

493 494 481;493 Luna elaborates: "…it is very difficult when a student is afraid of me and I think 'Why?' Because I'm straightforward…I just tell them. But [Nadia] takes it as a veto: 'OK, we're not going to do that' That's it! Finished!" Luna reflects on why Nadia appears to be "terrified" of her: "…[Students] won't tell you how you're doing…the

[51] This is not to say that these discourses cannot be integrated. As seen in the case of Howard, it is possible to achieve a win-win situation for all concerned: people, discourses and existing structures in the educational domain.

last thing they want is that you're badly disposed towards them". In this regard Grant and Graham note: "There is little doubt that the power relations in supervision tend to be seen by many students as uneven and relatively fixed…they worry about their supervisor's perception of them and how this might affect the supervision" (1994: 173). Nadia uses silence as an evasive strategy of defence against what she experiences as Luna's disapproval. At times Nadia shows the appearance of capitulating, but it is a
518 disguise: "…Sort of like being in protest all the time. That's how it felt, like I'm in
493 protest…but silent protest". Although Luna positions herself as "straightforward",
509 Nadia experiences her differently: "…I felt like I was being constantly undermined…I
518 experienced Luna as being quite manipulative…in a very sort of covert way…not openly". Cryer advises students to show gratitude and interest in any feedback from their supervisors regardless of whether it is palatable or valid (1996: 66-67). Nadia feels positioned as ungrateful when she expresses disagreement with Luna's feedback:
518 "…It was like: I should be very grateful for having a supervisor at all…I should be grateful for all these things…I shouldn't complain or say anything or express my views". It strikes me that at this stage, unexpressed feelings in their *personal* relationship override both Luna and Nadia's ability to discuss and deal with their *professional* disputes rationally: both appear to be doing much more feeling and reacting than thinking and responding.

490 Once again, the issue of time is raised. Luna comments: "…It's very difficult to critique in a situation where, for instance, you make a few comments about the literature review, and Nadia's thinking, you can just *see* it happening: 'This is going to take another two months…I'm not going to be ready'". It is not clear what Luna means
490 by "comments about the literature review" but in Luna's perception, a shortage of *time* makes Nadia unreceptive to a critique of her literature review. Students generally expect their supervisors to direct them towards (at least) key authors and theorists relevant to the research focus, but in this regard Nadia experiences a lack of support:
512 "…Luna never offered me encouragement like: 'I'm interested in this' or 'How about finding out about that…it might be useful for your project'". Does time, or a combination of time and lack of support, construct contradictory subjectivities in Nadia so that she does not respond congruently with her articulated expectation that she will be amenable to criticism? Or is Luna's criticism unjustifiable or invalid in that it derives from a different discourse to the one in which Nadia is working? Or is Luna's

attribution of Nadia's response to criticism as arising from time constraints yet another unexplored misunderstanding between them – one that masks the underlying differences between them? Nadia and Luna are both under time constraints and, furthermore, are both driving towards the thesis-as-product, yet these common goals and pressures do little to unite them, but rather exacerbate the divisions between them.

The feelings disguised by Nadia's strategy of silence soon begin to inflict further strain on the relationship. Nadia begins to push Luna's supervision efforts away: she resists
497 by withholding and not sharing. Luna elaborates: "…Nadia does not allow me access
498 into what she's doing…You have to talk about how you collected the data, how participants interacted with you, what you found out…the contextualization of the data gives you so much *more*. You have to have a *feel* of the research…not just what's written there, because that's cold and that doesn't always give you a full picture…and then I can't help with the interpretation of the data, and *feeling* if it gels. I read it to see
497 that it hangs together logically and all of those things…but that sharing is not
497 there…I'm not connected". She offers a powerful metaphor: "…You see, I'm like the police". This positions both of them: it implies that Nadia feels like a wrongdoer who avoids the surveillance and assessment of an authority figure, and Luna as a force and
491 not a service which is very different to Luna's positioning of herself as a "resource".

490 Luna goes on to say that in the face of time constraints and criticism Nadia "…gets
481 sick. She's sick all the time. Nadia will come and she will cry, and cry again, and then not come and see me for three days…trying to avoid me, or being sick and not telling
490 me that she is sick. So I don't know. And then she gets defensive, and then it's like 'Ja, but it's because this is how the methodologists in my discourse do it'". At this stage, Nadia is indeed sick and what she experiences as a lack of pastoral support becomes yet another wedge in the relationship. This is explored more fully in the following section. What is important here is that Nadia's evasion becomes overt and literalized – Nadia begins to *avoid* Luna *physically*.

Resisting what she experiences as Luna's covert repetition of the sayable rules of
518 Luna's discourse, Nadia now changes tactics. She revolts: "…I'd go away and look at these things and then I thought 'No!'" As previously argued (see p. 92), the concept of revolt seems to me to combine cognitive realizations with will and emotion, and more

specifically, with passion. Nadia is experiencing challenge to her methodology and as she said earlier: "I can honestly say, I'm not highly passionate about my topic…but I *am* about my methodology!" Nadia expresses her "No!" by beginning to informally consult a new staff member who specializes in her methodology. In an attempt to neutralize and breach the impasse between herself and Nadia, Luna invited him to sit in on a supervision session and arbitrate. For the first time in this relationship a strategy of collaboration is used to establish some order on Nadia and Luna's constant push against one another. Luna remarks: "…in fact he had quite similar comments to me…so from that point of view, I feel quite secure". Nadia concurs: "…he agreed with all [Luna's] criticisms of my work". However, Nadia remains unconvinced; she resists and decides to consult Peter again: "…I went away and I thought about what they had discussed and I didn't agree with them…so, I e-mailed [Peter] later and said: 'This doesn't make sense to me, this is what I think.' And he said: 'No, you're right.' I felt very disturbed by that". Luna is not aware of it, but the feeling of security she experiences is destabilized by Peter who has knowingly or unknowingly confirmed Nadia's earlier positioning of Luna as not "an" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority, and as "not safe" in Nadia's chosen research methodology. Phillips and Pugh (1996) document some of the problems of joint or co-supervision, which I think pertain equally well to arbitration in this case: a diffusion of responsibility, difficulty synchronizing conflicting aims and expectations, incompatible advice, and students who play supervisors off against each other. It seems to me that Nadia plays Luna and Peter off against one another. Furthermore, Nadia is "very disturbed": she is now positioned between two incompatible responses to her work. Having found in Peter support for her methodological approach, Nadia begins to consult him more regularly, but attempts to conceal this from Luna.

Nadia reports: "…one day Luna…sat down with me…it was sort of vague…we didn't talk about the real *why* or anything…she just brought it up and said: 'Well, if you want to change your supervisor you can, but I would prefer if I stay as your co-supervisor because I have worked on your project'". Nadia adds that Luna appeared to her to be "…very upset as well". In terms of initiative and Nadia claiming responsibility for her newly found freedom, Luna does indeed seem to be upset, she exclaims: "…*I* had to go and say it. Why did *she* not come to me and say: 'I'd like Peter to be my supervisor'? Because she's afraid of me and it doesn't work, if someone's afraid of you". Nadia's

positioning as "afraid" may partly account for why she then agrees to co-supervision as opposed to a clean break. Nadia continues: "…So we settled on that, but she still wants
508 to be brought in on supervision, which is difficult for me…I would've liked to just
508 change supervisor altogether". At the time she thought: "…I'd better settle with it
508 because I'm in the department, I have to see [Luna] every day, I can't be nasty about anything". The literature refers to difficulties that arise from competing roles where students are also research assistants and the resulting daily proximity of supervisors and students to each other (Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997). Luna comments: "Now Nadia is with Peter *and* with me, but before then I had put a lot of effort in, so I also
491 want to be acknowledged…this is the game in the academic world" [52]. Nadia speaks of
480 nastiness creating unpalatable working conditions and Luna speaks of her right to be acknowledged, but neither of them allude to a less pleasant aspect of power relations that arises when a student changes supervisors. Informal acknowledgement of problems in the supervision relationship becomes a formal declaration of them: "…whatever the validity of appeals, they are stressful, time-consuming and usually public; and sadly in the eyes of the world, 'mud sticks', even to innocent parties" (Cryer 1996: 69). Phillips and Pugh remark: "…a change of supervisors is the academic equivalent of getting a divorce" (1996: 106). Perhaps this is why Luna and Nadia decide to soldier on in a mutually dissatisfying relationship. In their compromise of co-supervision their push for autonomy and control is undiminished, but their relationship has been and will in all likelihood continue to be irrevocably changed by the entrance of a second supervisor.

If, as Phillips and Pugh (1996) declare, changing supervisors is like the academic equivalent of divorce, then Luna and Nadia may be experiencing what could be construed as the period of separation that sometimes precedes it. Nadia continues to use, or rather reverts to using, strategies of silence and avoidance, destabilizing Luna's
496 position to the point where Luna is rendered impotent. Luna reflects: "…She hasn't talked to me for two or three weeks. So what do I do? Do I let go, because I don't want to impose? Do I go and ask, because I don't want to show that I'm not interested? I want to be there if I need to be there, but I don't *know* if I need to be there". Luna

[52] How Luna and Nadia relate to the academic domain is discussed later in the section on institutional power.

feels impotent to the point where she experiences conflicting expectations - and subjectivities - that push and pull against one another. On the one hand she says:
491 "…I'm still a supervisor…I still have responsibility over it". On the other hand she
491 says: "…I don't think I'll have much input anymore. I think if you feel that, you must just let go…not get into acrimonious situations, or impose your power or your structure". Her ambivalence in terms of her power relations with Nadia and with herself, echoes Foucault's observation: "…power relations are mobile, reversible and unstable" (1996: 441).

Ironically, Nadia still positions Luna as "in" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority: Luna's
518 evaluation of Nadia as "afraid" raises a new issue: "…somehow, I'm afraid she's going to take the new supervision away from me…going to destroy everything that's been said…say 'Do *this'* or 'Do *that'* and undermine all of it…and then it's just going to be gone". In a bid for autonomy Nadia transfers her professional alliance and shifts her
508 dependency to her co-supervisor: "…I've resolved that [Luna] can have her say…I don't have to agree with it…but if it means a last-minute changing of everything then…No…I'll stick with one person's advice".

Having explored Luna and Nadia's professional expectations and abilities and the professional care they give and get, the discussion now compares their pastoral expectations and abilities against the pastoral care they give and get.

#### 4.2.1.4.3 Pastoral expectations & abilities

Cryer (1996) advises supervisors to be alert to the personal profiles of students: factors such as age and relevant life and work experience are likely to impact on the quality of the supervision experience. Luna expects students to have a mature approach to their
482 studies: "…I'm coming from this old fashioned school that an academic place is a place
481 where adults come together and they want to learn…I know you can have boyfriend troubles and you can have this and that, but life is still there. They are 24 and 25 years old…what are they going to do the next year when they're in the real world?" She

482 reflects on her position: "...I think I see students as more mature than they are…I don't give enough credit for their youth or their inexperience".

482 Nadia's "youth" and "inexperience" are captured in an insight she offers on some of her
506 motivations for joining the course: "…subconsciously there was…the sense of security in this location…that being in an academic environment is secure as opposed to going out in the working world and being on your own". It would appear that Nadia is somewhat reluctant to leave the academic nest. Cryer remarks: "…belonging to a community, being cared for by a professional, etc…can make [students] not want to get on with the next stage of their lives" (1996: 174). In terms of her relationship to her *own* power, Nadia's observation that the university affords her security may keep her in an emotionally dependent position and influence how she interprets her expectations of
511;389 "mutual respect" and "support".

509 Nadia says that she expects herself: "…to try and stay motivated…it's very difficult to
509 stay motivated". In her experience of supervision she feels that "…there was not only the lack of support, but there was no motivation". Grant and Graham note: "...supervision can be a great source of motivation…or cause for loss of motivation" (1994:166). South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee also notes the need to establish "…an appropriate motivational context" (CHE 2003: 3) for learners. Earlier (see p. 204) I proposed that intellectual support and emotional support are not separate from one another, nor from commitment and motivation. In addition, support and motivation have both professional and personal dimensions. As Phillips and Pugh note, supervisors need to recognize that for students the research process is an "…emotional experience, which involves the whole person…it is too often the case that managers choose to ignore the 'whole person' and patch over rather than get to the bottom of, any difficulties that are showing themselves in the individual's work" (1996: 160). Although Phillips and Pugh (1996) and Denicolo and Pope (1994) advise supervisors to access the "whole person" of a student through engaging him or her in informal conversations, most instances where personal or pastoral support are mentioned in the literature allude somewhat vaguely to how it may be addressed. Most resemble the remark of Phillips and Pugh: "…a significant part of your job as supervisor is one of keeping morale at a reasonable level…there are periods when moods are volatile and a certain subtlety is needed to help a student through the

difficult times" (1996: 166). Luna certainly notices that Nadia feels disturbed:
490 "…Everything around her is tense…she does not relax and when she's tense she can't think clearly and any comment you make, it's this *huge* thing and then it's all going to *collapse*". However, Luna is too immobilized by Nadia's withdrawal and the silence between them to formulate a way of engaging with her to improve the situation.

481 For Luna: "…pastoral help comes up all the time and I'm afraid I don't think I'm patient. I think students really are not very strong, personally, they can't make an effort, they can't just push when they need to…they just whine, and I just haven't the time for this. When I think of what I have to do in one day and the responsibilities that
481 I have to juggle…internally, I get very frustrated with them". Pope and Denicolo comment:

> …some supervisors are able and willing…to provide professionally skilled support, others are sometimes unprepared [untrained, inexperienced, unskilled]…and others…are unwilling…[they] justify taking a more distanced stance by demonstrating that their institution engaged them for academic – not personal – support for their students…( 1994: 126).

482;486 A shortage of time and the expectation that students will adopt a "mature" approach to her and to their studies position Luna and she responds with a businesslike approach, but this does not mean that she is unwilling to give pastoral support. Instead it is a matter of the quality of support she is prepared and expects to give, and to whom. She says: "…sometimes students will come and talk to me and I have a kind of counselling
486;498 session with them. But where does it stop being a supervisor? With some people you just connect and it's easier…with other people it becomes a task…then I call it 'counselling', otherwise I would just say 'be friendly'…just sit together or go and have a drink together". Clearly Luna recognizes the value of informal conversations. Denicolo and Pope regard these as being vital to the supervision process:

> …it is not sufficient to pay lip-service to the need to understand the perspectives of students. A systematic attempt throughout the period of registration to address…personal concerns is required…the emphasis should be on the responsibility of the research supervisor to recognize that conversations with their supervisees regarding…personal issues are a legitimate focus of attention…[These] allow free expression of these lived experiences…(1994: 128).

498 In terms of extending pastoral care Luna says that with some students "…instead of ordinary human interaction, everything has become a task". It appears that this is Luna's experience in relation to Nadia and that a lack of personal affinity between her
498 and Nadia turns pastoral support into a "task" so that the likelihood of uncomplicated
498 informal conversations between them - the "easy connection" or "normal human interaction" that Luna expects - is threatened, if not precluded, by their responses to their professional differences.

4.2.1.4.4 Pastoral care

Individual and institutional roles and personal and professional identities are intricately interwoven. Individuals are assigned relevant roles in the institutional domain and assessed as more or less useful subjects in it. In turn, students and supervisors assign roles to one another in the interpersonal realm. In Nadia and Luna's relationship the roles of parent and child are strongly evoked in metaphors of parenting. Luna
490 comments: "…I think of *all* my students as my children. Supervision is like bringing
502 up a child in a way…when you see your own children growing…it's exciting…so that makes me feel a bit worthwhile".

According to Nadia, coinciding with Luna's change in management style at the
512 beginning of the year, "…we all got the cold shoulder for a week…with Luna walking around very angry and stroppy [showing hostility]. And we'd sit there, all of us…like…'Where do we start?' I've only just realized it now, actually, it's been like a mother thing…which is why she probably gets very upset about any sort of negative thing said about her or about the course. It's very much like a parent-child relationship that we have with her". Nadia goes on to say that her relationship with Luna reminds
517;518 her of her teenage years with her mother: "…it was a very difficult…a very emotional
517 time…I felt the same sort of feelings of guilt for speaking my mind or expressing myself. The same sort of: 'Now you're making me feel guilty'…'But no…*you're*
518 making *me* feel guilty' sort of relationship. I kept feeling it's my fault. Thinking about

it now, I displayed a lot of regressive coping mechanisms [53]…I would need to let off steam by crying…I could just burst into tears at any moment…which was unhealthy, because then I feel out of control. When I was growing up I used to paint a lot as a sort
519 of coping mechanism. This year I drew a picture…of a girl covering her face...I felt just like that". [Nadia spreads her hands across her face.]

It appears that Nadia feels as if she is fighting a battle on two fronts. The image she offers pertains to her relationship with Luna, but also to the way Nadia's topic and
522 methodology challenge her self-image and belief systems: "…often I don't want to look at [my topic]…perhaps that's also part of my painting of the hiding girl covering her eyes…it's something I don't want to think about because then I *have* to stop and think about myself". In a case like this, where the research - both content and process - are challenging on both a professional and emotional dimension, it is likely that Nadia may need a very caring supervision space and extra pastoral support, particularly in the light of her expecting security within the context of the university. Nadia positions Luna as mother-of-teenager who is reluctant to allow Nadia the space to formulate her own way of being in the world and who arrests her will to autonomy. During her teenage years,
518 Nadia says she was in "silent protest" and felt guilty whenever she articulated her disagreement; these responses appear to be carried over into her relationship with Luna. During the interviews, Nadia reiterates her response to guilt: blaming herself: "…I
509 managed to work with it for a while and I thought 'just be happy…no one else is
510 complaining'…I thought 'Why am I feeling like this?' and for a long time I thought I
510 was just imagining it. I thought there's something wrong with *me*".

According to Foucault (1988), in the pastoral discourse, when a subject reveals something to a person who is sanctioned as being in authority, the status of truth is conferred on (or withheld from) what is revealed, purely through the authority of the person who is listening. Nadia feels that her truth is not listened to nor accepted by Luna as an authority figure. Instead Nadia experiences guilt and blames herself for
510 being "wrong". A Foucaultian perspective on the power relationships in this case, would articulate Nadia as being targeted by discourse - in this case Luna's discourse - so that Luna's surveillance, assessment and feedback positions Nadia as a difficult, a

[53] Coping mechanisms that served as strategies of defense in the past, particularly in childhood.

disobedient student. This is how sayable rules of a discourse normalize people according to values and behaviours that serve to reproduce the discourse: difference endangers its perpetuation. Nadia is predominantly constructed in a humanistic discourse, which emphasizes the value of individuals and focuses on the personal dimension of learning: the person-as-product. In this supervision relationship, I have already argued that Luna is predominantly constructed by scientific and commercial discourses and that although these do not necessarily exclude consideration of person-as-product, they place more emphasis on thesis-as-product. In the light of Luna's statement that she thinks of all her students as being her children, and her preference for mentoring in the commercial sense of the word, Luna-as-mother may want a different person-as-product to the one Nadia is presenting her with. Her expectations in this regard may be less directly linked to rules than to wishes. I suspect that Luna may prefer a student who is doing research where some*thing* comes out of it, someone who accepts her discourse and emulates her consulting approach. In terms of the teenage metaphor that Nadia offers, she is not Luna's kind of child: Nadia wants to develop in a different way to Luna's vision for her, she wants different things to Luna. Nadia resists by pulling away, strategizing with silence and consciously or unconsciously withholding aspects of her research so that Luna's attempts to engage with it are frustrated [54]. Eventually, Nadia dissociates from Luna and realigns herself with her new co-parent, Peter.

Pastoral care and the parenting metaphor also play out in the context of an event revolving around sickness during which neither of them are willing or able to offer
497-498 pastoral care to one another. Luna tells her story: "…Nadia came in here one time and got very upset. She told me personal things and ever since that time I have not seen her either, so I think she thought that maybe she'd overstepped something. I didn't ask for it, it just came. And it came at a bad time, because I was not feeling great either, I was feeling quite sick and tired, but I listened…And now she probably thinks that that stands between us as well…So a kind of distance has been created". Nadia relates her
513 side of the story: "…In the middle of the year I had wanted to quit for health reasons and Luna said: 'No…just carry on with it.' By then I hadn't told her anything because I

[54] It strikes me that this data would be very suitable to an Attachment/Object-relations theory reading of it.

didn't want anyone knowing my personal business. So it was only later on this year that I told her about something that was worrying me and it was as if she was in a
513 different *place* to me. It was like: 'Here I am confiding in you, wanting support'…yet she just *burst* out at me. I couldn't make it for a seminar…I was not feeling well. And she was so harsh, so dismissive, as if she couldn't care less. Then she went into this whole thing…divulged a whole lot of her own personal stuff…I just didn't know *what* to do. Then she wasn't talking to me. And I thought: 'OK, I can deal with this', but I was very upset that I had been treated so abruptly". As pointed out before, it is often difficult for supervisors to know where to draw boundaries in terms of what and how much support they offer students. By sharing aspects of her own personal difficulties Luna volunteers information on process – not on the professional process of research, but on her own life process. She willingly reveals herself, opening a door to a better understanding of her as a person and thus offering an opportunity to diminish the distance between them, but Luna's choice of timing, context and manner are unfortunate.

Cryer speaks of the need to treat one another "…as human beings who have strengths and weaknesses, personal satisfactions and disappointments, good days and bad days, just like everyone else" (1996: 59). Neither Luna nor Nadia honour this consideration. Instead, it seems that the professional sharing which Luna and Nadia have not had, erupts in a personal sharing that neither of them can contain. The metaphors of parent and teenager are apt: Nadia felt that Luna's sharing fell outside of the boundaries of what she is equipped to deal with. This adds a different dimension to Luna's reflection
485 quoted earlier: "…I think I'm not containing enough and…[yet] not structuring enough". Perhaps this offers new insight on the close link between professional and pastoral support. Supervisors are often challenged by the need to maintain balance between professional duties and the need to remain "…personally engaged and emotionally available" to their students (Teyber 1997: 21). Hill, Acker and Black found that most supervisors are of the opinion that: "…there [is] a boundary to…involvement…While friendly and informal, [supervision] was nonetheless largely confined to issues to do with the work" (1994: 67). Perhaps Luna and Nadia's case demonstrates the merit of maintaining a professional distance, although I suspect that

this would customarily apply to disclosures from the student's side [55]. Nadia continues:
514 "…I accept that she has difficulties as well…or that she's maybe in a difficult place too, but then I thought I've had *enough* now. I think that was the downfall of our relationship. It became very personal".

This event effectively ends any likelihood of conciliation between them; Nadia now
514 withholds respect. Nadia says: "…At one stage I treated her as someone I revere and have a great deal of respect for…and then I thought: 'No…her manner is not
513 professional at all'". Luna elaborates on her position regarding Nadia's illness: "…I
504 hate whining…that kind of 'I'm suffering' business…because that's also a strategy…to get what you want. I think strategies must be like *this* [a straightforward gesture], not like *this* [a roundabout gesture]…because I'm not going to say 'OK come on…' You've
496 got to actually *tell* me…Like right now, I don't know what she's doing. She's down the corridor but she avoids me. She hasn't talked to me for two or three weeks". It would seem to me that for Nadia discussion of the event is impossible. I wonder whether either of them are clear enough about what is going on in their relationship and within themselves to apply straightforward strategies. Their power relations resemble two people pulling on the opposite ends of a rope; they are polarized, but remain strongly linked by the resistance between them.

Having experienced Luna as an inhospitable mother, Nadia shifts her need for professional support to her second supervisor. At the same time she shifts part of her
510 need for pastoral support to fellow students. She says: "...I thought I'm either going to sit with this and be frustrated and not finish my thesis, or do something about it. I was
513 having this whole emotional breakdown…I wanted to change supervisors…I thought 'I don't like Luna any more'…eventually a friend brought me back to stability and said 'Look, go and speak to Luna's other student who's had the same problems as you'…which is what I did. That helped". Nadia also gets help from her partner but

[55] This is a particularly sensitive case study and the research process was challenging for *all* of us. One of the confidentiality clauses in my contract with participants is that during the course of the research process I would not share their data with one another. In accordance with this agreement and with my wish to remain as neutral and sensitive as possible, I did not use the one's data in order to probe the truth of the other's data, nor did I probe sensitive areas for information over and above that which Luna and Nadia were willing to offer me. I cannot be certain that Luna had in fact overstepped personal boundaries in this case. It seems that boundaries were overstepped - they both mention it - but I have no data to indicate which of their stories is closest to what actually happened.

this sometimes adds to her discomfort: "...I was…very depressed…at the stage where I would be emotional about anything. I would come home a frustrated, complaining, whining person…just horrible to be around. And you know, it's awful being like that…fortunately my partner supported me, but I felt like I was being unfair…unbalanced". Her power relationship with Luna gives rise to contradictory subjectivities (Kendall & Wickham 1999) in Nadia: it is as if she becomes a stranger to herself. The outcome for Nadia is that in both her supervision relationship and her relationship with her partner she feels guilty and disempowered. Research by Denicolo and Pope (1994) found that through exploring personal models of meaning, students became conscious of the links between their roles as researchers and other professional and personal roles (see p. 108). They realized that the role of researcher put their personal relationships at risk so that these were sometimes neglected or even lost. It raised their awareness of "…the consequent feelings of guilt; the pressures of conflicting duties or distractions and the anger that this can generate in self and others" (*ibid.*: 121).

For both Luna and Nadia, their professional and personal relationship appears to be unfair, unbalanced and disempowering. They are like parent and teenager, both feeling unrecognized and frustrated in the push and pull between autonomy and dependency. Luna says: "…I haven't had students who have been grateful…we never get a thank you or anything much. We put in a lot of effort and they just go. I suppose it is my task, but I *do* think I go beyond the call of duty, often". Nadia is right about the way Luna positions herself but contests the lack of appreciation: "…We have said [to Luna]: 'We know you don't feel appreciated, but we *do*, we *do* appreciate you.' We have to constantly keep saying that to her". Nadia then counters Luna's claim by saying that Luna's *students* don't feel appreciated: "…we are also working as interns and at the end of the day, we're not getting paid much, and we're not getting a thank you or anything like that". Nadia not only positions Luna as an inhospitable mother, but also as an inhospitable boss, saying that as an intern supervisor Luna "…can be quite a slave driver". Thus power struggles between them are exacerbated by conflicting roles that demand both the completion of a thesis as well as the production of deliverables for sponsors who fund – or rather employ the skills of – the interns/apprentices.

513 Nadia comments: "…Emotionally it's been hard sometimes…I think I've reached a
513 place of reason, now, where I'm civil and I do my work….and Luna has toned down a
503-503 lot". Luna comments: "…I really don't think that you can keep the professional part
503 separate [from the personal]…Why *this* supervision relationship is a disaster and others are not? It's not about the topic. It's basically about the relationship. And how does that relationship come about? I don't know. And how it's going to work out? As I said, right now I don't know what is happening or where I stand".

This concludes the exploration of interpersonal power relations. Under the sub-headings: Competing discourses; Expectations; and Care, the discussion now focuses on *institutional* power relations: how discourses in the educational domain influence Luna and Nadia and how, through strategies of resistance, they influence these discourses.

### 4.2.2 Institutional power relations

#### 4.2.2.1 Competing discourses

Luna and Nadia both want to make a difference in the world, but the discourses that construct them in their supervision relationship have different values and goals. Nadia has no wish to be mentored into the commercial world and irrespective of the degree to which Luna may have the interests of her students in mind, her goals are not the same as Nadia's. According to Luna's supervision praxis, useful research has values and goals consistent with scientific and commercial discourses. Nadia's postmodern paradigm challenges these goals and values. Luna and Nadia's interactions show how the effects of competing discourses in the institutional domain are experienced at ground level – the relationship between supervisors and their students.

Surveillance, assessment and feedback from dominant scientific and commercial discourses in the university domain are reinforced at the level of the supervision relationship. Even though Luna says: "…I'm working very hard on those new
492 paradigms and those new ways of writing-up", she is positioned and empowered by the system and by her own proclivities to silence new discourses or "subjugated

knowledges" (Foucault 1980: 82). Systems of reward and punishment serve to re-produce the principles of the discourses they espouse (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Kendall & Wickham 1999; Rouse 1987). In this regard Luna says:

492 "…I also have to consider that when I submit the thesis for examining, I want that
499 person to pass…maybe students see it as us just wanting it our way, but it's not just us. If I would be the only marker, I probably would accept some things more easily than when I know somebody else will be marking it. But if I know it's going to cause a
492 problem, I'd rather they'd change it".

It could be argued that this response is in keeping with South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's recommendation that teachers can lead students towards a better grasp of academic discourse by "…making explicit 'the rules of the game'" (CHE 2003: 8). Luna's positioning shows how the recommendation is open to diverse implementation strategies. Reformulating work to comply with sanctioned norms has repercussions for academic and personal freedom. It is understandable that Luna may advise students to alter their work in order to succeed, but it could be argued that by doing so she creates a situation that bears out Jones's observation that the power dynamic in the culture of university teaching "…has been remarkably resistant to change, with innovations in teaching consisting of cosmetic pedagogical moves which hardly impact at all on the fundamental meta-practices of institutions" (in Grant & Graham 1994: 175). Power relations are like scaffolds linking what is or may become sayable (sanctioned knowledge) and what is or may become visible (what is made manifest). By adapting research to fit in with institutionalized expectations, students and supervisors become subjected to system needs. As visibilities or subjects of discursive norms they surrender "…a measure of individuality and self-realization" (Morris 1972: 113). The resulting conformity "…pushes back cultural horizons…to a more common all-inclusive mass culture" (Morris 1972: 33) in which "…creativity, criticality and difference" (Luckett 2000: 64) are suppressed. As pointed out before (see Innovation and reproduction, p. 56), this detracts from the capacity of the university system to gain a competitive edge in the educational marketplace and to benefit from funding arising out of innovative research. It is also a factor in the subjugation of certain forms of knowledge.

488 Luna's understanding of her autonomy is captured in her declaration: "…Academics
488 are extremely free…I can basically do whatever I like…almost. That's one of the nice

things of being there. Nobody really stands in my way…not at the university. If I want to go out and do some consulting…if I want to set up a research center…if I want to change my course…I can". Academic freedom for Luna, however, does not translate into academic freedom for Nadia. Instead, it could be argued that Luna's freedom *constrains* Nadia and *vice versa*. A Foucaultian perspective recognizes that neither of them is free; instead, their professional and personal identities or subjectivities are largely constructed by the discourses that target them. This perspective reverberates in
492 Luna's statement: "…people and their styles of research go together" and in Nadia's
522 observation: "I think we choose things that are reflective of who we are". Nadia
511-511 reflects: "…I think, being much younger, I haven't yet formulated such strong views about any particular paradigm". This insight shows some of Nadia's vulnerability – her
482 "youth" and "inexperience" as Luna articulates it. Nonetheless Nadia vigorously resists by pushing against being constructed by the knowledge form of Luna's discourse. I suggest that for Nadia's research to challenge and impact on sanctioned forms of knowledge in the university domain, it would be more helpful for her to align herself, as she has now done, with a supervisor who belongs to the same discourse as her own: someone who would be reluctant to dilute or change Nadia's research in order to make it more amenable to assessment according to the system's norms or dominant discourses in the educational domain.

#### 4.2.2.2 Expectations

Time-funding pressure is one repercussion of the commercialization of education. It quantifies success by demanding a quota of successfully completed theses. The demand for throughput, as this process is called, sometimes leads to teaching styles consistent with an ethic of "pedagogy for profit" (Smythe in Lemmer 1997: 24). As I interpret it, part of Luna's pressure in this supervision relationship is the need to produce a quantity of successful candidates, but it would be spurious to say that she regards her students purely as commodities that generate funding. She says: "…If a student comes to me, I don't see the dollars on their face: 'Oh that one's a heavily
502 funded one, let me put more effort into them'…When I raise funding for projects, it's
500 for my students…I get money for my *students*. So they can't complain there. I pay
485 those students to be here. They get the opportunity to be involved in research". Luna

wants to prepare students according to her understanding of life and work outside of the university context: "…I always want to make the link with the outside world…tell students that the university system is there, but it's not really that important…it's much more important to think about things in a way that they'll be able to use it when they go out in the world…and do research in that way". Domains of education are vital centers for the construction of knowledge. They are also fulcrums of change for personhood and, by association, the fabric of society. Luna's approach defers challenge to the system so that in terms of time and space the university is no longer positioned as an axis of change, other than change in the sense of perpetuating and increasing the dominance of a commercial educational discourse.

Luna shows autonomy in as far as she does not allow the time constraints for completion of the Master's thesis to get in the way of research experiences that she considers as having the potential to enhance a student's curriculum vitae: "…I continuously convey the message: 'Look, there's opportunities here, grab it, let's do things *together'*…If a really exciting research comes up…why not leave your thesis and wait and get going on that? A university is about opportunities to learn, it's not about marks and handing in essays". However, Luna does not appear to regard research that focuses on goals *other* than those that excite her or that have relevance to corporate sponsors as particularly worthwhile. She resists time-funding pressures, but the degree and quality of her resistance ultimately serves to strengthen and not challenge scientific and commercial discourses. Knowingly or unknowingly, Luna assimilates the goals of scientific and commercial discourses and then targets and subjects herself and students to these goals in a manner that functions to reproduce these discourses. This causes friction with Nadia, who questions and resists the truth and worth of the internships that Luna sets up: "…I'd like to feel that my contribution to the university is going somewhere…that I'm offering some worthwhile input…not just being used for commercial ventures". It would seem that she feels positioned somewhat like a commodity: "…it's also about the way the organization has been set up…with that mission…to bridge the gap between the academic environment and the workplace, and to use our expertise to fuel work and get money into the academic environment". One consequence of designing and conducting research to meet the requirements of "…applied work that will yield quick results for corporate sponsors" (Altbach 2001: 19) is that academics are "…being tempted to withdraw from

community service or to diminish teaching responsibilities in order to devote more time to the measurable products of research" (Lemmer 1997: 29). As Marginson (2001) points out, this factory notion of educative progress sets the stage for discord between market-driven university managers and academics, and more socially motivated academics and students. This may well be what is happening in this supervision relationship.

The call to increase output in terms of publication is another consequence of the commercialization of education (Lemmer 1997; Marginson 2001). Despite targeted interview questions, Nadia does not comment on publication. Luna positions students as autonomous regarding whether or not they decide to publish jointly with her:
501 "…with students' Master's theses, I could never presume that they should ask me to be their second author. If they offer, that's nice…people must just do what they want to do". Cryer (1997) and Game and West (2002) point out that because funding and status are directly related to publication and because "…intellectual property rights…are a minefield" (Cryer 1997: 18), there should be careful negotiation regarding the ownership of research: "…no longer is ownership a matter of generosity of the supervisor, the norms of the department…or even goodwill all round. On some occasions these may suffice, but they may nevertheless backfire later" (*ibid.*). Consistent with her positioning of students as autonomous with regard to co-publication, Luna asserts her own autonomy. She pulls away and detaches herself from
501 the publish-or-perish injunction: "…This business about publication...it's all a whole lot of rubbish. There's so much repetition…I like most of my papers to be completely new and it takes me months. I write two or three at the most. Why would I write more? For what, and for whom?…I've just always done my own thing and not played the part. All these games…they just take so much of one's time…it's about doing research and doing exciting things, to me". Luna's observation concurs with a common complaint of academics that injunctions to publish stifle creativity and often result in a plethora of publications that do little more than reshuffle and reproduce information that is already well documented (Bowrick in Cryer 1996).

#### 4.2.2.3 Care

501 Luna feels positioned as a maverick in the university domain: "…even publication doesn't matter here…it depends on whether you're part of the club or not…so however hard you work…there's always another criteria. It's very much like that. I mean even if I published like mad, I'm just not the right person [for promotion] so it tells you, don't even try. Then you start doing what you like doing". Luna experiences herself as being excluded from systems of reward *in the university domain*. Although this frees her to reap the reward of what she likes doing - mentoring and "seeing certain students 479 grow" - it could be argued that such freedom remains constructed by and feeds back into a worldview which promotes - and pushes forward - fiscal values.

As a supervisor Luna is positioned in between students and the university system. She 499 comments: "…I feel that I identify with the students…I don't feel like I'm part of the system. It's not fighting the system…it's just that the student and I have to somehow get through it". Luna's head of department assists her to "get through" the system. She 487 comments: "…He's a very good administrator and he knows all those little rules. 487 Administration is just one of those things I don't like doing and I think there's an understanding that this is the kind of support he will give me. And if he can't decide on 488 something, then I can go straight to the Vice-Chancellor…you can just talk to him as a person. Some people are afraid of the hierarchy…I'm not really afraid of anybody". Does Luna feel able to assert her autonomy partly because her research endeavours accord with commercial demands in the current university domain? According to Foucault "…assuring the city's unity" (1988: 67) obliges university managers to pay close attention to commercial demands. Funding plays a key role in this regard (Lemmer 1997; Walker 2001). Luna emphasizes that she sources funding from the corporate or commercial sector for her *students*. This happens to benefit the university as well. Perhaps this is a pertinent example of the role of chance and contingency (Foucault 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) on the outcomes of relations of power. In the *process of becoming* a situation or event can emerge spontaneously as one possible result of a complex interplay of relations between other events (Kendall & Wickham 1999).

Unfortunately, Nadia does not enjoy the same sense of personal autonomy as Luna and she does not find the university or the department particularly supportive: "…a lot of people gripe because it's just so miserable being in our department. And what can you do about it? Nothing…It's just like 'Oh well, you're welcome to come and talk to us.' There needs to be an active, *ongoing* monitoring and evaluation system for watching the relationship and evaluating the courses". A University of Melbourne (2001) survey found that students place a high value on the relationships they form with other students and members of their department. While staff members who are "approachable, friendly and helpful" (*ibid*.: 7) afford them a sense of community, "…a generally negative atmosphere was said not to be conducive to high quality research" (*ibid*.). Nadia's experience of her department as being a "miserable" place may account to some extent for her feeling somewhat distanced and indifferent towards her head of department: "…Our head of department…his relationship with the students is very different…we know he's *there*, and I guess that's fine…I mean he's not our supervisor".

Mouton observes: "…most postgraduate students will tell you that their thesis was the loneliest project that they ever undertook" (2001: 7). A difficult supervision relationship exacerbates this, as does a student's sense of distance from members of staff. These factors erode a student's support base. Ultimately Nadia turns to other students and her partner for support, but student forums can also step into this breach by offering students a forum where they can share common goals, overcome intellectual loneliness and form a critical mass for action (Grant & Graham 1994; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). In terms of the broader student body, Nadia is aware of the newly formed postgraduate forum, but found no support when she approached them: "…I e-mailed the guy to ask if there's a forum to discuss supervision and he never ever responded…so I thought: 'OK, obviously these things are not important'". Although sayable rules in university guidebooks customarily indicate clear avenues for problems to be heard and addressed, students who respond to supervision problems as Nadia does - pulling away with strategies of silence and withdrawal - may not report their difficulties in an effort to maintain distance from authority figures. As Luna says, she feels as if Nadia positions her as "the police". A student's silence may be premised on the fear that university managers will automatically align themselves with the supervisor and thus repeat the negative supervision experience. This concurs with

Grant and Graham's (1994) point that there is sometimes confusion in a student's mind as to which forms of academic authority are legitimate. Whittle asserts: "…The quality of supervision is one of the main factors which influence the quality of research theses and the ability of candidates to complete their degrees on time" (1994: 110). In order for both students and the university to assure a quality research experience, a less threatening avenue may need to be established for airing supervision disputes other than the one which is currently available: approaching staff and managers who are high on the university hierarchy.

This concludes the discussion of institutional power relations. The next section notes what forms of knowledge (visibilities) are produced in this relationship in terms of the thesis, in terms of personhood and in terms of the university and broader educational domains. Thereafter, a short summary concludes the discussion of this relationship.

### 4.2.3 What is produced

#### 4.2.3.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

517 Nadia's research proposal is accepted. During our final interview she reports: "…I felt very *stuck*. I'm feeling very motivated now…since I've had another supervisor. I woke up the other day and thought 'I *am* going to finish my thesis this year…I don't know *how*, but I'm going to *do* it'".

Nadia withholds this resolution from Luna, keeping her in limbo. Luna comments:
497 "…The proposal's approved but as I said, right now I don't know what is happening. When I think it's time, I'll check and see what's happening…and then I'll just take it from there. I think I'm going to get a wad of text and then read it?"

4.2.3.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

Luna and Nadia are frustrated and disempowered in their relationship. Furthermore there has been a loss of mutual respect. Luna says: "…I don't know where I stand. Frustration…that's how the whole experience has been for me". Nadia's process is just as unhappy: "…I was very depressed…at the stage where I would be emotional about anything. I would come home a frustrated, complaining, whining person…just horrible to be around. And you know, it's awful being like that".

4.2.3.3 What is produced in terms of the university and broader educational domains?

Nadia and Luna remain visible products of the sayable rules and values of the discourses that construct each of them. At this point power relations between Nadia and Luna polarize them so that *in their relationship* there is an impasse in the power play between their competing discourses. In terms of the university and broader educational domains, Luna reinforces the strength of a commercial educational management discourse. It remains to be seen whether Nadia's resolution to align herself more closely with a new co-supervisor may promote her discourse and advance Nadia's "humanitarian" aspirations. In terms of surveillance, assessment and feedback, Nadia says: "…I completed my supervision report the other day and I went into some detail. Maybe something will happen".

In terms of the draft recommendations for improving learning and teaching formulated by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003), this supervision relationship highlights inconsistencies encountered when the "reflective practitioner" (*ibid*.: 3) approach to teaching and learning - which is based on humanistic discourse - is merged with the injunctions of commercial educational management discourse.

### 4.2.4 Summary

Neither Luna nor Nadia get what they want nor what they expect, both in terms of professional and pastoral care. In their battle between autonomy and dependency a great deal of emotional energy is expended. On an ontological level, in this relationship Luna views reality as shaped by commercial expediencies; Nadia views reality as shaped by humanitarian action. Nadia is mainly constructed by a humanistic discourse and in this supervision relationship Luna is mainly constructed by scientific and commercial discourses. Luna and Nadia are not well matched either professionally or personally. The thesis is caught in the middle of their conflicting discourses. No collaboration (in the helpful sense of the word) appears to occur between them, nor between the value systems of their discourses. Power relations between Nadia and Luna are conducted mainly through indirect and coercive strategies of resistance: they push against one another using silence, avoidance and passive aggression. There is almost no clear communication between them and in its absence, professional disputes are shifted to and erupt in personal clashes. Luna is aligned with, yet in some ways autonomous from, university management. Although she feels somewhat sidelined by reward systems, in many ways Luna's supervision goals are supported by and push forward a commercial educational management discourse. Nadia feels unsupported, both in the supervision relationship and in her relationship to her department and the broader university system. In terms of person-as-product this supervision relationship is counterproductive to a rewarding research endeavour for both Luna and Nadia. Nadia's research proposal has been approved, so thus far the thesis-as-product manages to survive personal and professional power struggles.

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## 4.3 ANDY and MOLLY

### 4.3.1 Interpersonal power relations

4.3.1.1 Initial positioning

4.3.1.2 Worldviews & motivations

546 When asked why she is doing a Master's, Molly's immediate reaction is "madness!"
547 Her life was not the same after Honours: "…the thought of spending the next twenty
547 years working in a store, becoming increasingly grumpy…wasn't that exciting". A
547 number of coincidences led her to take, as she calls it: "the plunge". While her friends,
547 her Honours mentor and her current supervisor Andy were "prodding" and "niggling"
her to go ahead with the Master's, she read "…a very, very inspiring book by Jonathan
547 Bate entitled *The Song of the Earth*". She then encountered the work of a South
547 African thinker revolving around "…the tension between science and art". Finally she
heard a priest commenting on a line in the Bible: "…'And I shall give you dominion
over the earth'…He was saying that we shouldn't even begin to think that we have
dominion over the earth…that it's ours…and that he prefers to use the word
563 'stewardship'". These all "…fed into a feeling...[that] the ecological has to be there if
there's going to be any kind of hope. Unless we learn to live in symbiosis with the
earth, we are going to die…become extinct. So that's our choice".

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Andy enjoys supervising. He reflects: "…if only to see the lights coming on in *any*
student…to see things happen. It's one of the ways I've found of affirming my
presence in the world…teaching and seeing students, at *whatever* level, wake up to
539 their potential and to themselves". For Andy it is also partly "…wanting to promote…a
holistic view of the world. To do that one has to challenge all sorts of narrow points of
539 view…blindnesses and ignorances". In his opinion, "…the ecological crisis is the great
524 crisis of our time, which subsumes and outreaches any other crisis we can think of".
539 He remarks: "…In South Africa…in my discipline…ecological studies are very
embryonic…There's a huge silence…people just haven't looked at it". Andy describes

539 himself as "…catching a wave [of] ecological criticism" and he hopes to "…get other people involved…so they can also catch the wave…contribute to it".

4.3.1.3 Professional-personal matching & research topic

When Molly began working as a tutor she and Andy became colleagues, but their association began some time before, when she was one of his Honours students. This matching process is an example of what Hill, Acker and Black (1994) refer to as coming in "warm", a potentially ideal situation where the student and supervisor know or have worked with one another before. Andy took a lot of interest in Molly's
548 development as an Honours student and she sees him as being "…responsible for my staying the course". Apparently Molly and Andy's previous experience of working together secures them a mutual basis of trust and respect (Grant & Graham 1994).
547 Despite "vehement" declarations that she would never follow her Honours with a
548 Master's, Molly says that Andy: "…gently niggled…[and] nurtured me into [it]".
524 Andy reflects: "…Some students have come straight out of the teaching that I've given
524 them in Honours…including Molly, which I take as a real accolade".

Past and present professional associations gave Molly and Andy opportunities to gauge one another on a personal level before deciding to work together. As previously pointed out, the literature makes numerous references to taking professional, organizational *and* personal factors (see p. 89) into consideration when choosing a supervision partner (*ibid*.). Andy stresses the importance of personal affinity in the
525 matching process: "…one almost wants to advise students to get together with supervisors they *know* they're going to get on with, on a personal level. Because
548 otherwise it must be…it can be horrendous". Molly finds Andy: "…an inspiring
549;550 teacher…I suppose it's easy to work for him because I want to…I have a great respect
548 for him…I just like him very much". Both Molly and Andy feel professional and personal affinity for one another and numerous times during the interviews they say that they have become friends. The literature presents differing viewpoints on the boundary between friendliness and being friends in the supervision relationship (see p. 120); further on in this discussion I compare these viewpoints with Molly and Andy's experience of being friends.

Molly and Andy both believe that the survival of our world and planet depends on humans living in an ecologically sensitive way. On an ontological level, this perspective views reality as differentiated into myriad life-forms (humans, world, plants, inanimate things, etc.) that are loosely bound together in one dynamic whole. Thus I argue that Andy and Molly's sense of reality is constructed predominantly in holistic discourse. Their accord on an ontological level echoes in their accord on the epistemological and methodological levels. Andy and Molly both work in an interpretivist research discourse (see p. 47) in as far as they explore and interpret creative texts in order to negotiate meaning and generate new perspectives in relation to ecological concerns. Applying a rationality that is exploratory, often holistic, even intuitive, interpretivism incorporates everyday common sense understandings with those constructed by theory and does not regard any value system, interpretation or narrative as wrong, only different. Interpretivism acknowledges subjectivity and the "…intrinsic, irreducible, and mutually transformative relationship" (Brooke 1991: 7) between researchers, their subject matter and their field of study. Molly and Andy also share a research approach that is embedded in critical discourse (see p. 48). Critical discourse aims to empower people to change reality. Andy's aims are constructed accordingly: he wants to "promote" a "challenge" to "…blindnesses and ignorances" that feed into "the great crisis of our time, which subsumes and outreaches any other crisis we can think of". In critical research discourse "…knowledge becomes emancipatory, enabling both researcher and researched to free themselves from limiting social forces" (Connole 1998: 19). As will be seen, Molly becomes a subject and product of the eco-critical focus of her work: her research influences her way of being in the world so that she begins to translate her ecological concerns into ecological action.

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Andy is passionate about his area of interest. His commitment to ecological studies is revealed in his wish to involve other people in the field. It is also echoed in his reflection: "…I can see myself pretty much doing [ecological criticism] for the rest of my days". The beliefs and worldviews of teachers influence what will become known. Teachers help to mould us; they may inspire us to follow their path or perhaps even turn us against it. Teachers who are passionate about and congruent with their teachings are particularly powerful in promoting their vision of truth. I anticipate that

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this will be the case with Andy. Consistent with what is sayable in texts on supervision practice (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Wisker 2001; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994), Andy affirms the importance of a supervisor being
525 interested in a student's field of study: "…it's almost incumbent for [a] supervisor to choose to supervise something that he or she is really interested in and passionate about and can see that the student is, also. It's a good foundation". When Molly was
547 weighing up whether to do a Master's, she thought: "…seeing as I am a South African…if I ever do…a Master's, it should be close to home". Molly chose to research the work of a South African thinker whose creations offer insight into the tension between art, science and ecology. Asked about Andy's influence on her decision to undertake the Master's and on her choice of topic, Molly says Andy
548 "nurtured" her and adds: "…I don't want to say solicited, because that's a bit strong…but it's that kind of meaning as well". I suggest that the application of holistic rationality to a topic on ecology forms a dual alliance between Molly and Andy that potentially reproduces a holistic view of the world and thus strengthens holistic discourse.

Holistic discourse cultivates ecological sensibility and honours the interconnectedness of all aspects of being-in-the-world. It proclaims that every perspective, everything, everyone, every process and every system is *unique* - in the sense of having individual identity - and, moreover, that all individual identities are interdependent and positioned appropriately in relation to ceaselessly shifting relationships in an ever-shifting world (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999). Thus holism positions people as inter-dependent, yet individual and unique subjects who co-create the world. I juxtapose the terms individual and subject here to explore the ambiguities of adopting a Foucaultian perspective when speaking about holistic discourse. Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) acknowledges that people exercise a degree of freedom and agency, but as I have pointed out before (see p. 208), at best this agency is a constricted form of freedom and from a Foucaultian viewpoint, we remain subjects of the power relations inherent in discourse. This raises the issue: is it possible to be *subjects* of holistic discourse as well as *unique individuals* as holism claims? Holism is all-inclusive, it derives from principles of quantum physics that acknowledge the existence of chaos as well as the existence of structure. It perceives reality or things-in-

the-world as evolving out of a constant interplay between chaos and structure, resolution and dissolution (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999). As I interpret it, the inclusivity of holism presupposes that it is possible to be both subjects and individuals. Thus in the context of holistic discourse a constructivist as opposed to a constructionist reading of Foucault appears to be appropriate.

It *may* be, however, problematical to apply Foucault's insights to interrogate holistic discourse at all. His insights can be used to challenge and deconstruct power relationships inherent in institutionalized discourses, but to what extent do guiding principles of a holistic discourse potentially *disarm* his deconstruction of them? Since Foucault proposes that we are products of the discourses that construct us (*i.e.* that we are subjects), *and* that we have agency in as far as we are free to resist (*i.e*. that to some degree we are individuals), *and* that our power relations are conditional on chaotic or unpredictable contingencies, is it not possible to think of his philosophy, itself, as all-inclusive and thus holistic? And if so, is it not solipsistic to use Foucault's insights to unpack the power relationships between Molly and Andy, as subjects of holistic discourse? In Foucault's words: "A critique…is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept, rest" (1988: 154). What margin is left open to critique, challenge and deconstruct holism in Andy and Molly's relationship if Foucault's insights are used to do so? Is accord between Foucault's insights and holism not likely to strengthen both Foucault's ideas and holism? This is a pertinent example of how issues of knowledge cannot be separated from issues of power. According to a methodologically relational research approach (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) (see p. 50), researchers need to explore how their object of study is constituted at the outset of the research work and to track the influence of this initial construction throughout the course of the research. This opens avenues to challenge the theoretical bases on which the research is premised; it guards against studies that simply document and thus reproduce sanctioned knowledge, without probing and thus researching them. Making this dilemma visible and challenging my research approach is uncomfortable, but a methodologically relational research approach obliges me to be mindful of, reflect on and report the ways in which my theoretical bases, my research discourses and the relationships between them may impact on the research and, potentially, on its educational context.

Educators guided by holistic discourse accept and honour difference. The rules of holistic discourse require them to take responsibility for the co-creation of a student's learning experience and to apply humanist principles of mutual respect, empathy and tolerance. As pointed out before, discourses are not discrete: they refer to other discourses. In this regard, I also argue that Molly and Andy are constructed by a *humanistic* discourse. As this discussion proceeds I develop and ground this claim in the context of the data.

As a supervisor Molly positions Andy as "an" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority: "…he's
550;551 very sharp…He knows the process…[and] he knows his subject much better than I do". Her perception positions her in a way that allows her to trust Andy and be receptive to his input. He is also receptive to her input. In terms of expertise and shared learning, the balance of autonomy and dependency between them is portrayed in Andy's words:
526 "…a lot of it is *me* being taught. I don't claim to be an expert in many of the fields that we're delving into…By just chewing her way steadily through [the thinker's] works and giving me analyses every so often, [Molly] is teaching me a huge amount about him, which is wonderful". Andy positions himself as a supervisor who is willing to learn from his students. Their learning process is reciprocal and it is also ongoing. In an earlier chapter (see p. 93) I suggested that learning and unlearning are integral to research and, by association, to the research supervision relationship, and that the learning-unlearning process is related to autonomy-dependency. When we are learning, we are dependent on what we already know and on the forms of knowledge that are being consciously or unconsciously appropriated in the present. When we are unlearning, we are challenging those forms of knowledge and becoming more autonomous in relation to them. I suggest that it is in the resistance between the polarities of autonomy and dependency that power relationships between supervisors and their students function. Power relations are at the fulcrum between the old and the new; they initiate new cycles of the will-to-knowledge. If Andy is unthreatened by and receptive to Molly's new knowledge and celebrates sharing it, he is likely to *allow* her autonomy to explore unknown and unfamiliar paths.

Andy and Molly show evenly balanced autonomy and dependency in this first phase of their relationship. In the will-to-knowledge cycle what is sanctioned as sayable in an

institutionalized discourse targets, produces and is produced by visible manifestations of that discourse, including its rationality and the forms of knowledge it privileges. People become visible subjects of their knowledge. When supervisors and students like Andy and Molly are strongly embedded in and comfortable with the knowledge forms of their discourse, they appropriate and assimilate its values, goals and language and they are likely to re-produce the discourse. In Foucault's words "…the individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle" (Foucault 1980: 98).

This concludes the discussion of Andy and Molly's initial positioning with regard to their worldviews and motivations, professional and personal matching and Molly's research focus. I now turn to explore how Andy and Molly use power relations - specific resistance strategies that fall within the broad categories of push, allow and pull - to go about constructing one another. The discussion of the constructing process that follows, explores the interface of Andy and Molly's professional expectations with the professional care they give and get. In keeping with Foucault's notion of the will-to-knowledge, I show how Andy and Molly are targeted by and positioned in discourse.

#### 4.3.1.4 **Expectations & abilities - Professional & pastoral care**
(The process of constructing self and other in the will-to-knowledge)

##### 4.3.1.4.1 Professional expectations & abilities

548 Molly declares: "…If I have any expectations, other that just getting my Master's finished…it's proving to myself that I *can* do it…and that I'm improving myself…I don't expect the world to open up to me because I've got a little Master's from the bottom corner of Africa!" Throughout the interviews Molly shows resistance to her own potential. Andy repeatedly counters Molly's tendency to underestimate the value of her work and her academic abilities, although to a limited extent he may collaborate
532 with it. Andy says that he accepts that "…the Master's is not vital to her career in any way…to her life…so there's a certain relaxation about it. It's not *just* for fun…but it's not for professional reasons really". He does, however, allow space for change in his and Molly's positions regarding the importance of the Master's to her career by

acknowledging that "…she's kind of getting into [teaching]…and I think she's quite a good teacher. So ja, one doesn't know where it will carry her, actually, in the end". His position is congruent with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) recognition that outcomes are influenced by and consistent with the conditions and contingencies out of which they arise. This feeds into the systems metatheory concept of equipotentiality which claims that it is not possible to make deterministic predictions about the outcome of any relational process (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 71). Consistent with humanistic and holistic educational discourses, from the outset of the constructing process Andy positions himself in a way that does not privilege extrinsic, measurable products of research over the intrinsic educative value of the research process. He understands that for Molly the thesis and publication of it are not her primary motivating factors for embarking on postgraduate research. As Hill, Acker and Black (1994) found, some students undertake research for its educative value in terms of personal growth - as Molly's statement suggests she does - and sometimes, simply for the delight of the intellectual pursuit. Andy acknowledges a degree of dependency on Molly in the sense of sharing the fruits of her research: "…A lot of it's about helping Molly to find a way through a segment of work that is a part of a whole mosaic for me…one that she does not see herself as part of, in quite the same way as I do…it's a whole kind of career thing for me as well, I guess". However, tangible rewards do not drive his way of supervising Molly. The degree to which Molly understands this is captured in her statement: "…I almost owe him a debt…but it's not that…I don't feel as if I must pay him back or anything".

Molly has more roles than that of a Master's student and it is sometimes difficult for her to share her time and energy between them. This concurs with the findings of Denicolo and Pope (1994) whose research enabled students to become aware of the links between their roles as researchers and other professional and personal roles (see p. 108). Molly remarks: "…Self-discipline is really difficult…to have set times when I work, because it's the only way I can fit it into my life…At least half of me is a mother and one quarter…probably more…is a tutor. So [Andy] knows he only has a quarter of me". She does not put extra pressure on herself to complete her Master's quickly and jokingly, yet clearly, makes Andy aware of this. He says: " Molly has been *very clear* that I only have a quarter of her time this year…so she's taking it fairly slowly". He accepts the pace that Molly sets for herself: "…I'm fine with that". Grant and Graham

found that "…frequently the underlying issue in breakdown of supervision was an initial lack of clarification of mutual expectations and responsibilities…perhaps supervisors are too busy to think of it…and we know students are frequently too timid to initiate it" (1994: 168-169). Happily, this is not the case with Molly and Andy: Molly is clear about the centrality of her research in her life and confidently communicates this to Andy. He *collaborates* and *allows* by respecting her time boundaries and adjusting his expectations of her accordingly. In this regard, Andy's approach is consistent with South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's recommendation that academic teachers develop an appropriate motivational context for their students (CHE 2003: 8). An appropriate motivational context for Molly, however, is less appropriate to system needs in as far as it challenges the committee's endorsement of a "…shift to a more formal, contractual and accountable relationship" (CHE 2003 7: 3).

Andy is conscious that he too has different roles and is also constructed in time. He
534 reflects: "…time and commitment do have to be balanced against all the other stuff in one's life, other demands". Responding to the comment that in terms of achievements or accolades, it seems as if Andy is almost more *there* for students than for himself in
534 the supervision process, Andy elaborates: "in a way, yes…I think this has been pointed out to me before. I almost have a slightly self-sacrificial aspect to it…and I have to watch that. I have to be careful not to give *too* much…or spend more time than is necessary. I found this in the first few theses I supervised. I was really spending too much time on them…being too close, too finicky. I've got to step back a bit…both for the student's sake, and for mine". Andy's experience and his reasoning concurs with comments in the literature pointing out that the quantity of guidance supervisors decide to give their postgraduates has to be balanced against the consideration that ultimately students have to demonstrate "independence and mastery" (Moses 1994: 13). Cryer notes that this may be especially difficult for new supervisors who "…tend to put in more time, effort and guidance than their more experienced counterparts…which can delay or even prevent students' transition to independence" (1997: 5). I suggest that Molly and Andy recognize and position the research holistically: it is viewed in the context of their whole lives and it seems that they manage time in a way that allows them space to balance different dimensions of their personal and professional lives.

Andy supervises in a way that emphasizes person-as-product, but this is not without consideration of the thesis-as-product. He anticipates that "…[Molly] *is* capable of producing a really quite interesting piece of work. It's a *new* field…so it doesn't matter if it's ground level…that's what's *required*, in a way". He positions Molly as "…having a lot of staying power". Grant and Graham (1994) note that perseverance is a helpful quality for a research student to have. Hill, Acker and Black elaborate: "…persistence and reliability were more important than sheer intellectual brilliance" (1994: 66). Andy hopes that Molly will finish her Master's, but he sometimes wonders "…if she *will* actually finish [it]…I feel that there's a part of her that might not want to get too embedded in the later stages…finessing the argument. And if she feels that she actually doesn't want to do that…I wouldn't resent it or feel bad in any way". He positions Molly as: "…a pretty self-contained, mature person…whose self-esteem is not going to take a huge whack if she doesn't finish". The way in which Andy recognizes and respects Molly's time-role boundaries and the way in which he refrains from taking responsibility for completion of the thesis onto himself and away from her, is congruent with both humanistic and holistic discourses. Holistic teaching praxis recognizes that the needs, expectations, decisions and actions of people are reciprocally interconnected and equally influential. This applies not only in the context of the supervision relationship, but also to the wider social context. In this view, the personal and social meanings that are evoked in reciprocal relationships co-construct an interconnected web of reality (Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991). As Andy articulates it: "…There's a sense of…personal achievement but within a helpmeet, common goal sort of situation…we're both connected to each other in different ways, but also to the outside world where we operate in innumerable ways".

Andy's supervision style is also congruent with person-centered humanistic discourse in that he supports Molly's "…choice, free will and especially the human capacity for self-determination and self-fulfilment" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg 1991: 116). He comments: "…if a supervisor is unable to shelve their ego and allow a student to achieve what they want or need to achieve…it's a disaster…and very demoralizing for the student". Shelving ego presupposes non-control, non-separation, tolerance to what *is* - in essence, compassionate action - as the central organizing principle of power relations. This way of being in the world effectively links holistic discourse with

humanistic principles of choice, free will, self-determination and self-fulfilment (*ibid*.). In this regard Molly and Andy consistently use strategies of collaboration, reciprocation and mutual support to balance *push* and *pull* in their power relationships so that their resistances most often centre near the fulcrum of *allow*. Allow is more a state of mind and being than a strategy: a deeply embedded ethic of tolerance and open-mindedness that is grounded in everyday practice. Allow is the defining intentionality underlying compassionate action: the attitude toward self and so-called other which negotiates and collaborates in a way that seeks to do no harm and to minimize suffering and which gives due credit to one's sense of self-in-the-world while recognizing and *accommodating* ways of being other than one's own (Balsekar 1992).

As pointed out earlier students commonly feel unsure of their academic ability and their capacity to create, particularly original work (see p. 95). Molly's interviews are peppered with statements that repeat her evaluation of her academic abilities. One
546 example is: "…I'm really not sure *why* they were prodding *me*…I wasn't a hot-shot student, I was pretty mediocre…but they did". Another example is: "…I'm going to
563 have to do this whole process in my head and I don't know if my head is big enough!"
527 Andy understands Molly's insecurities: "…she worries that she's not going to make the
527 grade…she suffers from an ongoing…sense that she might not be up to this". Andy assesses Molly's abilities differently: he thinks she is capable of proving to herself that
527 she *can* do it and says her insecurity is "misplaced". He positions her as a student:
528 "…she's well capable of doing the Master's".

Andy does expect to *push* Molly in order to *pull* her away from devaluing her abilities and to get her to recognize and *pull* instead from her store of academic abilities. He
532 says: "…my only difficulty [has] been persuading her that she's good enough to do
527 this…So I just keep supporting and pushing and saying: 'What you're doing…it's fine'". As previously pointed out, support and motivation are closely linked (Grant & Graham 1994). By encouraging Molly and building up her confidence Andy assists her to maintain momentum (Clegg & Gall 1998). Molly expects to have some difficulty
551 integrating theory with her data: "…my conceptualization...isn't very strong…it's a
527 skill I need to learn". Again, Andy is aware of this: "…She has to work really *hard* at getting to the ideas…the conceptual level". He expects to "…keep pushing her to start
527 arguing and start coming up with patterns…that's my job". His perception of his "job"

concurs with expectations expressed by student participants in the research of Phillips and Pugh: "…students expect their supervisors to have the flexibility to understand what it is that they are trying to say…the supervisor needs to draw out their ideas…through a constant questioning procedure" (1996: 156).

Regarding his expectations of one aspect of his job - the regularity of supervision - at first Andy formulates a regular schedule and then adapts it to the rhythm of his
526 relationship with Molly. He explains: "…Normally I try to set aside a timeslot every week, which will be the student's supervision spot…whether it's taken up or not…That's kind of fallen away with Molly…because we see a lot of each other anyway…either in the department or inter-visiting. If anything comes up…then we can just sit down and chat about it. So it's been very informal with us". Molly is happy
549 with this arrangement. As she says: "…he *does* keep tabs on me, but there are no formal schedules or deadlines". Phillips and Pugh recommend regular contact between a supervisor and his or her student: "…the more frequent the meetings, the more casual they are likely to be, helping to create a climate for discussion" (1996: 97). This viewpoint is not without its critics: Delamont, Atkinson and Parry (1997) found that problems commonly arise from students and supervisors' daily proximity to each other. Perhaps this illustrates the difficulty – if not futility – of developing a one-size-fits-all model of supervision. Different people bring different expectations, wants and needs into the supervision relationship: what represents helpful praxis in one relationship could well be anathema in another. Timing also plays a part – supervisors need to recognize the stage students have reached and adjust the amount of supervision accordingly (Phillips & Pugh 1996) and this varies from relationship to relationship. Regular contact could, for example, disturb the "weaning process" (Phillips & Pugh 1996) when students need to begin working at a higher level of independence. In Molly and Andy's relationship, regular and informal contact poses no problems at any time during the course of this project. Their engagement evolves naturally into a sequence where almost each week she offers him analyses of pieces of the thinker's
553 work. She is happy with the way he reciprocates: "…He's efficient. He doesn't sit on
550 my stuff…[and] gives me feedback almost immediately". Although their expectations are not directly discussed, these synchronize spontaneously into a mutually satisfactory working pattern.

531 In terms of how he expects to supervise, Andy aims to "...hit a bit of a middle ground between the two extremes" of his own experience of supervision. He elaborates: 531 "…My own supervisor was *so* relaxed and *so* supportive that it was useless…or next to useless…So I ended up giving my stuff to somebody else in an informal capacity, who 531 just *shredded* me". Although, at the time, he enjoyed the stimulus of that criticism - 531 "…the detailed, sparky stuff" - Andy prefers to work in a different way and not to 531 "…pull my punches too much on what I think is inadequate". Many academics have created supervision styles that protest against their own experience of supervision and would probably relate to Nias's claim: "…to produce creatively, it is necessary not only to transcend the old, but to accept responsibility for its dissolution…learning anything that is new to the world must involve some unlearning" (1993: 45 & 81). Andy assimilates his experience of two conflicting supervision styles: he learns and unlearns from both of them and develops a way of working that is more closely aligned to his personal integrity and authenticity. The manner in which Andy reflects on the quality of his criticism and his own experience of being supervised contradicts the finding of Lessing and Schultze: "…experienced supervisors were much more aware of the nature of the criticism they gave whereas the inexperienced group did not seem to have considered this aspect at all" (2003: 179).

531 His phrasing: "…on what *I think* is inadequate" shows an attitude congruent with holistic discourse in that it *allows* for and respects the legitimacy of different perspectives of adequacy, not only his. It is also congruent with humanistic discourse: it opens a space for adequacy to be evaluated not only in terms of thesis-as-product, but in terms of person-as-product. Andy's attitude is accepting of each student's level and his or her evaluation of it as being appropriate to him or her: this challenges the application of depersonalized and normative standards of assessment to a student's learning process. Andy's attitude is congruent with those recommendations of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003) that are constructed by humanistic discourse, but as pointed out before, humanistic principles do not always fit comfortably with commercial imperatives.

Molly and Andy are particularly well matched both personally and professionally. They are ontologically aligned and both embedded in the values, language and actions sanctioned by humanistic and holistic discourses. Their approach to research is also

methodologically aligned. They know one another well, respect and like one another, communicate openly and clearly and have realistic expectations of each other.

#### 4.3.1.4.2 Professional care

Molly began formulating her research focus and wrote her first draft proposal before
551 she registered for the Master's. Andy advised her to do so in order to "…get it out of the way…[and] start the year working". Molly says: "I think the first draft was
551 probably complete twaddle. But he was very gentle…He just gave it back to me with a few comments and a *pile* of books and said: 'Read these'…A lot of it was mostly
551 theory, which goes with conceptualization and it doesn't really excite me that much".
552 Molly smiles: "…I got a bit uppity then". Molly makes a show of resistance that is more playful than earnest – tongue-in-cheek, really. She knows that Andy knows and expects her to resist theory and conceptualizing. He strategizes in three stages. First he
551 *pushes* and *asserts*. As Molly recalls it: "…he pointed out that [conceptualizing is] part of the process, that you have to do it, and if you want to get [the proposal] through the Higher Degrees Committee, this is the way you *do* it". Secondly, he *assists* and
551 *collaborates*. According to Molly "…he gave me the right books [to read]". Thirdly he makes the task less daunting by offering a process comment that encourages her to understand and see beyond the immediate difficulty. He offers the perspective that
530 "…this is only an *initial* stage. You're not going to be forced to stick with what we've got here. If you change your style in some ways…as long as you don't hurtle off and do a different topic altogether…no one's going to look at [the proposal] again". South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee recommends that teachers should make "…clear to students the purposes and outcomes of the learning task", make "…explicit 'the rules of the game'" (*ibid.*), and lend learners their "…own conceptual anchors, cognitive structure and strategies to assist their thinking and acting" (*ibid.*). Andy's interventions implement all three of these recommendations. His interventions also show that Andy is open to chance or contingencies: he views the research process as both goal driven and exploratory (Cryer 1997) and likely to deviate from the proposal or initial plan (Cryer 1996). Some students have little idea of the different stages through which their research and *they* will go. Phillips and Pugh found that few supervisors talk to students about "…anything relating to the *process* of doing

a research degree" (1996: 89). Andy approaches the task differently: he offers Molly information on both the process and the content of the research venture. He balances encouragement with clear directives in order to keep her moving forward.

Throughout these three interchanges Andy influences Molly by *collaborating* with her so that she *pulls* on her own resources and integrates her ideas with his insights and criticisms. As Molly says: "…he fills gaps". I propose that power relationships operate in the gaps. As Hauke articulates it: "…it is in the gap that something happens and the spark is revealed" (2000: 29). Filling gaps in a student's understanding is one way a supervisor influences the construction of knowledge. Offering critique of a student's understanding or interpretations is one phase in the cycle of surveillance, assessment and feedback. Criticism may subtly or overtly bestow or withhold reward; it constructs the student's knowledge. Phillips and Pugh note: "…the script should form the basis for a discussion…[which] furthers the student's thinking about the project through an exchange of ideas with the supervisor" (1996: 151). From a Foucaultian perspective, knowledge is mediated through relations of power, but these power relations do not only operate in one direction: when the student responds to critique this potentially furthers the supervisor's ideas. In turn, changes in both the student's and supervisor's ideas potentially transform knowledge in the wider educational domain. Andy remarks on his exchange of ideas with Molly: "…Obviously, with giving feedback, there's a delicate balance between putting my own ideas into the mix, and allowing Molly's ideas to emerge organically from what she's seeing…so that she *does* feel that they *are* her ideas…you know…that I'm not writing [the proposal] *for* her. In a sense it's also something that I'm trying to draw out of the work itself". Andy does not take Molly's responsibility or autonomy away from her instead they *pull* together at the task. As Andy articulates it: "…we make a bit of a team effort in playing the game…for the formality of it, and to get it out of the way…Because it can be quite inhibiting, I think…to be stuck on the proposal and not the real work…even though it is part of the real work, really…clarifying a student's thinking". Commenting on Andy's approach, Molly says: "…Maybe in a different situation a supervisor will come to you and say: ' I want more theory from you' and then you'd try to squeeze it out, whereas he came at it much more gently and encouraged me to try and get my head around it". Applying humanistic principles of empathy and respect, Andy gently pushes Molly to work with and overcome her resistance to theorizing.

529 Andy says he tends to "...guide the proposal stage pretty tightly…and we go through four or five drafts of it before I'm satisfied". He adds that Molly "…was still pretty
529 hesitant…quite unsure about what she was going to do". Molly recalls this stage: "…it
551 was *hell*, actually. He drilled me. He really drilled me. He made me rewrite it…I don't know…I lost count after draft number five. And he did very close commentary". According to both their accounts this is a stage of intense critical feedback. Andy
529 elaborates: "…obviously I try to deliver it in as constructive a manner as possible…not in a dismissive manner". Andy experiences Molly's way of receiving criticism:
529 "…where I've disagreed or remained unconvinced by what she's said, then I say so, and she accepts that, with great humility and grace". Molly regards his criticism as
550 "…very useful, very valid". Andy expresses his impression that at this stage she is
530;560 "…grateful for the supportiveness". Molly confirms this: "…Andy's there *with* me".
551 Her spontaneous comment: "So we did it!" aptly captures the sense of team spirit - the
551 *we* - in their relationship. Molly and Andy share the success: "…at the beginning of this year…the proposal went through without even having to be defended".

551 Since then Molly says she has been "…doing my little weekly offerings…[and] playing". Her play takes her skipping down an unexpected trajectory: "…I could've
555 got completely lost and done a whole thesis on a [Mediaeval mystic]". Commenting on tangents Cryer says: "…it is often these that can provide 'originality' as well as the fascination with the unknown that ought to accompany research" (1996: 123). Molly
556 recalls: "…Andy certainly didn't enthuse about my trip…but fortunately his attitude is:
555 'There's no such thing as a side road'". Andy shows caution balanced with recognition of the potential fruitfulness of the unknown. In a sense, his approach concurs with anarchic leadership discourse which presupposes change and works with shifting outcomes. His response is an apt example of a flexible supervisor who is able to "…empathize with an altered conviction" (Berger 1987: 116) to what is often a student's baffling progression of advance and regression, play and rest. Molly does actually benefit from her trajectory: she finds a useful concept for her thesis: "…[the]
555 idea of '*veriditas*'…a Latin word which has been translated as 'moisture in greenness'. So *there's* the ecology…the importance of things that are growing…of greenness and obviously, moisture as life". Molly likens the research process to a journey: "…So [the
555 Mediaeval mystic] took me on a trip. Like the thinker I'm studying…each piece of his

552 work is like a new journey…another road". As pointed out before, metaphors of journeying commonly arise when students and supervisors speak of the research and supervision processes (Clegg & Gall 1998). In keeping with a humanistic discourse, Andy is hospitable to Molly's need to explore her new field and to make and assimilate her own discoveries. He resists her pull to autonomy using dual strategies of allowing and containing so that she benefits from her tangent but does not get, as Molly says:
555 "completely lost". Andy reflects on the changing nature of their power relationship:
536 "…The supervision relationship is a hugely complex thing…always shifting…There
538 has to be a sense of the independence of two beings in the relationship. There's obviously a certain amount of pull one way or another, within the constraints of the set up, I suppose. But my aim is less to constrain than to liberate Molly's views into their fullness". The collaborative spirit of Andy's statement reverberates in systemic and holistic worldviews which assert that "…all phenomena should be defined in terms of relationship" (Bateson in Becvar & Becvar 1996: 356). Individuals are part of a complex and ceaselessly shifting web of interconnectivity; each person impacts on the world through her or his reciprocal relationship with each of its parts so that every action can be seen as a contribution to how the world and each sentient being in it can *become.*

538 In "…liberat[ing] Molly's views into their fullness" Andy respects Molly's autonomy
533 as an individual as well as her right to it: "…Molly is independent…doing her own thing…she'll make her own decision as to how far she pushes her Master's studies…I
537 hope she'll finish". He adds "…but also…she's having fun…so I think to myself: 'Ag well, it's Molly's pace and she can go with it'. I don't want to pressure her out of having fun at this stage". Learners and teachers in a holistic discourse respond to time in a way that allows space for discontinuities, and for work to co-exist with play (Nias 1993; Vandenberg 1997). Teaching practices also aim to balance intuition and emotion with logical rationality. This sanctions a focus on experience and spontaneity rather than the relentless application of intellectual rigour (Capra 1989). Play is accepted as an aspect of learning that encourages the emergence of the creative self; it is closely related to experimentation, reflexion, the realization of personal authenticity and the discovery of intrinsic truth (Winnicott 1971). Accordingly, Andy adjusts his way of delivering feedback and criticism to match the stage at which Molly finds herself in the research process and also to her experience of it. At this point she is exploring the

thinker's work and doing detailed criticisms of sections of it. Andy comments:
527 "…Molly's been working her way through…fairly basic…ground-up stuff that she has to do…[she's] playing around with the ideas and trying to get her head around
528 them…but still in a fairly tentative, unformed sort of way". He repositions himself: "…My criticism has been fairly light at the moment, partially because I know that the
529 stuff she's doing at the moment is going to go through huge renovations. At this stage I'm just tackling the ideas…picking up where she's hesitant or lost…trying to help her through that…making sense of the works *with* her". Andy's praxis concurs with Delamont, Atkinson and Parry who counsel:

> …careful management of the stark truth…in the early stages…it is very easy to destroy a student's self-confidence by criticism, or to give him or her a false sense of security by too much praise…there are times when the student must be told that the work is fine and that he or she is doing well, because it *is* fine for that stage…and the student must move ahead…The sensitive supervisor will realize that, at the wrong time, thoroughgoing and detailed criticism of the work in progress can undermine the student and bring the process to a dead stop…(1997: 23-30).

Molly positions Andy as "pragmatic". She elaborates: "…when I'm really struggling
556 to get my head around something, [he] says: 'Just leave it then, and come back to it later…don't worry about it'".

Andy positions Molly in terms of his expectations of a student at this stage: "…she's asking questions all the time and that's what one *wants*. That's just great". She
527 confirms that "…he certainly is pushing me…to consider different aspects…to
550 question", however, "…when he offers criticism…I don't take everything he says lying
550 down". Engaging with a supportive and sensitive supervisor who exposes them to constructive criticism helps students to adopt and develop a critical stance in relationship to their work (Phillips & Pugh 1996). It also creates an unthreatening climate where the student is comfortable to engage with and perhaps challenge what the supervisor is saying. Criticism in a supportive relationship provides "…opportunities for learners to test, extend, reflect on and revise their ideas through performances of understanding" (CHE 2003: 8). Molly continues: "…we've got a little tussle on the
550 concept of the balance of nature. I haven't really locked horns with him about this…and I haven't done enough reading or thinking about it to take him up on it, but I'm sure that I will". Again, the balance of autonomy and dependency between them is

evenly poised and resistances in their power relationship tend to center on the strategy
529 of *allow*. Andy comments: "…most of her stuff has been good…there's only the one piece I thought she really hadn't got her head around…so I said: 'You haven't got it together on this one yet' and she said 'Ja, no, I can see that'. She recognizes the justice
552 of that…and that's as far as the disagreement has gone. It's amazing". Molly concurs: "…there's no tension". It could be said that their power relationship is harmonious as opposed to dissonant. This brings to mind Wheatley's poetic description of the collaborative spirit of holistic discourse:

> …Those who have used music metaphors to describe working together, especially jazz metaphors, are sensing the nature of this quantum world. This world demands that we be present together, and be willing to improvise. We agree on the melody, tempo, and key, and then we play. We listen carefully, we communicate constantly, and suddenly, there is music, possibilities beyond anything we imagined. The music comes from somewhere else, from a unified whole we have accessed among ourselves, a relationship that transcends our false sense of separateness…(1999: 45).

556 While she is "having fun" and working at her own pace, Molly is aware of needing to find her own ecological stance. She explains "…I'm analyzing separate pieces of the
552 thinker's work…I get into one part, sail along and then finally the thing's finished…and then I have to start all over again on the next piece…There *are* things that connect [the pieces together]…but I'm struggling to find the thread that runs
553 through…It's almost as if [the thinker] is sitting on my shoulder and laughing in my ear". Molly offers a metaphor for her research process that relates it to a hobby of hers: sewing. She says: "…In my thesis, I start off with analyzing the thinker's work, which
562 is one complete piece [of cloth], and at the moment I'm busy cutting that up…and crafting it into these lappies [little pieces of cloth]…these separate analyses. So it's
563 very detailed attention to each piece…I just wish I had a sewing machine, instead of a
533 computer to make my thesis!" According to Andy: "…she *loves* sewing… that's what *really* sets her alight". Skillfully and creatively, he uses Molly's love of sewing to encourage her to re-perspectivize the task of finding the thread that will weave all aspects of her thesis into a coherent overall design. He uses a process comment that is grounded in her hobby, potentially making the research process more enjoyable and
533 accessible to Molly: "…I encourage her to think of her Master's thesis as an analogous process…[to sewing]".

Andy begins to anticipate the next stage in Molly's research process: "…once we get into a level of having to weld her analyses into some sort of argument…and she has to develop an eco-critical stance for herself…we'll try and get her reading together and formulate things a bit more clearly". Again, his use of the word *we* illustrates the team spirit that exists in this relationship. He expects to readjust his criticism during the next stage: "…I'll be much, much more rigorous…then I start nit picking…both in terms of coherence in argument and in terms of writing style". Reflecting on his past experience of supervision Andy wonders: "…I suppose I do get quite…maybe too much…I don't know…too rigorous towards the end. I think I'm a bit of a compulsive proofreader". Andy's dilemma is shared by many supervisors as they try to find a balance between the amount of criticism they offer and what they need to withhold in order for a student to own and take responsibility for their own research (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Nias 1993; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Wisker 2001; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). He anticipates that at the next stage: "…she might baulk at the jumps a little bit more, and need a bit more support" but concludes that "…It'll evolve". This last phrase shows an attitude in accordance with holistic discourse where time and progress are not seen as linear but as multidimensional and intricately interwoven (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999). His approach is also in accord with Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) who regards outcomes as unpredictable yet appropriate to the contingencies, situations and power relationships from which they arise. Accordingly, Andy plans to guide Molly's process, but he also expects to be flexible and to adapt to circumstances as they arise in the supervision relationship. He does not seek to control the process in a way that would stifle an organic evolution of it. Instead, he accepts things-as-they-are and positions himself as receptive to whatever outcomes may emerge. Again, his attitude is congruent with anarchic leadership discourse. As Molly says: "…He has a very…eclectic way…even when he's teaching…it's difficult to describe".

As can be seen from the interchange above, principles of holism reverberate in aspects of anarchic leadership discourse (see p. 70) as well as humanistic discourse (see p. 76). The fact that discourses are not discrete, renders problematical the idea of power relationships being constructed by any one specific discourse. It is for this reason that I propose that people and their power relationships are influenced and constructed

*predominantly*, but not exclusively, in particular discourses. Moreover, because people adopt different subject positions or identities in different contexts, I acknowledge that it is only in the supervision relationships in which they *currently* find themselves, that participants most keenly experience the influence of their working partner's discourses and become targeted and constructed by them.

552 Molly assesses her present position in the research process: "…Other difficulties? Well, you know how it goes…not knowing where to go next…which I'm sure is pretty
556 common…Sometimes I get quite tired but mostly I'm having fun. I'm starting to be afraid that I might just burn my brain cells out completely…but that's what academia's like, I think…the whole process is quite an up-down thing". As Clegg and Gall remark, supervisors need to help students to understand the phases through which the research, and they will go. Research involves "…keeping…momentum up and understanding how that momentum will change and why it changes" (1998: 330).

Having discussed Andy and Molly's professional expectations and abilities and their experience of professional care, I now explore their pastoral expectations and abilities, and the pastoral care they give and get.

#### 4.3.1.4.3 Pastoral expectations & abilities

524 Regarding the quality of his supervision relationships Andy comments: "…there's a
525 curious mix there, of friendship and professional interest…I regard all the students I've
524 had so far as friends…just getting involved together in stuff that we're interested in…I
525 guess partly…it's just *me*…I *like* having friends". Molly comments: "…I'm fond of
552 Andy. I mean, we're good friends". For instance, he will pop in and have a meal with us…so it's a nice sort of relationship. Sort of family…I suppose". Again the family metaphor appears in this relationship, but it would seem that Molly and Andy's association is more one of family-friend than the parent-child alliance portrayed by Burgess (1994) and Clegg and Gall (1998) (see p. 110). I develop this interpretation in the next section. In holistic discourse relationships are interconnected and not considered discrete. This principle is demonstrated in the permeable boundaries between Molly and Andy's professional and personal alliance. Hill, Acker and Black

found that most supervisors strike a middle path preferring to think that in the supervision alliance: "…there [is] a boundary to…involvement…While friendly and informal, it was nonetheless largely confined to issues to do with the work" (1994: 67). Markie adopts a strong stance regarding the boundary between friendliness and friendship: "…establishing and maintaining a friendship with one or more students will severely limit a professor's ability to honour other moral obligations" (in Chapman & Sork 2001: 101). He advises the maintenance of a "professional distance" (*ibid*.). Neither Molly nor Andy expect their friendship to disturb their supervision relationship
552 and respond similarly when asked about this. Molly says: "…they say you shouldn't mix business with pleasure…but our friendship doesn't get in the way of our supervision process". Andy elaborates: "…For me, being friends doesn't interfere with
525 the supervision process. I mean I don't feel hesitancy in therefore being critical of the work. People appreciate that. And I don't have a problem doing that. It's almost part of the friendship…that one is very rigorous about that". Thus Molly and Andy's relationship challenges and rejects what is sanctioned as sayable in texts on supervision practice.

Clegg and Gall acknowledge: "…problems in [students'] progress often stem as much from problems in their personal life as from academic issues" (1998: 327). Andy appears to consider the need to offer pastoral support as an essential aspect of being a
525 supervisor: "…You just get so involved with the person and go through all their
527 turbulence and turmoil…Things like illness and crises…they do arise…and you have to cope with them". Happily this has not been his experience with Molly; he positions her
527 as "…just so…steady. She just kind of…goes *on*…*does* things…nothing seems to faze the process. Really, it's quite extraordinary". Andy does not rule out the possibility of
527 having to offer Molly pastoral support: "…[she] doesn't seem to [need] any of that, somehow…or she hasn't *yet*. Obviously something might happen…but she's doing fine and so far I haven't had to cope with crises on her part".

#### 4.3.1.4.4 Pastoral care

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Andy offers a comment that may suggest that Molly shows more autonomy than he does in terms of needing or giving pastoral care. He says: "…she's been a very stabilizing influence in my own slightly turbulent last couple of years". This is an unusual reverse of the autonomy-dependency tension that is encountered in texts on the supervision relationship. As students progress in their studies, and (ideally) become aware of new developments and cutting edge research in their field, they may come to know more than their supervisors (Phillips & Pugh 1996). In such cases supervisors may be dependent on students in the sense that students' work may offer supervisors some professional advancement in terms of new knowledge (*ibid*.). Supervisors may also be professionally interdependent in terms of sharing publication (Hill, Acker & Black 1994). However, I have found no instances in the reviewed literature that mention a supervisor's dependency on a more personal level. The only indications are references to supervisors deriving personal satisfaction from supervising students and nurturing their growth (Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994).

As pointed out before, in the reviewed literature professional expectations and care are examined closely but there appears to be some silence surrounding pastoral expectations and care. Is this because pastoral care is more difficult to define and defies categorization? Is it because this aspect of supervision remains in the private domain? Is it because I found no cases in the reviewed literature that examine friendship in the supervisor-student relationship? I venture to offer a further interpretation: that a considerable quantity of the available literature on supervision practice arises out of a commercial educational management discourse, which tends to emphasise thesis-as-product above person-as-product. By this I do not mean that person-as-product is ignored: the "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee, for instance, do not ignore person-as-product; rather the documents are for the most part silent on, and thus marginalize, the personal dimension of the supervision *relationship* and thus banish *pastoral care* to the peripheries. Despite the acknowledgement that "…it is important to preserve as far as possible, the intense one-on-one supervisory relationship" (CHE 2003 7: 3) many of the Committee's recommendations promote a "…more pragmatic and efficient" (CHE 2003 7: 3) approach to supervision in keeping

with an international "…shift to a more formal, contractual and accountable relationship" (*ibid*.).

The shift in emphasis from personal to professional accountability in the supervision relationship suits system needs in as far as it renders the supervision relationship, the thesis-as-product *and* the person-as-product more easily accessible to instrumental assessment methods that are linked to the commercial imperatives of an outcomes-based model of education. As I interpret it, despite the manner in which the Committee's recommendations attempt to integrate humanistic discourse with the demands imposed by and power relations inherent in a commercial educational management discourse, its cursory acknowledgement of the personal nature of the supervision relationship is inconsistent with the humanistic principle of pastoral *care* that underpins many of their recommended interventions. As such, I argue that the documents represent an organizational example of contradictory subjectivity. As Foucault remarks: "…There is a battle for 'truth', or at least 'around truth'…it being understood that it's not a matter of a battle 'on behalf' of the truth but of a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays" (1980b: 129-132). In Foucaultian terms: what is sayable in texts on supervision practice is becoming predominantly constructed by a commercial discourse. What is sayable becomes sanctioned in the visible, which then serves to double back and shape and reproduce the sayable. It is in this self-perpetuating cycle of the will-to-knowledge that particular discourses may become dominant and entrenched.

As I hope to have shown so far, Andy's approach to the supervision relationship offers numerous examples of pastoral care in terms of a holistic-humanistic discourse where the process aspect of a student's learning is considered to be equally important to the content aspect of what they learn. In this discourse, professional and pastoral aspects of supervision are insinuated in and inextricably linked to one another. As discussed in the previous two case studies, a pastoral discourse in Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) sense of the word, operates when a person's experience of reality – their sense of self, their words, feelings, thoughts and actions – have the status of truth conferred on (or withdrawn from) them. This is accomplished through the authority of the person to whom those truths are disclosed or rendered open to surveillance, assessment and feedback. In accepting all Molly's ways of being: her need to balance

her role as a Master's student with her personal role as mother, her play and her work, her staying power, and his appreciation of her capacity to respond graciously to criticism, Andy effectively confers truth on Molly as person and student. Molly, equally, confers truth on Andy as person and supervisor: she appreciates his nurturing manner, his gentle way of offering criticism of her work, his expertise, and his friendship with herself and her family. Molly and Andy's mutual recognition of and agreement on the rightness and truth of these attributes has the effect of reinforcing these attributes. Thus their existing subjectivities are entrenched. As Kendall and Wickham explain:

> For Foucault, the subject is produced out of the doubling of force upon itself, the attention to self. This production of subjectivity always occurs as a doubling of self upon self in every realm – the realm of the body, the realm of force and the realm of knowledge…(1999: 53).

In Molly and Andy's power relationship, they also perpetuate and reproduce holistic and humanistic discourses so that what is sayable in these discourses becomes visible in their way of being - their identities or subjectivities - and evident in their language. They make repeated references to terms such as 'evolving', 'organically', 'holistic', 'embodies', 'humility', 'grace', 'nurture', 'eclectic', 'symbiosis', 'ecological', 'embryonic' and so forth.

Another sayable aspect of their relationship that relates to a pastoral discourse within their holistic-humanistic worldview is that of play. On several occasions during the interviews, Andy refers to allowing Molly the space to play. In terms of Foucault's (*ibid*.) insight, Andy's validation of play in Molly's process sanctions it as truth. Play then becomes visible in practice and, in turn, this strengthens what is sayable in the holistic and humanistic discourses that construct them. He says: "…I don't want to pressure her out of having fun at this stage. So I just say: 'Well OK, just go with that, have fun with it'". One of the metaphors Andy offers for the research process shows that he is included in Molly's play: "…we're both feeling kind of puppyish about it" [56].

[56] Constructing metaphors for aspects of the research experience was a task I requested participants to undertake before their second interview (see p. 139). Andy specifically requested me to report on his reluctance to consciously construct metaphors. His resistance is echoed by some of the other participants and this is discussed in the section entitled *Participants' experience of the research process* (see p. 290).

Molly offers a metaphor for their relationship that illustrates play and fun in her process: "…When I think about our supervision relationship, I think of play and surprise and challenge…and an element of child*like*ness…Imagine a playground with lots of bright colours. For me, bright colours symbolize happiness and fun. There's a long complicated jungle gym…a brightly painted one, a challenging one, with lots of different obstacle courses…kind of rambling and with all sorts of hidden things to discover along the way…[it's] constructed out of wood with tyres and netting-rope things and different levels…almost like an army training obstacle course. It's quite exploratory, but it's contained as well…[and] manageable…and multi-textured. It's actually quite an organic jungle gym, I've just realized…It's probably also connected with climbing…Andy's obviously more experienced than I am, but he's not standing there saying 'You better climb up that one'. He's there *with* me".

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Andy also offers a climbing metaphor: "…I find climbing a pretty holistic kind of activity. It's very absorbing because…you don't think about anything else other than where you're going to put your hand next. So it's very cleansing in a way…almost meditative. It's private, but it's a partnership too…there's always somebody on the other end of your rope…so it's a very two-way thing happening all the time…the give and take. And if you don't feel like doing a particular climb, that's cool…It's all a matter of encouraging one to do better or get up the thing, but if you fall off, there's no judgment involved…that's just the way it is…It's quite strategic…and it's a matter of overcoming fears…knowing that you may peel off but you've just got to trust it and trust the gear and trust your mate and hope you'll be all right...You lead I'll follow…maybe I'll lead it too…I'm there anyway…we're both there to keep each other safe. And just being together in beautiful places…that's also the attraction of climbing for me…And I love that atmosphere, you know. In a sense…it embodies some of who I am and perhaps something of the kind of philosophies and attitudes that I bring to the rest of life, or try to. There's a sense of a kind of personal achievement but within a helpmeet, common goal sort of situation".

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Both climbing metaphors capture the sense of balance between autonomy and dependency in Molly's and Andy's supervision relationship. They share a sense of enjoyment and play in a challenging yet fun context and their process is equally as important as its ends: the thesis-as-product - or to articulate it in the language of their

metaphors - the climb up a rockface or through a jungle gym. Friends customarily play and have fun together. As I interpret the data, play is an important sayable and visible aspect of a pastoral discourse and its attendant quality of care in their power relationship.

525 Andy says that he and his students, including Molly: "…end up kind of leaning on each other in many ways". As I pointed out in the section on their professional expectations, the thesis is a professional route to Molly and Andy's reciprocal learning-leaning process. I venture here to unpack Andy's statement in terms of a possible way that pastoral care may provide a way of fulfilling their pastoral expectations and/or needs.

527 532 547 547;547 532;527 Andy says: "…Molly suffers quivers of…unconfidence…pretty regularly…She keeps saying things like 'I don't know if I can really do this' or 'I'm not really totally sold on this thing'…comments like that". Molly recalls being "vehement" about "never" doing a Master's, and tells how Andy "gently niggled" her to "take the plunge". Andy says the only difficulty he has encountered so far in their relationship is "persuading her that she's good enough to do this…So I just keep supporting and pushing". He comments:

537 532 "…part of Molly just stubbornly refuses to take this thing seriously…but when she's doing it she has a hell of a lot of fun, which is great". I propose that in their relationship pastoral care is almost like a game they play: a kind of power game in which they *push* and *pull* and ultimately *collaborate* with one another between the positions of 'yes-you-can-do-it' and 'no-I-can't'. As I read it, whether they interact as friends or family, as fellow colleagues or supervisor and student, this particular form of play between them partly establishes and maintains nurturing in their relationship.

This concludes the exploration of interpersonal power relations. The discussion now focuses on *institutional* power relations: how discourses in the educational domain influence Andy and Molly and how, through strategies of resistance, they influence these discourses. The section is presented under the sub-headings: Competing discourses; Expectations; and Care.

### 4.3.2 Institutional power relations

#### 4.3.2.1 Competing discourses

Within the university domain Molly's research topic contributes to holistic discourse and she is also beginning to promote this discourse in wider educational and societal
556-557 domains. She explains: "…I don't know if this is an apposite example of how the thesis has influenced or changed my daily life and worldview…but whereas two years ago I wouldn't have thought anything of the wastage in packaging, now I find I'm getting quite irate…imagining where all this tin-foil and cellophane and cardboard comes from. And where is it all going to go to? Then I thought: 'But you shouldn't be getting cross, you should just not buy these products'. At home I've finally got the family trained to use the different bins. And then all these big bags of paper collect and I've got to go and post it! Because there's just a little slit in the recycling bins…I think they're designed for A4 office paper…not for your oats boxes and potato bags. And there I am thinking: 'I've got to go and post all the paper again…is this worth it?' And I stop myself and say: 'No, I *must* do it'. If everybody did it, it would make such a huge difference". Molly reflects: "…what the thinker I'm looking at shows us, I think,
563 is the search for harmony…humankind in symbiosis with the earth…knowing that it's actually an impossible task to reconcile tensions, but doing it anyway…and I'm just inadequately trying to follow his footsteps". Molly has begun to re-produce sayable values of a holistic discourse by re-educating herself and her family. In the will-to-knowledge cycle depersonalized information translates into personalized action. Molly is transformed by her new knowledge and acts in a way that transforms her world. As Tharp and Gallimore comment: "…learning is the internalization and transformation of social tools of thought" (in CHE 2003: 7). Furthermore, Molly's ecological action is a pertinent example of *compassionate* action (Balsekar 1992; Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bohm 1981; Brennan 1993; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999). Compassionate action arises from the recognition that we are connected with all inanimate things and sentient beings in a symbiotic and collective union with nature and the human-made world (Bohm 1981; Capra 1982, 1989). The holistic discourse views the role of individual conscience as a pivot for an emerging global consciousness and ecological awareness. It nurtures a personally motivated critical approach to ordinary, everyday life in order to effect transformation from *within* the personal-collective world by acting mindfully,

moment-to-moment (Balsekar 1992). Wheatley's comment mirrors this vision: "…Through engagement in the moment, we evoke our futures" (1999: 38).

Andy's actions also potentially strengthen the position of the holistic discourse and the
539 ecological sensitivity it promotes. He describes himself as "…catching a wave [of]
539 ecological criticism" and he endeavours to "…get other people involved…so they can also catch the wave…contribute to it". He is also *pushing* forward holistic discourse in the university and broader educational domains by generating and securing funding for
537 academic pursuits: "…I've got a huge eco-project developing which I've got a bit of funding for".

Andy remarks: "…Funding is now becoming dependent on staff getting students on
542-543 board with group projects…it hasn't really hit our department yet but it's certainly happening in other ones. If you've got a particular goal in mind for your own career…[and] an ego-driven investment in that…then the impulse *is* to compel the student to do what *you* want done. If that kind of ego comes into play…you have to guard against it. If you don't…you can actually scotch students' opportunities. And that's terribly dangerous. I am quite aware of that". Gibbons (2001) proposes that the impetus to discovery - and, by association, research - is usually attended by competition, which in turn motivates experimental behaviour that is exploratory, open-ended, flexible and produces new knowledge. However, the competition Andy speaks of here and its potential to pit the supervisor's ambitions against the best interests of the student is ominous and not easily or comfortably reconcilable with the notion of academic freedom. Much of the reviewed literature points out that commercial educational management is becoming a dominant discourse in the university domain and that this discourse tends to favour the methods of science and technology (Altbach 2001; Lemmer 1997; Luckett 2000; Marginson 2001; Morris 1972; Walker 2001). As Foucault comments, science and technology embody "…a very specific type of rationality…whose aim is to increase strength within an extensive and competitive framework" (1996: 73-77). One repercussion of the scientific model of research is an upsurge in group projects supported by corporate funding (Altbach 2001; Lemmer 1997; Luckett 2000; Marginson 2001; Morris 1972; Walker 2001). In this model of research there is

> …less personal stake in the problem's outcome…[it] demonstrates the great superiority of the group mind over the individual mind …great abiding belief in *group* thinking, the *group* considering; the *group* choosing is a more authentic and reliable avenue to true humanity than the *individual* thinking, considering and choosing…( Van Cleve Morris in Morris 1972: 210).

The danger of this route lies in academic freedom being potentially constrained by conformity to commercial values. As Andy points out, this could be manipulated to benefit (ruthlessly? desperately?) ambitious academic supervisors. In this event, I propose that they are targeted, constructed and perhaps unknowingly constrained (or are feeling trapped?) by dominant discourse and the groupthink this engenders. In turn, this is likely to impact on research products, on subjectivities and on the power relations between such supervisors, their students and university managers and will influence what forms of knowledge become sanctioned in the broader educational domain.

543 Andy goes on to say: "…Fortunately this ecological thing is big enough and loose enough and I'm quite happy to see anything happening in the field from any quarter, because it's all grist for the mill at this stage. Hopefully it'll continue in that way…big enough to avoid any sense of competition". As pointed out before (see p. 56) universities are embedded in an economic environment where "…intensified competition and innovation are respectively the stimulus and response to globalisation…[and] survival" (Gibbons 2001: 5). Increased competition should not be demonized as an unreservedly bad development. A Foucaultian viewpoint would regard this simply as a development, one that is mutually constructed by and constructive of people and their contexts. It is up to us as individuals to nurture awareness of the discourses that construct us so that we have better autonomy to respond and adapt creatively to things-as-they-are in order to find a way of being that is congruent with our sense of personal authenticity. Foucault recognizes this when he says:

> …Power relationships are being born incessantly, as both effect and condition of other processes…[they do not simply arise from] the resistance of the unhappy ones who are obligated to bow before them…power is born out of a plurality of relationships which are grafted onto something else, born from something else, and permit the development of something else…(1996: 260).

524 Andy's promotion of what he calls an "embryonic" field of research - ecological criticism - does potentially position the university advantageously in terms of competition. Innovative research can attract funding and has the potential to improve the university's edge in a competitive marketplace. Andy comments: "…As it happens, 543 what I do is going to benefit the system anyway…but that's more luck than anything". His words are an apposite illustration of Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) recognition of contingency and chance. These are the 'wild cards' in his view on how power relations work: they allow for and are receptive to a conspiracy of possibilities.

4.3.2.2 Expectations

524;542 Andy supervises partly because "…we're expected to…Staff are under pressure to turn 543 out postgraduate students per se…you want to have, 'I have supervised X, Y and Z' under the belt…and that's all part of one's career ladder in some way". Nonetheless Andy is not putting much pressure on Molly to finish, nor to finish within a specific timeframe and in this regard he shows high autonomy when it comes to applying and adhering to institutionally sanctioned sayable rules and expectations. Production and throughput are demands in a new education market where funding plays a key role (Lemmer 1997; Walker 2001). As Marginson observes:

> …To a greater or lesser degree, governments have…reduced public spending, to encourage higher tuition market activity and industry links, and to introduce a performance economy and business-like management, while tightening control over academic life through accreditation, evaluation and quality assurance; in other words…[education] is joined to neo-liberal economics and quasi-corporate management…(2001: 2).

It appears that Andy strongly resists being constructed by the injunctions of a commercial educational management discourse and remains resolutely student-focused. Although he supervises with the thesis-as-product in mind, Molly's learning process appears to be more important to Andy than being rewarded by the university system for 543 having a quantity of supervisions "under the belt". This shows humanistic and holistic discourses in action: humanistic discourse acknowledges the right of people to self-actualization; holistic discourse acknowledges that life is multi-faceted and that people

need space and time to experience all dimensions of their being, not only work. In a
533 sense Andy protects Molly's autonomy: he supports her right to decide on "…how far she pushes it". Molly concurs with Andy's perspective on time pressures: "…The
549 university limit for a full thesis is two years, but I'm not putting any pressure on
549 myself. If it takes me two years, great…I'm actually registered full-time…which is a bit of a silly thing to do, but in fact I am doing it part time". It appears that to some extent she is aware of the time-funding issue, but resists it, preferring to concentrate on getting the task completed as opposed to completed quickly.

Commenting on the place of publication in terms of competition and reward, Andy
543 remarks: "…the whole organization induces a certain competitiveness. In the broader sphere of academic discourse, publish or perish means that people are competing ever more fiercely for space in a limited number of journals. It almost encourages you to produce acres of crap because you've got to have publications on your CV…never mind whether they're any good or not…I'm getting into the position now where I'm being solicited for stuff and sometimes I've said: 'No…it's just not central to what I want to do'. I *won't* write anything that I think is not integral to who I am, and that I feel I can do with real integrity and spirit and fun…For other people who don't feel that way or don't write as easily, or who don't enjoy doing research…they just want to be teachers…it's pernicious". His opinions concur with those in the reviewed literature not only in terms of the capability of the publish-or-perish injunction to stifle creativity, but also in terms of it resulting in a plethora of publications which do little more that reproduce what is already known (Bowrick in Cryer 1996). Andy strongly resists by *pushing* against sanctioned and visible practices of what is sayable in a commercial
543 educational management discourse. He reiterates: "…I just don't do anything that I don't want to do…never mind *what* the system says". He will not be pushed into a position where he is obliged to diverge from his sense of authenticity and adopt what would amount to contradictory subjectivity. By tradition, academics regulate their teaching approach and the quality of their work through reflexion, self-examination and their own inner conscience, in other words, according to personal integrity. Systems of peer review have also always been part of academia. It could be argued that the construct of performativity (see p. 54) marginalizes the integrity of these criteria. It supplants them with extrinsic forms of surveillance and assessment that are rigid, impersonal and formal and appear to be designed from a drive to manage and measure

them in terms of normative standards. In this regard, Andy comments on the unfavourable way the publish-or-perish injunction positions teachers who favour teaching over publication and who consider their work to be a vocation as opposed to a career. In the South African context this conflict is unlikely to lessen, given the statement from South Africa's Department of Education: "…the value and importance of research cannot be over-emphasised. Research…is perhaps the most powerful vehicle that we have to deepen our democracy" (in CHE 2003 7: 1).

Andy does not disregard or discount the benefits of publication to students and the
539 system: "…I would like to see all our Master's students publish something of their theses", but Andy will publish according to his own sense of time and integrity and his expectations of his students and of Molly are formulated similarly: "…I'm sure [she]
539 will be able to produce something publishable in due course…I would hope so…[but] she's not ready for that yet". Molly does not refer to publication during the interviews, but her perspective on the thesis-as-product suggests that she understands the balance of autonomy and dependency between herself and the university system as being equal:
564 "…The university needs us as much as we need them. It's in the university's interest to encourage students to write theses. Producing research is a big part of the university's business, I suppose". Regarding the power structures in the university domain she
564 positions herself: "…There has to be a structure. You work out what the structure requires, and you produce it…and so I need them…they're solid, they've worked out the process, they know what's required…And yes, I *will* produce [a thesis], because it's what's required of me and also because it'll be quite nice to say: 'I've got a Master's'…but that's not all [I'm] doing". Again, holistic and humanistic discourses can be seen operating in Molly's perception of the degree of her interdependence with the university domain. She resists by *collaborating* with university structures and sayable rules, but only to the extent that they are in keeping with her intrinsic motivations and with her expectation that by undertaking the Master's she will be
548 "…proving to myself that I *can* do it…and that I'm improving myself".

524 Andy talks about his motivation to supervise: "…people approach one for supervision, especially if you've enthused them at an early level about something or other. Obviously we encourage that…as a department. *I* encourage it in the sense that I love doing it". Part of encouraging and enthusing students at an early level relates to a

challenge that Andy poses to structures of surveillance, assessment and feedback in the
538 university domain. Andy explains: "…I think you can build assessment in a different way so that it's really part of the learning experience instead of this boring, frightening,
544 summative rush at the end…I think it rubs off on the postgraduate thing…if we can generate excitement at the lower levels, we can keep the postgraduates coming
537 through". He elaborates: "…For anybody at any level…from Master's downwards…the end product…the exam or whatever…is only one bump on the road. I think the road is much bigger than that…Just understand the work…*that's* what it's
538 about. What's it doing to the constitution of your braincells?' *That's* what we're really
538 interested in". Andy continues: "…I've just managed to push the department…and to my surprise, the faculty and senate…to allow us to experiment with our exam system at Honours level…to have open book or take-home exams…In fact people have been doing it all the time and they just haven't been saying anything. All this came out of the woodwork in the process of debating this ridiculous issue". This statement illustrates something of covert power relationships between university teachers, university managers and their contexts. Resistance to institutionally sanctioned sayable discourse may not be directly expressed in words, yet becomes covertly visible in practice, and thus by implication, covertly sayable. There was already a collective consensus around the need to change and like-minded academics simply bypassed rigid structures in order to develop assessment systems that they consider to be more appropriate to their and their students' needs. The status of dominant discourse as expressed (sayable) in institutionalized systems of assessment are bypassed and changed and this change happens from the ground up.

Many of the current changes in South African education are from the opposite direction: top-down. This is more in line with processes in Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) will-to-knowledge, in which cycles of surveillance, assessment and feedback are systematic ways in which subjects are targeted and rendered accessible by *institutionalized* discourse (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Hunt & Wickham 1994; Kendall & Wickham 1999). These cycles establish and entrench normative behaviour. Dominant discourses in an institution (in this case: policies of educational transformation) become sanctioned as desirable and acceptable and will enable authority figures (e.g. institutional auditors) to get a measure of the university (including managers, teachers and students) according to the values,

language and behaviours of the dominant discourse. Individuals are assessed according to how well they fit and the degree to which they recreate or challenge the status quo (in this case: challenge and change are the desired outcomes). As Rouse observes:

> …For Foucault…the crucial feature of [surveillance and] administration is its normalizing function. It does not primarily operate through the opposition between the permitted and the forbidden, and it does not bring all the weight and power of authority to bear upon those who have been observed in transgression, its function is corrective. It reconstructs the person and his or her behavior by gradual steps and small impositions…it creates distributions around the norm, which can be ranked, classified and dealt with differentially…it corrects and reduces deviation…(1987: 217).

In South Africa, through a complex array of policy documents and (for the most part, anonymous) bureaucratic structures, the ideological discourses at the root of the government's mega-power relations with higher education institutions filter down to act on managers, academics and teachers as raw materials for engineering and accelerating change. In this regard the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) translate government's goals into finely detailed rules and criteria that are designed to *interrupt* the status quo and to accelerate the democratization of education. As the document notes, resistance to change is not easily overcome: "…whilst the very idea of the university presupposes debate, change and the discovery of new ways of knowing and doing, the systems, structures and cultures of higher education institutions are notorious for being resistant to change" (CHE 2003: 9).

Commenting on the response to his suggestion for open-book exams, Andy captures the
538 resistance of university management to change: "…Hundreds of universities all over the planet do it…and they treat it here as if you're trying to rebuild the Titanic from the
538 bottom up! Remarkable reaction". Andy asserts: "…none of my colleagues seem to want to experiment in the same way, but blow me down, I'm going to experiment with *my* courses!" Andy's *push* for autonomy, his resistance to current systems, and the action he takes and intends to take, demonstrate how power relations of *people* influence the production of new knowledge or the integration of different forms of knowledge in the educational domain. Although the outcome of Andy's experiment - his innovation - is unpredictable, he has started a new cycle of surveillance, assessment

and feedback, both in terms of learning outcomes for future students and in terms of the outcome of competing systems of assessment.

Andy resists traditional assessment techniques partly because he considers their
537 emphasis on marks "…so normative". As was demonstrated earlier, part of the holistic-humanistic discourse that constructs Andy as a teacher is the element of play and fun; joy in learning is part of the normativity of this discourse. He says: "…People
537 take academia too seriously…they take *themselves* too seriously. Students slot into it immediately…when I give them something fun to read, then they're suspicious and actually back off it: 'What? *Fun*? So you're *supposed* to laugh at this? I don't know about *that*?' They get very uncomfortable, which is something that I think is so unfortunate". At the level of university hierarchy, Andy persuades university management to experiment with new assessment techniques, but it seems that at the ground level of teaching he also pushes forward one of the sayable values of a holistic-humanistic teaching discourse: play.

4.3.2.3 Care

Andy declares: "…My relationship with the department is good, partly because I just
544 don't get involved in personal politics. I don't socialize with my colleagues, not because I don't like them, but just because I just…basically don't! An occasional dinner is about as far as it goes". This contrasts with his relationships to students, many of whom he socializes with outside of the university and whom he considers as good friends.

531 In terms of support as a supervisor, Andy says: "…I've really had to feel my own way in terms of how to supervise". Most students are the targets of supervisory practices that are based almost exclusively on supervisors' personal experience of either receiving or giving supervision (Burgess 1994; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). Considering that "…it is from current students that future cohorts of academic staff will be drawn" (Grant & Graham 1994: 175), university managers need to be receptive to

and address the support and training needs of their staff. In this regard Andy says:
531 "…There was a workshop on supervision early in the year that I didn't go to. Something the Academic Development Centre did? That's the only thing I've ever come across in terms of university support for the staff". His response to training sessions concurs with the findings of Hill, Acker and Black who discovered that courses aimed at assisting supervisors "…were invariably mentioned somewhat apologetically by staff who had heard about, rather than attended, any of them" (1994: 59) [57]. It also reverberates in the comment of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee: "…with a few exceptions, numbers enrolling for these [formal as well as non-credit bearing] programmes remain small, except where it has become a compulsory requirement for new academic staff" (2003 6: 4). This occurs despite incentives such as remission of fees, upward mobility in terms of promotion, annual distinguished teacher awards, and in some cases, confirmation of tenure (*ibid*.).
531-532 Andy continues: "…I haven't personally felt the need for much support…because I haven't encountered any major problem. Unlike some of my colleagues…where…there's a major fallout or personality clash or the student goes off the rails for some reason…there's a suicidal crisis…that kind of stuff happening. *There* I think, some better support mechanism would be very necessary. I don't think the university has anything remotely like that". He acknowledges that "…In terms of
532 departmental support, it's a bit better. We've recently reformulated our methods of calculating workloads. For the first time, postgraduate supervision is actually counted into our workload, so you get some tutoring at the undergraduate level taken off depending on how much postgrad stuff you're doing. So that's quite lekker [nice]…because some of these things take a huge amount of time, depending on the student". It would seem that to some degree systems of reward in the university domain do alter to meet the changing needs of supervisors.

564 Molly finds the university somewhat depersonalised. She says: "…I don't really have a relationship with the university. My relationship is my pay cheque at the end of each month, really, and whether my proposal went through the Higher Degrees Committee
554 or not". She elaborates: "…The university's a bit kind of…*out there*…[it is] quite

[57] Webb (in Grant & Graham 1994: 174) outlines a way that academics can be persuaded to buy into staff development programmes through a linguistically targeted marketing strategy (see p. 52).

563 comforting there in the background, but it's not cozy or warm or inviting…it's a solid, stone building. It's been there for a long time, it has traditions, but it's a bit cold, distancing. As a structure it's a lot less fun and organic than the jungle gym…I'm
564 having fun while I'm doing this…but they don't really care about what Andy and I are doing…playing on the jungle gyms…they just want the finished product". She does
554 mention that "…they were kind, for example, when I was applying for bursaries and my undergraduate results weren't on the computer…things like that. Ja [yes]…the university is as supporting as a bureaucratic system can be". Molly acknowledges departmental support, which predictably, she experiences as more personalized:
554 "…Part of why I'm here is because of support from the department. I have a tutoring job and without it I would probably never have started the Master's. And there are some good people here with good knowledge…if I've got a question, I can throw it out in the tearoom and everybody is so kind. They really do go out of their way". The University of Melbourne survey (2001) found that students placed high value on the relationships they formed with other students and members of their department: "approachable, friendly and helpful" (*ibid*.: 7) staff members afforded them a sense of community. In terms of the newly formed postgraduate forum, Molly reports: "…I
554 haven't received anything from them…maybe because I'm a staff member and I don't use my student e-mail address anymore". As discussed in the literature review (see p. 66) and in the last two case studies, postgraduate forums offer many benefits including contact with other postgraduate students (Cryer 1996, 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). Regarding contact and sharing, Molly reflects: "…I have
556 a casual, coffee relationship with a fellow ex-Honours student who is now doing her Master's in another discipline…Conversations with her and her support have been invaluable".

This concludes the discussion of institutional power relations between Andy, Molly and the university domain. The next section briefly notes what forms of knowledge (visibilities) are produced in this relationship in terms of the thesis, in terms of personhood and in terms of the university and broader educational domains. A short summary concludes the discussion of Molly and Andy's relationship.

### 4.3.3 What is produced

#### 4.3.3.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

529 Andy says: "…The proposal is approved, now it'll evolve from there".

551 Molly concurs: "…The proposal went through without even having to be defended. I
549 usually hand in something every week…it's more a piece of rough work".

#### 4.3.3.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

Molly and Andy allow one another the space to be themselves. They are happy with
526 their relationship and have become friends. Andy says: "…A lot of it is about *me* being
532 taught…Also Molly's having a hell of a lot of fun, which is great". Molly remarks:
556 "…Sometimes I get quite tired but mostly I'm having fun…It's very difficult to
557 measure, but I'm sure my perceptions have changed. I can't go back to where I was four years ago before I started postgrad".

#### 4.3.3.3 What is produced in terms of the university and broader educational domains?

Andy advances and reproduces an ecological discourse by his way of supervising, by encouraging others to get involved in ecological criticism and by securing funding for an eco-project and by teaching in a way that values and encourages play. In addition,
544 he manages to challenge and change entrenched management practices: "…I've been shunting ideas around for years and most of them get lost in the administrative mud, you know. But a couple more of my ideas…like the ones on assessment…are being picked up, and that's exciting".

Molly assimilates her research topic and Andy's input and integrates these with her
563 own values and compassionate action in the world so that she begins to reproduce holistic discourse. She comments: "…What the thinker I'm looking at shows us…is

563 the search for harmony…humankind in symbiosis with the earth…knowing that it's actually an impossible task to reconcile tensions, but doing it anyway…and I'm just inadequately trying to follow his footsteps…recycling packaging and getting the family involved too".

Regarding the proposed interventions of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee, Andy's supervision practices implement a good deal of their recommendations (CHE 2003). However, factors in Andy's supervision style (the manner in which Andy favours Molly's personal development over her completion of the Master's, the way he allows space for all aspects of Molly's ways-of-being and does not view the thesis-as-product as the most important factor in her educative process) challenge rather than comply with commercial injunctions underpinning the Committee's interventions. Andy's practices are not governed by any rules of extrinsic assessment, but develop out of his strong locus of personal control: his sense of intrinsic integrity. As I interpret it, his alignment with many of the Committee's recommendations (*ibid*.) occurs more by chance than by any desire to conform.

### 4.3.4 Summary

Ontologically, Molly and Andy are aligned: they both believe that reality is shaped by the agency of humans and that ecological sensibility is essential for the survival of the planet. Their ontological alignment reverberates in their epistemological and methodological alignment. Molly and Andy are both constructed by holistic and humanistic discourses and their professional expectations and care and pastoral expectations and care are formulated in accordance with these discourses. Their values, their ways of being in their relationship, their attitudes and expectations regarding the university domain and the knowledge they re-produce, are all strongly allied. In partnership, they *push* forward what is sayable and visible in humanistic and particularly in holistic discourses so that these discourses are advantageously positioned to challenge and shift competing discourses in the university domain.

As I interpret it, their common ideological positions assure that there is little personal and professional dispute between them. As they balance interpersonal and institutional

autonomy and dependency their *push* and *pull* tends to center on *allow*. One exception is their resistance to being constructed by the injunctions of a commercial educational management discourse, particularly with regard to time-funding and publication issues: in this context, their resistance strategies push against normative injunctions. In terms of interpersonal power relations their principle strategies of resistance are respecting, communicating clearly and collaborating. As friends and colleagues as well as student and supervisor, enjoyment and play have a strong presence in their approach to the research process and in this regard they are visibilities of holistic discourse. They both use the products (thesis and personhood) of their teaching-learning process to effect change in the university and broader educational world, particularly with respect to promoting ecological sensibility. They are very well matched and they both get what they expect professionally and personally from their supervision alliance. It is likely that their alliance and the fruits of Molly's research and Andy's funding endeavours will benefit them personally and professionally and, by association, the university system is likely to share the fruits of their development.

This concludes the discussions of each of the supervision relationships. The following section offers a brief synthesis of the three case studies.

## 4.4 TOWARDS A SYNTHESIS OF THE THREE CASE STUDIES

The supervision relationship is complex. It brings together two, and perhaps more, people in an infinite number of combinations of worldviews, life experiences, motivations, levels of professional experience and personalities (Burgess, 1994; Cryer, 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry, 1997; Hill, Acker & Black, 1994; Phillips & Pugh, 1996; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). No two supervision relationships can ever be the same, but some insight may be gained from comparing different cases. In this section, I explore similarities and differences in the three cases studied in this thesis. Considerations of space allow for only a few comparisons to be selected for discussion. The discussion is organized under the headings: **Matching; Reflection; Authority; Levels of guidance and support;** and **Power in the educational domain.**

### 4.4.1 Matching

Both Howard and Luna remark that people and their research match. The three cases studied appear to affirm this observation. I suggest that in all three cases, irrespective of the discourses that target the participants as supervisors and students, the thesis-as-product is insinuated in and inevitably influences person-as-product.

In terms of research discourses, motivations, worldviews, the construct of time, research topics, professional expectations and care, and pastoral expectations and care, Howard and Ray, and Molly and Andy, are well matched personally and professionally. They have easy power relationships that tend to balance autonomy and dependency around the fulcrum of allow. Predominant power strategies in both cases are collaboration and mutually beneficial, open communication. There is congruence between professional care and pastoral care.

Howard, at this stage of the research process leads Ray by means of relentless questioning; he pushes Ray to pull from his own resources. The research topic as well as the way they conduct their supervision relationship are in accord with the aims and actions of their shared anarchic educational management-leadership discourse. In the

context of an educational leadership thesis, their supervision relationship is leadership in action. Andy also leads Molly by pushing her to pull from herself. The quality of their professional and personal interaction is unstructured, spontaneous, casual and congruent with their shared holistic discourse. Work and play are unified in the context of a holistic research topic; it is like holism in action. The two cases appear to differ in the degree of importance attributed to the thesis-as-product. This may be because Ray and Molly have differing motivations with regard to the centrality of their theses to their professional lives, although I am not entirely convinced that Molly is less career
528 motivated than Ray. Perhaps, as Andy says: "…It'll evolve". In both case studies thesis-as-product is purposefully linked to person-as-product: both are humanistic discourse in action.

In the case of Luna and Nadia, their research discourses, motivations, the construct of time, their worldviews and research interests are not well matched. This reverberates through their professional expectations and care and their pastoral expectations and care. In an interesting and intricate interplay of reciprocal causality, both interpersonal and institutional power relationships appear to produce contradictory subjectivities (Kendall & Wickham 1999) in Luna and Nadia. Both of them are frustrated in their supervision relationship and with the actual research. In terms of the balance between autonomy and dependency, they push against one another continuously and eventually pull away to the extent that they become polarized and hardly interact. Power strategies they use are predominantly coercive, covertly aggressive, and there is little mutually beneficial or open communication. They battle for control on an interpersonal level and also on the meaning and recognition of culture, including the recognition of their own research cultures. Both thesis-as-product and person-as-product are caught in the middle of the struggle and both suffer. It seems to me that a lack of professional care is carried over into, or at least echoed by, a lack of pastoral care. I wonder whether their relationship may have been easier if they were able to extend pastoral care to one another irrespective of their professional differences? The research of Chapman and Sork (2001) shows that it is possible to push forward new knowledge in the face of both personal and professional differences, although as pointed out before, theirs was not an easy relationship.

### 4.4.2 Reflexion

The supervision relationship is potentially an emotionally volatile one, particularly for the student (Phillips & Pugh 1996). It is likely that *some* disagreement will arise between supervisors and their students. In this study reflexion appears to have an important role in terms of influencing hospitality to criticism. Critical reflexion benefits Howard, Ray, Andy and Molly. It is possible that fewer areas of dispute are opened out because of their good professional matching. Perhaps less reflexion occurs in the absence of problems? Both Molly and Ray appear to "…problematize their own positions" as Howard states it. In other words, they become active observers of their own thoughts and actions (Senge *et al*., Kleiner, Roberts, Ross & Smith 1994: 60) and thus adopt a critical stance towards the positions they assume in relation to each other and their own research.

434

Reflexion appears to be less effective in leading Luna and Nadia out of their difficulties. Nadia's research discourse leads her to continuously problematize her own position both on a professional and a personal level. However, Luna and Nadia appear to remain intolerant of criticism from one another. In their case reflexion seems less focused on hospitality to criticism than on defence of their positions. Also, the pressure of all their professional disagreements appear to leave them little space for hospitality towards one another on a personal or pastoral basis. As is discussed in the next section entitled "Participants' experience of the research process" they do appear to benefit to some degree from the reflexion engendered by having engaged in *this* research.

### 4.4.3 Authority

Most of the reviewed literature notes that there is an unequal power differential between students and supervisors (Burgess, 1994; Chapman & Sork, 2001; Cryer, 1996, 1997; Phillips & Pugh, 1996; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan, 1994). However, the balance of power in the three case studies explored in this thesis shows itself to be far more complex and subtle than is immediately evident in the phrase: unequal power differential.

Ray accepts that Howard is "an authority" (Peters in Nias 1993) and to some extent "in authority" (*ibid*.), although the latter is less emphasized in keeping with Howard's
442 intention and his supervision style: he "plays down" the "power-distance" effect in their relationship without denying its existence. They both offer metaphors that relate to being fellow travellers who alternate between leading and following and who assist one another on the research journey. In the case of Andy and Molly who are colleagues and friends, "in authority" (*ibid*.) and "an authority" (*ibid*.) are differently balanced in terms of professional-personal autonomy and dependency - more intricately interwoven, perhaps. Again, Andy and Molly offer similar metaphors to one another. In a relational context of family-friends they climb together (a jungle gym and a rock-face). They share fun and success and like Howard and Ray they support one another. In both these relationships, there is negotiation of and mutual accommodation to each other's boundaries of authority.

With Luna and Nadia, however, authority is fiercely contested. Luna offers a
497 metaphor: "…I'm like the police". Nadia draws a girl hiding behind her hands; it represents her response to authority and challenge both in terms of how the supervision relationship challenges her as well as the way her research discourse challenges her personal belief systems. Pyrrhonistic skepticism precludes me from offering any judgment on what Grant and Graham (1994) refer to as legitimate authority in their relationship. However as I evaluate it, Nadia challenges Luna's position as "an authority" (Peters in Nias 1993) to an extent that a situation develops in which Luna is no longer "in authority" (*ibid*.). Compounding the authority battle in their relationship is the strong influence of a parent-child metaphor: controlling parent and recalcitrant teenager. Pastoral care appears to be the context where "in authority" (*ibid.)* and "an authority" (*ibid*.) are most covertly contested.

### 4.4.4 Levels of guidance and support

The reviewed texts on supervision practice refer repeatedly to the variation in the level of guidance and support students need (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). The three case studies show

this clearly. Predictably, perhaps, all three students showed evidence of lack of confidence, either in relation to their work or to themselves and sometimes in relation to both.

Howard works hard at getting Ray to "turn a corner" and to bring Ray into closer alignment with critical academic discourse. Ray honours Howard's input with some very hard work of his own. Excepting for certain critical research stages such as data analysis, Howard now expects to have a less intense quality of input. It seems that Andy expects his guidance and support of Molly to stay fairly concentrated throughout her research process, intensifying at certain critical stages.

Neither Molly nor Ray speak about needing pastoral support. Andy asserts that so far Molly appears not to need it, although they seem to *share* a fair amount of it in an informal way. Howard says of supervision: "…a student is embarking on a fairly big piece of research and there has to be quite a lot of caring going on" and Ray certainly engages with the care Howard offers. Nadia and Luna are professionally and personally positioned in a way that virtually precludes support and for the period during which I conducted this research it appears that Nadia was almost entirely self-reliant.

Ray's and Molly's academic abilities and critical capacities appear to dictate the level of support that Howard and Andy offer them. It is unclear to what extent these factors influence the degree of support Nadia may need. At no time during Luna's and Nadia's interviews did either of them make any reference to Nadia's academic ability. Nadia prioritizes support as the most necessary factor in the supervision relationship. She does not specify whether she means professional or pastoral support, but as this research finds, one impacts on the other. As I interpret it, Nadia appears to include herself in her claim that "…at Master's level …you are clear about your ideas…you are clear about what you want to say…all of us have done a lot of reading on our topic and we do know the basics of our topic and our concepts". This statement suggests that she has the ability to work independently and that the type of support she misses most may be the pastoral variety.

The one thing I achieved by exploring pastoral and professional support in two separate categories was to bring specific data to show more specifically *how* pastoral support

reveals itself and *how it works* in the supervision relationship. I also think something is shown of the interface between professional interest and support, and pastoral interest and support.

### 4.4.5 Power relations in the educational domain

Supervisors and students are influenced by the university context (Burgess 1994; Cryer 1996, 1997; Delamont, Atkinson & Parry 1997; Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Mouton 2001; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994) and the university context is effected by supervision in terms of the influence of supervision on training a future cohort of academics. With the exception of the research of Sork and Chapman (2001), I found little evidence in the reviewed literature of research conducted on the influence of the supervision relationship on the university domain. All the participants in this study offered a wealth of information to enrich reflexion on this phenomenon. I offer only an abbreviated discussion here:

Competing discourses:

Howard is keenly aware of the demands of commercialization on university education and the way this privileges scientific, instrumental and goal-driven rationality. As a supervisor he has a comfortable relationship with the university management system, but is by no means unconditionally accepting of all of its values. He is embedded in and motivated by humanistic and anarchic leadership-management discourses that focus on nurturing and perpetuating the growth and emancipation of *people*. He skillfully integrates the system's needs with these discourses. He works from *within* the system as demonstrated in his deliberate use of a scientific model to apply for funding for qualitative research. His student Ray is embedded in the same discourses as Howard and is interested in applying the leadership techniques he learns from his research and from Howard for the emancipation of people and education. With their focus on education, the fact that both work in the field, and their discourses and motivations so strongly aligned, the personal and professional products of this supervision relationship are likely to pose a serious challenge to rival discourses in the educational domain.

To some extent, in her role as supervisor Luna is aligned to the values of a commercial educational discourse and knowingly or unknowingly perpetuates them. In terms of surveillance and assessment she sees herself as more on the side of the students than the system and thinks that current assessment techniques get in the way of learning and research. Her pragmatic focus on mentoring students into marketable skills is an important factor that motivates and influences her way of supervising. Her student Nadia is opposed to these values, being more interested in humanitarian issues, and this causes conflict between them both professionally and personally. The conflict appears to have reached an impasse and by the end of *this* research neither of them are well positioned to advance the discourses in which they are embedded. The influence of this supervision alliance on the educational domain is uncertain.

Andy is not entirely aligned for or against the university management system. Working with the system, he has eventually begun to see some of his ideas more favourably regarded by university management. He has a holistic-humanistic and ecologically sensitive worldview and does not accede to commercial injunctions that go against the values of his worldview. Molly is also embedded in holistic-humanistic discourses and their match is good both professionally and personally speaking. They are both learning new things in an innovative field of research. Andy encourages students to work in the field of ecocriticism and has secured funding for a project. Molly has begun to translate ecocriticism into eco-action. They are both advantageously positioned to advance the holistic and ecological discourses in the university and wider educational domains.

As I have said before, discourses are not discrete and combine with other discourses, sometimes in unexpected and innovative ways. Because of their governing ontologies, some discourses amalgamate more readily than others. The quantum rationale of anarchic educational leadership discourse, particularly regarding change, the centrality of personal agency and the interpretation of freedom, merges more comfortably with humanism and holism than with its commercial educational management counterpart, which is predominantly premised on instrumental, Newtonian rationality. The data show evidence of considerable accord between Andy and Howard's approach to teaching, learning and change. One important difference is that Howard integrates commercial injunctions whereas Andy tends to snub them. Luna's teaching practices *in*

*this particular relationship with Nadia* differ considerably from the practices of Howard and Andy.

In terms of the draft "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003) of South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee, Howard successfully implements the recommendations, particularly those pertinent to the transformation of education through transformational learning practices (see CHE list p. 105). By improving Ray's academic and personal capabilities and thereby redressing inequalities in Ray's early educational experiences, Howard accomplishes another of government's goals, which the Committee translates as "Fitness for purpose" (CHE 2003: 3-4). This includes the expectation that teaching practices improve equity within "…a national framework of differentiation and diversity" (*ibid*.). The final goal: "Value for money" (*ibid*.) concerns delivery of "effectiveness and efficiency" (*ibid*.) is also fulfilled. Andy's supervision practices implement a good deal of those recommendations aligned with humanistic discourse (*ibid*.). However, factors in his supervision style challenge rather than comply with commercial injunctions underpinning the proposed interventions. Andy's practices are not governed by any rules of extrinsic assessment, but develop out of his strong locus of personal control: his sense of intrinsic integrity. As I interpret it, his alignment with many of the Committee's recommendations (*ibid*.) occurs more by chance than by any desire to conform. Many of Luna's practices do not comply with those recommendations of the CHE (*ibid.)* which are based on humanistic discourse. This relationship particularly, but not exclusively, highlights inconsistencies encountered when the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003: 3) approach to teaching and learning is merged with the injunctions of commercial educational management discourse.

University support:

The supervision literature indicates the benefit of communication and sharing between students (Grant & Graham 1994; Hill, Acker & Black 1994; Zuber-Skerrit & Ryan 1994). All student participants derived benefit from contact and sharing with fellow students: Ray through his initiation into research in a group, Molly through her contact with a postgraduate student with whom she shares insights and experiences, and Nadia with the students she turned to for support. In terms of the newly formed postgraduate

forum, Nadia experienced a non-response to her enquiries while the forum did not manage to make contact with either Ray or Molly.

All student participants reported feeling somewhat distanced from the university. All supervisor participants share the perspective that the university management system resists change. If these factors are considered together with the fact that students did not connect successfully with the postgraduate forum, it seems likely that all the students will rely heavily on their supervisors to bridge the gap between themselves and decision-making structures and systems within the university. All supervisors noted that in some way they benefit from postgraduate supervision. By extension, the university also benefits from postgraduate students. I propose that without a more visible postgraduate student body through which students can advance suggestions, the university management system is likely to lose contact with innovative ideas that may have the potential to benefit students, their supervisors and the management system itself.

**Conclusion**

I deliberately entitled this chapter "*Towards* a synthesis of the three case studies" as it touches on only some of the complexities encountered when the case studies are compared. All three case studies show that the supervision relationship is as unpredictable, flexible and mobile as the power relationships that operate within it. Although I have suggested some possible outcomes of the supervision relationships, these are tentative, uncertain and subject to the vagaries of contingency, chance and change.

The following section offers comment on participants' experience of the research process.

## 4.5 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In the qualitative and interpretivist research discourse of this thesis, I acknowledge and assume the systemic principle of reciprocal causality, which claims: "…we see every system influencing and being influenced by every other system and every individual influencing and being influenced by every other individual" (Becvar & Becvar 1996: 66). According to this perspective, I am both researcher and participant. My presence in combination with the research process itself, has some effect on participants' experience of the actual research process, and perhaps even on their perception or experience of supervision. In turn, participants influence me. In the spirit of transparency I now discuss data relevant to how all of us experienced the research process. Information is gathered under the headings: **Privacy and generosity; Delays; Engaging in the process – limitations and gains; Researcher intrusiveness; How participants influenced the researcher;** and **Evaluating.**

### 4.5.1 Privacy and generosity

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the openness and generosity of all my participants. Not only did they make themselves available for several interviews, but in keeping with the hermeneutic approach of this study they also edited, validated and commented on all their interview transcripts. The supervision relationship is relatively private and a potentially sensitive one to research: all participants expressed interest in what their counterparts had to say and were aware that once the thesis was released, the experience of each would be visible to the other. Howard and Ray, and Andy and Molly are well matched and have easy relationships, which I think may have made the research process smoother for them. Luna and Nadia, however, have a particularly difficult supervision relationship and the research process was often very challenging for them.

During the interviews I quite often felt intrusive and somewhat uneasy. I drew strength and inspiration from the way Luna values the research endeavour above her own comfort. She says: "…I wasn't very happy about doing it with Nadia because it's not

nice to me and I actually feel insecure about what she told you about me …But then I
505 thought, one has to be a bit grown up about things and you can't just talk about [a student] that you feel happy with because the aim is not about me, the aim is about doing research that may be useful, and hopefully what we have said about it is going to help you towards your research. I'm very interested in this topic. I think it's a great thing to do research on, that's why I wanted to be involved". In fact, I had also interviewed another student of Luna's [Student X]– they have a successful and easy relationship. I interviewed two of Luna's students partly because I agreed with her assessment that it would provide data for an interesting comparative study, but several constraints prevented me from using the data of her second student. One constraint was the length of the thesis. In addition, the student was not conducting individually conceptualized research and, on reflection, I realized that this was inconsistent in terms of my sample. Also, in terms of methodological design, I considered it best to consistently present supervisor-student pairs and refrain from introducing one triangular configuration.

### 4.5.2 Delays

One set of participants withdrew from the research. The supervisor cited lack of time as the reason. The student was evasive about her reason for withdrawing, but expressed less concern about time constraints than her supervisor did. It was a difficult relationship and I wonder if they may have felt uncomfortable engaging in the research, especially if they anticipated that my thesis may be released before their supervision relationship would end. Part of my research contract with participants stresses their right to withdraw at any stage and although their withdrawal delayed my data collection by seven weeks, I had to accept their decision as graciously as possible.

### 4.5.3 Engaging in the process: Limitations and gains

At the end of each of the interviews I would usually ask: "How did you experience being interviewed?" Selected comments from each of the participants follows.

Howard says: "…The interview? Lovely. I like talking about what I do, you see. I guess most people do. Because I'm a researcher…I've done so much interviewing…it's great to be on the other end. I'm as interested in the process as much as the content…In fact, all the time I've been thinking about what's happening…so it's *that* sort of attention I was quite conscious of today. I thought you handled the interview extremely well. Gave me lots of room". He offers a written reflexion: "…On reading the transcript and listening to the recording, I realized how unclear I am about the dependency/power/guide issue. Thanks for making it surface".

In a subsequent interview, I was much more interactive and Howard comments: "I said some things today that I couldn't have said a few days ago because I hadn't gone that route, hadn't thought it through. So my own thinking has been pushed ahead…the whole scientific thing you brought up has opened up all kinds of things to me…I enjoyed it very much…challenging…I found it challenging. [Today] I'm not really thinking consciously of your role, in terms of how intrusive you are, or manipulative. You've introduced three or four things into the interview, ideas, thoughts, notions, which were kind of fresh, different…I didn't feel taken off guard at any point, so I assume that they were all coming from what we had said [before]…maybe from what you've been talking about with other people…I was very happy to talk about all of them…I thought they were good leads into areas we haven't really discussed but which are pertinent to the question. So…ja…good experience".

Ray comments: "…I think it's insightful…stimulating…it assists me to reflect…to think about my *thinking* of my research and my relationship with my supervisor…What's its purpose? What does it feel like?…Although this may be a forced situation, in the way it's been conducted I think it's very much informal…almost personal. It makes it more of a conversation type of experience…an exchange…for you, of something that's based on building your knowledge, and for me, on reflecting on the knowledge that I'm developing…and making sense of my experience". He continues: "…I think what is significant about the interviews too…in a sense [they] allow me to look back again and see where I'm coming from. I would've liked it if you'd have come a year later, because it possibly would have assisted me in a lot of ways…[and] I would have been into it in great depth".

As already shown, the process was challenging for Luna, but she also found it useful.
504 When asked about how she experienced the interviews, she teases: "Ah…and so now
493 we have to say nice things!" She continues: "…It was fine…a nice vibe…drinking a glass of wine! I found it very interesting. It's quite nice to talk about it because sometimes you actually realize certain things that you don't realize until you talk about it".

523 Nadia comments: "…It's been quite difficult having to think about the process…because I think I've just been trying to get back to a nice place…not so much
523 dealing with all this in an analytical sort of way". She adds: "…It's been
523 good…memory work helps a lot…and nice questions as well".

534 Andy comments: "…Ja…great…I've enjoyed it. It's quite useful, in the sense that I'm thinking about this a bit more…I *might*…I mean, I think about it, but I don't necessarily formulate it in any compact way to myself. So, thanks"…It's not
544 something that I've found a need to think about in the intervening period [between
534 interviews]". Andy does derive some benefit: "…just to think about commonalities between the various students that I've had is quite useful".

558 Molly offers these comments: "…I feel slightly uncomfortable because I'm aware that it's an artificial situation…but it's fine…I think it's got easier as it's gone along…at
564 first it was a bit intimidating…not because of you, but because I didn't know what to expect, or what you were going to ask me, or was I going to make a fool of myself…And that little tape winding away…it makes it very solid". She adds: "…It's
558 fun as well because you've been asking me these questions that make me think…[so]
565 it's been worthwhile for me as well. I'm pleased I've done it…I think I might miss [the interviews]".

523 Nadia surprised me when she asked me my own question: "I should ask…and how has
523 *your* experience been?" I replied: "…It's been interesting. I've enjoyed the interviewing much more than I thought I would. I'm very inexperienced at interviews, so I'm always a bit nervous about it: Have I posed things correctly? Am I going in the right direction? So I've tried to leave it quite open, and then I worry about how much

control I'm supposed to have. I'm sure there's a right way but…in the end I relented on the shoulds and should-nots. Maybe I just prefer to have a bit of a conversation".

### 4.5.4 Researcher intrusiveness

The issue of researcher control and intrusiveness was an ongoing challenge for me. Ray enjoys a conversational approach, but I also shared my reservations with him: "…I
473 guess I'm like you, I enjoy sharing thoughts and experiences. I'm just a bit worried about some of my sharing. It could be construed, in terms of research interview technique…á lá Kvale and Seidman and similar instructional literature…as leading the conversation to where I need it to go? Maybe we should strike our exchanges off the transcript [those relating to the questions: What do you think of the university's standards? What do you think the university stands for?]…what do you think? Please feel free to delete anything. Giving you the transcript to edit helps to keep me on the
473 straight and narrow!" Ray did not remove anything from the transcript. He asserted that his replies were congruent with his opinions and that he did not consider them to have been coerced or solicited.

I would sometimes need to gently nudge participants off tangents and back onto the topic. However, reflecting on control and power relations in the interviews, I am struck by how often, when I got lost, the participants would assist me in exactly the same way. I offer one example. Towards the end of one interview with Howard I blurted out: "…My experience of interviewing is that it's sometimes difficult being in-between
451 supervisors and their students". I *suspect* that he may have been as equally surprised as I was at this uninvited intrusion of my own anxieties, but he gently and deftly steered the interview back on track by replying: "…Oh! OK. Well, I suppose it's personalities. It's also kind of how supervisors see their roles…or how threatened they
451 feel, or how threatened students feel…I didn't feel uncomfortable…[Supervision is] a strange domain…it's public and private…"

Five out of the six participants were critical of one of my data collection techniques. I had asked them to construct metaphors for their supervision relationship, the research topic, the research process, and their relationship with the university. It was an idea

that I picked up and adapted from a book entitled "Recreating relationships: collaboration and educational reform" (Christiansen *et al.* 1997). In retrospect, I realize that my approach to their responses could be construed as invasive, as I generally pushed past participants' resistance to the task. I offer data for the reader to evaluate:

Nadia was the only participant who really enjoyed this task. She comments: "…really
523 nice using the idea of metaphors". A more common complaint was that the supervision relationship is so intricate that no single metaphor effectively captures its many
442 nuances. Howard felt "…a bit uncomfortable about consciously trying to construct a metaphor". He pointed out that metaphors commonly arise spontaneously in speech and wondered why I felt the need to literalize metaphor to the extent of asking people to construct them. When commenting on the task, Ray offered a lovely example of
476 exactly the spontaneity to which Howard refers: "…Although I've tried to separate according to the categories of your outline…it's all happened within one whole…it
477 forms a tapestry that you can't draw apart because the one strand is always influencing
495 the other one". Luna concurs: "…it's all part of the same thing…I cannot separate it".
536 Andy comments: "…It's not holistic enough…it's reductive". He goes on to say: "…If
536 one could combine a metaphor of planets revolving and a spider web and dogs playing in a field and people climbing a ladder…and you put all those together somehow, maybe you'd start capturing something of the relationship". Feeling somewhat pushy, I
535 suggested: "…we can look at the metaphors that you think are quite reductive and maybe something comes out of that, and we can play with it?" He very reluctantly
535 agreed: "…Well, ja, I suppose", then wryly commented: "…one can maybe suck just
540 about anything out of any metaphor one chooses if one tries hard enough". Acknowledging and collaborating with my resistance, he added: "…I don't know,
535 maybe you can guide somehow". I did so by shifting his one metaphor, "people climbing a ladder", to a focus on the pictures on his walls and linked both to an earlier casual conversation, pointing out that these all reflect something of his hobby: climbing. He launched into a passionate engagement with this metaphor and ended up
542 giving me his wholehearted approval to use it in the thesis. Molly's initial reaction
559 was: "…I thought, I can't possibly think of metaphors. And then the one for my supervisor came to me almost immediately". She remained somewhat resistant,
561 explaining: "You do realize…there's a problem with metaphors…it's very difficult to explain [them]". However, afterwards she comments: "…this interview is quite

564 different from the others. I would never have thought about what I'm doing in these terms so it's been digging around a little and then getting insights…otherwise I don't think that I'd ever have imagined Andy and I playing around on the organic jungle gym!"

### 4.5.5 How participants influenced the researcher

In different ways the different supervisor-student pairs influenced my experience of and attitude towards my own research. Also, I found there were strong links between the quality of their relationships, the focus of their research topics and how I related to them as people.

Howard and Ray pushed my knowledge forward a great deal. I had never been exposed to educational leadership and was delighted to learn something about the field and particularly about the anarchic argument in relation to organizations. Howard offered many more insights on conducting research and the supervision relationship than I have been able to explore in this thesis. In their power relationship Howard encourages Ray forward on both personal and professional levels by challenging him to integrate his personhood with his research. As I pointed out before, Howard's way of supervising translates anarchic leadership principles into action. I am struck by how, working with both of them, I was challenged on both the professional and the personal levels and how, in subtle ways, *I was led* to integrate my own personhood with my research.

Luna and Nadia's interviews were the most upsetting. Throughout the research process, including the writing up, I was acutely aware of their pain. I often felt as torn between their stories as they were between their discourses. It was difficult to untangle threads in their relationship and then reweave them with my argument. Remaining equally neutral towards both of them and, on a more methodological level, between the two sets of interview data, was a tricky balancing act and I was most thankful for and drew heavily on the practice of Pyrrhonistic skepticism.

Andy and Molly were the most casual and fun interviews and the least anxiety provoking for me. This echoes, I think, aspects of their holistic discourse and their

approach to learning and the research process. In a sense, they influenced me to refrain from making my research quite such a serious and central issue in my life. There was laughter in all of the interviews, but during those with Molly, there were some moments when we could not talk for laughing.

**Conclusion**

It appears that each of us benefited in some way from the research, perhaps mostly, as researchers Pope and Denicolo (1994) found, from the reflection it provoked. Perhaps it may even have encouraged some of us to move beyond personally-focused reflection and towards what Foucault considers to be the benefit of criticism and reflection: "…to detach the power of truth from…forms of hegemony…social, economic and cultural…within which it operates at the present time" (1988: 133). I chose to offer more than a sketchy description of our experience of the research process in the hope that future researchers who decide to explore the supervision relationship may be able to derive some benefit from our shared insights. Perhaps also, to encourage fellow researchers to reflect on the way so-called mistakes usually offer some advantage, if not for the actual content of the research itself, then surely for its more intrinsic products: learning how to integrate the unexpected and accommodate challenges, learning how to balance what *is* with what *ought to be*.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Research is public and private, a product and a process. Measurable products such as books, journals and theses enter the public domain, but some things a researcher learns remain more private (Smith & Brown 1995). Most of the research outcomes offered here belong to the former category and include ideas on avenues for future research and action. I also comment on aspects of the latter category: some loosely formulated reflexions on how knowledge gained from this research continues to challenge and transform me. As the discussions of each of the supervision relationships conclude with summaries (see pp. 192; 239; 279) and a brief synthesis of the three case studies has already been presented (see p. 281), a broad overview of the research outcomes is offered here. The chapter is structured under the headings: **A constructivist reading of Foucault; Freedom, change and the influence of discourse; Supervisor-student matching; Expectations, abilities and care; Strategies of resistance; Recommendations of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee; Towards improving quality in postgraduate supervision; Limitations;** and **Future research.**

## 5.1 A constructivist reading of Foucault

It seems pertinent to start at the beginning: choosing Foucault. Weaving through this conclusion is commentary on using Foucault's insights as a theoretical framework and as research tools. In this particular section, some of the difficulties of a constructivist reading of Foucault are discussed. As indicated before, I remain dissatisfied with the way he deals with the tension between what he presents as the almost overwhelming potency of the power relations inherent in institutionalized discourses to construct knowledge and subjectivity, and his claim that people have freedom and agency. This dissatisfaction derives partly from adopting a constructivist position, which claims that the linguistic construction of reality is mediated by free will (Steffe & Gale 1995). This is a somewhat uncomfortable argument, as each premise potentially undermines the other. The dynamic between the notions of the subject, who is predominantly constructed in discourse, and the person or individual, who marshals free choice to resist such construction, poses a philosophical dilemma that perplexed me throughout the research and continues to do so.

It would have been easier perhaps, to skirt the issue and to simply apply Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights to research data. I chose not to do so. This decision is based partly on the fact that, given Foucault's (*ibid*.) research attitude, subservience to any ideas including his own would be theoretically incongruent. However, my decision is based more strongly on the belief that the subject-individual debate challenges the concept of human freedom at a profound level. Foucault says: "…there is freedom everywhere" (1996: 441). Nonetheless, reading Foucault and applying his insights constantly challenged - and sometimes eroded - my belief systems and often left me feeling almost inescapably constructed.

Arising from this discomfort is the realization that despite the difficulty of choosing any position in postmodernity (Connole 1998; Grice & Humphries 1997; Kvale 1996), we need to do so. Any position we adopt has its attendant problems; in order to live consciously and thereby appropriate as much autonomy as possible we need to question the values and assumptions we use to justify our way of being in the world. Questioning is a vital response to Foucault's recommendation to "…take responsibility for inventing or producing one's own 'self'" (in Kendall & Wickham 1999: 30). Given the permeable boundary between ourselves and our world it seems that we also need to take responsibility for inventing or producing our own world. In this regard, reading Foucault primed me to be more vigilant of the nexus between knowledge and power relations: between myself as researcher and my field of research. My application of methodological relationalism (Bourdieu 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992), which counsels methodological reflexivity, accentuates Foucault's injunction to explore how my reflexivity links with what I believe to be true. What forms of knowledge am I knowingly and unknowingly constructing or reconstructing? What are my professional and personal resistances and how do they manifest themselves? If this research is used, how will it be used and by whom?

### 5.2 Freedom, change and the influence of discourse

Regarding freedom and the positioning of students and supervisors in the university domain, the research showed that even in the face of commercial demands, students and supervisors appear to have a high degree of autonomy regarding their professional

proclivities and conduct. On the other hand, the research showed how this freedom is constrained by the ways that participants are positioned in and constructed by the discourses in which they are embedded. In this regard research findings corroborate with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insight that there is no discernable beginning or end to the process of construction: causality is reciprocal and is as much dependent on continuities as on ruptures, on rules of discourse as on resistance to them, on chance as on determinism. This perspective identifies no definitive source of paradigm shifts – those slow or swift shifts in collective consensus that bring about and sanction different ways of being in the world. Such shifts may be as much in the hands of social groups as they are in the hands of a single individual. In this regard I found another of Foucault's (*ibid*.) suggestions valuable: the construct of power is usefully analyzed when thought of as a relation, not a reified thing possessed by the collective and not the individual, by some and not by others. Analyzing power as a *relationship* proved a fruitful avenue for exploring how participants become both subjects and vehicles of what they know and learn. It made more readily discernable the links between *processes* and *products* of power relations: how power relations inherent in discourses in the educational world reinforce particular values, structures, languages and behaviours by shaping participants' identities or subjectivities and how, through relations of power, participants then reshape these discourses. Foucault (*ibid*.) proposes that this occurs in a cyclic process called the will-to-knowledge whereby what is sayable (legitimized in texts) influences what is visible (what is or becomes manifest). The visible then doubles back on the sayable, and depending on relations of power in this interchange - the quality and degree of people's resistances - what is sayable becomes challenged or entrenched but changed in some way.

Change is a theme that recurs throughout the literature on power relationships, the university domain and supervision practice. Consistent with Foucault, the research found that power relations and their strategies are capricious: they are "…mobile, reversible and unstable" (Foucault 1996: 441). Moreover, the forms of knowledge they bring into being are equally mutable. Thus another of Foucault's propositions is found convincing: there is no sure way of predicting outcomes; not for discourses, not for supervision relationships, not for research students and nor for their supervisors. Long before this thesis had even begun to be written, new patterns in the supervision relationships were forming and falling away.

Regarding the value positions and assumptions of publications on academic supervision, it was found that many of the texts providing advice on what forms of professional care supervisors *should* give their students and *how* they should give it, tend to privilege a discourse of commercial educational management. The praxis of this discourse is exemplified in Vilkinas's claim: "…good supervisor practice can easily be transferred from corporate to academic arenas" (2002: 129). In this regard, Van der Westhuizen's (1989) research found that supervision is product-oriented, or as I conceptualize it: favours thesis-as-product. This research finds links to support the argument that a commercial educational management discourse tends to privilege the values, rationalities and methodologies of science and technology and to award primacy to the thesis-as-product. It also shows that commercial expectations demanding increased throughput and publications place pressure on academics and that this filters through to the supervision relationship. The case study of Luna and Nadia confirms Marginson's (2001) observation that the factory notion of educative progress inherent in a commercial educational discourse sets the stage for discord between market-driven university academics and more socially motivated academics and students. However, by also examining the *person-as-product* of his or her learning experience as mediated in the supervision relationship, this research also shows that commercial values are offset by resistance to them. Irrespective of acrimony or accord, participants use different strategies of power to resist and interface with commercial expectations: different approaches give rise to different products.

Luna is the only participant whose principles and practices in the supervision relationship *strengthen* the discourse of commercial educational management. The principles and products of Howard's humanistic and anarchic educational leadership practices and Andy's humanistic and holistic supervision practices strengthen those particular discourses and, by doing so, commercial values are challenged or rather, adapted. As I interpret it, the quality of Andy and Molly's resistance to the injunctions of commercial discourse adapts them by *subversion*. Particularly Howard's way of synthesizing his preference for humanistic and qualitative research with a research-funding approach favoured by hard scientists, demonstrates how aspects of apparently conflicting discourses can be innovatively combined to create a potentially win-win outcome between contesting discourses. Taken together, these outcomes question the proposal that supervision is predominantly product oriented (Van der Westhuizen 1989) or constructed predominantly by an ethic of "pedagogy for profit" (Smythe in Lemmer 1997: 24). The

commercialization of education appears not to have obliterated traditional guiding principles of a university education: to offer a quality learning experience in which students are urged to think critically, to develop themselves to their fullest potential, and to contribute meaningfully to society. Rather, guiding humanistic principles of the traditional university exist alongside principles of commercial educational management. This interpretation needs to be considered in context: the university where data were collected maintains a traditional structure where disciplinary boundaries have been retained. It is not one of the South African institutions that have become predominantly oriented to programme-based education initiatives, as have many universities in the country. In this particular context, Van der Westhuizen's (1989) finding - that supervision is product-oriented - reflects a trend that may or may not continue to increase in influence. Much will depend on how well the humanistic discourse in the proposed quality assurance intervention strategies designed by the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (CHE 2003) will co-exist with commercial objectives. Regarding the waxing and waning of dominance, this research showed the merit of Foucault's insight:

> …Power relationships are being born incessantly, as both effect and condition of other processes…[they do not simply arise from] the resistance of the unhappy ones who are obligated to bow before them…power is born out of a plurality of relationships which are grafted onto something else, born from something else, and permit the development of something else…(1996: 260).

Power relationships and the structures that arise out of them served to bring about changes in participants, their supervision relationships and in the educational domain. These changes cannot be categorized as essentially repressive or liberating, nor are they driven by the values of one discourse, but rather by an integration of many. Whether the changes that this dynamic integration bring into being are regarded as useful or less useful depends on the value positions that people choose, or less autonomously, that subjects assume.

In different ways and to different degrees, all participants perceived university management as being resistant to change and slow to accept new ideas from new voices. Despite this perception, the data show that change happens and that participants are partly responsible for negotiating it. The research shows how, in the will-to-knowledge cycle (Foucault 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996; Kendall & Wickham 1999), power relations inherent in different worldviews filter through different discourses of learning and teaching so that at the interface of the supervision relationship, forms of knowledge

are entrenched, challenged or adapted. The research also shows this process in the opposite direction – from the individual participants, through the supervision relationship to the university system. Irrespective of their various ways of teaching and learning, to some degree the power relations of all the participants bring about shifts in power relationships in the university and/or broader educational domains. The data challenge Jones's claim that the *power dynamic* in the culture of university teaching "…has been remarkably resistant to change, with innovations in teaching consisting of cosmetic pedagogical moves which hardly impact at all on the fundamental meta-practices of institutions" (in Grant & Graham 1994: 175).

### 5.3 Supervisor-student matching

The research revealed how change is negotiated at ground level: the relationship between supervisors and their students. The data show how supervisors and students are constructed by what is sanctioned (sayable) in discourse and reveals how they use power relations to challenge, comply with or adapt such construction In the supervision relationship, Howard is professionally and personally constructed by humanistic and anarchic educational leadership discourses, as is his student Ray. Andy is professionally and personally constructed by holistic and humanistic discourses, as is his student Molly. Data show that at an *ontological* level - their view of reality - both of these supervisor-student pairs are well matched.

This accord reverberates in how they approach the research *methodologically* and, on a more personal note, how they approach themselves, one another and the university system. Howard and Andy's ways of learning concur with their ways of teaching - what is said matches what is done. The subjectivities or identities of Ray, Howard, Molly and Andy are all *visible* manifestations of what is *sayable* - or legitimized - by the discourses that construct them. In both cases, their areas of interest match their personal proclivities and the quality of power relations support both topic and person, in other words: person-as-product accords with thesis-as-product. Congruence also exists between their values and actions in the supervision relationship, and their relationship to the wider educational domain. Cohesion on an ontological level positions the alliances of Howard and Ray, and

Molly and Andy, in a way that potentially strengthens the capacity of their discourses to challenge and shift contesting discourses in the educational domain.

Howard and Ray use strategies congruent with anarchic educational leadership and humanistic discourses to *actively* challenge dominant scientific discourse: this is effected in a way that seeks less to discount and overthrow than to accept and integrate the discourses, so that all concerned stand to benefit. Notably, anarchic educational management aims to work *with* and not against change. Applying guiding principles of this discourse such as open communication, meaningful participation and the celebration of difference, Howard finds innovative solutions to potentially problematical situations in the supervision relationship, as well as potentially divisive factors in the university domain.

Using strategies of power relations consistent with holism and humanism, Andy and Molly's alliance is positioned to strengthen these discourses in the university and broader educational domains. The way in which they resist contesting discourses, including that of commercial educational management, is indirect and less governed by intent than by chance: it could be argued that they pretty much snub commercial injunctions unless these accord with their professional and personal preferences.

The products of both relationships in terms of the thesis are successful. In terms of personhood, the relationships are happy and enriching. Whether by intent or default, the alliances also benefit the broader educational domain and, significantly, the university system also stands to gain: either directly, from the success of the thesis-as-product or in a less obvious way, by promoting critical thinking, alternative worldviews and their attendant research values and approaches. As suggested in the literature, new voices provide the innovative thinking and products that are vital to the survival of the university in a commercialized educational context (Altbach 2001; Cooper & Randall 1999; Gibbons 2001; Luckett 2000; Morris 1972; Rouse 1987).

In the supervision relationship Luna is constructed predominantly by commercial educational management discourse, while her student Nadia is constructed predominantly by humanistic discourse. Despite the fact that they both work within a critical research paradigm which seeks to engender change in the world, the changes they envisage and to

which their actions aspire are different. They are not well matched at an *ontological* level. This mis-match begins to show itself in methodological conflict and soon pervades all their professional and personal interactions. The thesis-as-product is caught in the middle of the assault, yet struggles forward. In terms of person-as-product, Luna and Nadia both feel hurt, angry and frustrated. Despite disclaimers that each of them offers, they both hold onto and defend the ontologies and methodologies of the discourses that construct them so that by the end of *this* research process they and their discourses are polarized. Luna strengthens a commercial educational management discourse in the university and although it cannot be claimed that she discounts less dominant discourses - indeed she attempts to learn more about them - to some extent she contributes to their subjugation in the educational domain. It remains to be seen if and how Nadia's research may influence the educational domain, particularly since she has allied herself with a new co-supervisor who works within her paradigm. In terms of thesis-as-product and person-as-product, disadvantages outweigh advantages in this relationship: opportunities exist, but in the form of impediments.

The three relationships demonstrate the importance of matching supervisors to students. Howard and his colleagues devise an effective way of using group workshops to introduce students to institutional expectations, research methodology, fellow students and potential supervisors. Students share their research ideas with each other and with supervisors and benefit from feedback. Only once supervisors and students have got a feel of one another do they decide with whom they choose to work. Molly and Andy came into the supervision relationship "warm" (Hill, Acker & Black 1994): they already knew one another and had worked together before. A shortage of staff forces Luna and Nadia to work together; neither is the other's choice and as it turns out, they are mis-matched. Certainly the dynamics of power between participant pairs concur with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) claim that different forms of knowledge construct different subjectivities or identities. Some participants actually articulated this when they observed that people, their topics and their research approaches go together.

These outcomes lead me to recommend that students and supervisors need to nurture awareness of the *ontological* positions they adopt - and importantly, nurture awareness of both the professional and personal dimensions of it - so that they may more clearly understand the values that influence their expectations and the methodologies they choose

to translate those values into action. Lucid exploration of their ontological positioning could enable them to avert a mis-match and a potentially very rocky research ride, to put it colloquially.

### 5.4 Expectations, abilities and care

A complex, intricate and multidimensional dynamic evolves when the different personalities and life experiences that students and supervisors bring to supervision synchronize with their expectations and abilities and with the care they experience. The research indicates that participants' professional and personal expectations are closely aligned. Not only are their expectations aligned, their expectations also impact on how they perceive, communicate and practice - how they *experience* - professional and pastoral care. Expectations also link to participants' perception of their own abilities, one another's abilities and to the way they perceive university management's ability to hear and respond to staff and student needs.

Ray and Howard communicate expectations clearly and respectfully and reach consensus. Molly and Andy's expectations concur, but this appears to be less the outcome of discussion than from the mutual understanding and respect that has evolved between them and which appears to render the articulation of expectations redundant. Howard, Ray, Molly and Andy appear to evaluate their own and their supervision partners abilities congruently and their perception of how these abilities translate into outcomes also concur. They get what they expect from each other and are pleased with the care they experience. Moreover the professional and personal care that they expect, give and receive is congruent with the discourses that construct them.

Luna and Nadia do not communicate their expectations of one another at all, nor do they get what they expect, rather in this regard they surprise - or rather, shock - themselves and one another. Furthermore, Nadia contests Luna's professional abilities. It appears that disputes arising from Luna and Nadia's mis-match on a professional level contaminate their relationship on a more personal level, although it could be argued that misunderstandings between them may just as easily be rooted in the clashing of personal styles as in pragmatic problems with the research (For instance, the methodology, the

construct of culture, and the argument). In the process, Luna and Nadia are both displeased with the care they experience and there is mutual loss of respect. If the opposite argument is valid and they get what they expect and need, then I am forced to ask: What are the benefits of negativity? I suspect that this question would interest psychologists.

On this note it seems pertinent to comment on the ethic of pastoral care in humanistic discourse. Examining professional care separately from pastoral care was problematic as they are intricately interlinked, but at least this approach helped me to examine how pastoral care *manifests* itself and how it *functions* in the three relationships. In this regard, the research goes a fair way to augmenting the shortage of research in this area.

Foucault's claims that the "…constant, individualized, and final kindness" (1988: 62) promoted by an ethic of pastoral care serves the surveillance, assessment and, eventually, the control of people. Pastoral discourse positions the supervisor as the *caring* authority figure who guides his or her student towards an improved self who is better than he or she would have been without the supervisor's influence. By virtue of status and authority the supervisor's interpretation of a student - as revealed in his or her work and way of being in the supervision relationship - has the capacity to confer truth on what has been revealed and thus, on the student on both a professional and personal level. The data show how this process works. Howard leads Ray towards integrating his personal truth with his professional truth. This is a significant achievement, as Ray comes from an historically disadvantaged educational background which ill-prepares him to assimilate his prior knowledge with the new knowledge he encounters and to bring both into a dialogue with the norms of academic discourse, where knowing becomes linked with knowing how (Geisler 1994). From the outset of their relationship Ray confers the status of truth on Howard, both professionally and personally and as Ray breaks through the barriers of his earlier learning style, this truth is affirmed. The truth of their shared humanistic discourse and particularly their anarchic educational leadership discourse is strengthened in the process. As supervisor Andy confers truth on Molly as disclosed in her work and way of being in the relationship. Molly reciprocates and in the process the truth of their shared humanistic discourse and particularly their holistic discourse is strengthened. As a supervisor Luna withholds the status of truth from Nadia's work, which is constructed by a discourse other than her own. Nadia contests the truth of Luna's professional values - as

constructed by a commercial educational management discourse - and withholds truth by disputing Luna's professionalism. In the process of contesting the truth of their *professional* discourses, they eventually both withhold truth from the *personhood* of the other. In terms of the "…battle about the status of truth" (Foucault 1980b: 129-132), I found that the functioning of a pastoral discourse can be repressive or empowering and that relations of power inherent in this discourse may produce participants either as subjects or more autonomously as individuals. However, I question whether Foucault's (*ibid*.) notion of the pastoral discourse as ultimately leading to the *control* of people is an apposite way of describing power relations where participants show a high degree of agreement and get what they want or expect.

A pastoral discourse plays out in interesting ways in the three supervision relationships. It is revealed in participants' statements of *nurturing* and their use of metaphors: a family metaphor (Andy and Molly; Luna and Nadia) and a fellow traveler metaphor (Howard and Ray). These metaphors are also mentioned in the literature (Burgess 1994; Clegg & Gall 1998; Mouton 2001; Wisker & Brown 2001). Howard, Ray, Andy and Molly's metaphors operate through nurturing strategies that are gentle, empathetic, respectful, caring and collaborative. Significantly, their metaphors embody adventure and play. Both these relationships are epitomized in Andy's words: "There's a sense of a kind of personal achievement but within a helpmeet, common goal sort of situation". Nurturing, couched in a parent-child metaphor, also plays out strongly in the relationship of Luna and Nadia. However, in their case the metaphor has ominous implications: Nadia takes on a role of recalcitrant adolescent while Luna takes on a role of perplexed and disappointed parent.

Examining a child-parent role in the relationship of Luna and Nadia, a fellow traveler role in Howard and Ray's relationship and the role of friend in Andy and Molly's relationship, I found that the subject and the individual merge in an intricate way with the values and rules of their discourses: subject reciprocates individual and *vice versa*. This I found to be equally true in terms of professional care and pastoral care: one reciprocates the other. These interpretations concur with Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights on the construction of subjectivity, but leave a scant margin for challenging his insights.

The wisdom of nurturing interpersonal closeness in the supervision relationship is contested by critics, some of whom go so far as to debate the use of the term *relationship* to refer to the supervision alliance (Brown in Grant & Graham 1994: 166). Andy and Molly's friendship challenges texts that urge supervisors to maintain a professional distance in the supervision relationship (Markie in Chapman & Sork 2001). Contrary to Markie's (*ibid*.) warning, their friendship does not appear to compromise the work at all; in fact the reverse is the case. Howard and Ray have a friendly manner towards one another, but friendship *per se* is something that Howard anticipates will develop after Ray completes his thesis. Luna speaks about the benefit of friendship - or at least "being friendly" - in the supervision relationship, but she speaks of it in a way that highlights its *absence* between her and Nadia.

Taken together the data provide enough evidence to show that personal affinity impacts on the quality of professional and pastoral care that is given and received. In this regard I venture a very simple and common sense recommendation: during the matching process, supervisors and students should pay very close attention to whether or not they like one another. Of course, early impressions of people are subject to change. Nonetheless I argue that it is better to start off from as amicable a position as possible. I am not saying that the success of supervision relationships is more strongly premised on personal than on professional needs and expectations, but that a mis-match at a personal level is likely to influence the quality of the supervision relationship, including its professional quality. In this regard, students and supervisors would benefit from reflexion on the pastoral care they expect to give and receive, as pastoral care affects both person-as-product and thesis-as-product.

Personal affinity also appears to play a role in terms of how student participants perceive and negotiate the professional positioning of the supervisor as "an authority" (Peters in Nias 1993) and "in authority" (*ibid*.). In their roles as supervisors, Howard and Andy do not position themselves as being "in authority" (*ibid*.) instead they give Ray and Molly space to be themselves, to own their research and to act congruently with their own sense of integrity. As I interpret it, as supervisors they *earn* authority. Personal affinity is maintained as these relationships progress. Nadia initially regards Luna as being "in" authority, but as professional and personal affinity declines between them and mutual

respect is lost, Nadia's perception of Luna's status both as "in authority" (*ibid*.) and "an authority" (*ibid*.) diminishes.

### 5.5 Strategies of resistance

With regard to the negotiation of authority, Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) offers an analytical framework and approach that assisted me to examine how institutionalized power relations impact on people. However, I had to conceptualize and construct my own conceptual model or analytical tool to explore how power relations operate from the micro-level of the individual to the macro-level of institutions. Despite its shortcomings (see p. 98), my conceptualization of resistance strategies as falling along a continuum between three main categories push, allow and pull helped me to identify specific strategies that participants use to negotiate power relations. Moreover I found the concepts of push, allow and pull useful in examining *how* and *when* participants use *specific* strategies to resist being constructed and how these strategies balance autonomy and dependency, extrinsic authority and intrinsic authority.

Power relations between Luna and Nadia are mainly negotiated through strategies that fall into the categories of push and pull; they seldom allow. It could be argued that in this particular supervision relationship, Luna positions herself to divide and rule and that her strategies show an inequitable use of authority. She pushes Nadia a great deal, but does so in a covert manner. Nadia experiences her as coercively controlling, passive-aggressive, undermining and neglectful. However, Luna is also a victim in this relationship. Nadia finds many ways to resist Luna's authority and to negotiate autonomy and dependency between them. Most of Nadia's strategies are aligned with pulling away: silence, avoiding, withholding work, discounting Luna's knowledge and playing Luna off against a new co-supervisor. A lack of open communication between them appears to exacerbate their disputes and leads to covert power struggles.

Howard and Ray and Molly and Andy communicate openly and use strategies that are closely aligned to *allow*, such as respecting, reflecting, empathizing, trusting, collaborating and letting go. Although they often push and pull, these strategies are used more to

include and integrate their differences, than to exclude difference and dominate one another.

Regarding strategies and their outcomes, facilitating the production of a number of successful Master's theses is a tangible goal towards which supervisors are required to work. If like outcomes, relations of power are "…mobile, reversible and unstable" (Foucault 1996: 441) strategies that work well in one relationship may backfire in another. Moreover, whether or not people are conscious or unconscious of their motives, the consequences of their strategies are not always congruent with their intentions (Lukes 1992, 1996; Scott 1996). If there is no sure way of predicting outcomes, it becomes somewhat problematical to design and implement sure ways of achieving them. This casts doubt on the wisdom of producing texts that offer a one-size-fits-all approach to supervising postgraduate research. Broad outlines for supervising and conducting research can be most helpful, but supervisors and students need to customize any recommendations in a way that is sensitive to their particular situations and to who they are as people. Moreover, they need "…to constantly question and methodically distrust" (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 248) the assumptions on which texts on supervision practice are premised.

Research data show evidence for these claims: Texts on teaching and supervision practice recommend that supervisors use questioning as a technique to bring students to a better understanding of their fields of research, to help them refine their arguments and to grow their capacity to think critically (Morris 1972; Phillips & Pugh 1996; Van Manen in Vandenberg 1997). The research shows that questioning worked well for Howard and Ray and for Andy and Molly, but Luna's questioning engendered anger and insecurity in Nadia. As I interpret it, this outcome was contrary to Luna's conscious intentions. The relationships of Molly and Andy and of Ray and Howard show that they respect and trust one another but this is not the case with Luna and Nadia. I propose that questioning as a supervision strategy works when a solid basis of mutual trust and respect exists, but could backfire in its absence.

Another example is showing emotion. Cryer advises that in the face of dispute, unpalatable criticism or unprofessional behaviour from a supervisor, a student should "mask negative emotions" (1996: 66-67). She counsels students to show gratitude and

interest in any feedback and that "…only when you have taken time to consider can you decide how much to accept, reject or adapt" (*ibid.*). As pointed out before, this is sound advice, but it does not account for spontaneous emotions that *are* justified. If emotions were more spontaneously expressed in Luna and Nadia's relationship, would it have cleared the air between them? To what extent did masking emotions exacerbate a situation that inhibited the progress of the work and made their supervision relationship close to unbearable for both of them?

An unexpected fruit of this research derives out of questioning assumptions inherent in texts and it relates to an insight on the issue of emotion. From the outset and right through the writing up of this research, I was aware of a nagging discomfort, a vague awareness of a gap somewhere. The feeling seemed to arise whenever I read and reread the literature. Foucault's work and texts on the commercialization of education privilege the system over the individual, I think, and this makes me uncomfortable. Texts on supervision practice evoked the same response in me, although somewhat diluted. The discomfort subsided when I worked with texts on humanistic teaching praxis, holism and anarchic educational leadership. After reflecting at length, it struck me that the former group of texts is almost exclusively premised on *intellectual rationality* - they seldom and sometimes never, explore emotion. What about *emotive rationality* - that rationality of the body upon which so many intellectually measured decisions run aground and are marooned?

From a methodological perspective I think Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) insights and Pyrrhonistic skepticism (Kendall & Wickham 1999) assisted me to merge explanation and exploration in a way that *allowed* participants' emotive experiences to be described without the encumberance of any theories or concepts of emotion. Skepticism warned me to attempt to refrain from making second order judgments, those intellectual calculations that are applied to initial perceptions and that lead a researcher to search for hidden meanings in data (*ibid.*). Looking for and finding hidden meanings usually signals that a researcher may be viewing data through discourses relevant to himself or herself, but not necessarily to the data. As stated in the introduction, in worlds and disciplines other than psychology there is sometimes resistance to psychological constructs and practices (Foucault 1980a, 1988, 1996; Nias 1993). Intending to circumvent such resistance and to appeal to as wide an educational audience as possible, at the start of this research I resolved to refrain from using psychology theory in this work.

Despite the absence of it, one of its central areas of interest - emotion - is rendered more discernible. From a Foucaultian perspective it could be argued that even emotions are partly constructed by discourse. It could also be argued that my interest in psychology primes me to show the emotive elements in the data. This is the ongoing challenge of the subject-individual debate. Nonetheless, I think that a good proportion of the strategies participants use to negotiate relations of power in their supervision relationships revolves on their feelings. Some texts on supervision acknowledge that research is, in the words of Phillips and Pugh:

> …an emotional experience, which involves the whole person…it is too often the case that managers choose to ignore the 'whole person' and patch over rather than get to the bottom of, any difficulties that are showing themselves in the individual's work…(1996: 160).

I think this research shows a link between the strategies participants use to negotiate relations of power and what they feel - their emotions - and perhaps this is where pastoral care are most strongly evoked. Empathy - the ability to put oneself in the position of the other person - is the factor absent in Luna and Nadia's relationship. Disruptive feelings such as anger and frustration in their relationship engender covert, disruptive power plays that compromise pastoral and professional care. As I interpret it, Nadia extends empathy initially, but withdraws it when Luna (for whatever reasons) does not reciprocate. Luna and Nadia do not communicate their feelings effectively. On the one occasion when they did try to talk about their difficulties, they became so involved in the emotions that they were unable to marshal any strategies to improve their respective positions – they were almost entirely focused on what they *cannot* do – this disempowered both of them. Howard and Ray extend empathetic care to each other as do Andy and Molly: they acknowledge difficulties, these are communicated and then they create ways to do something about troublesome issues. With Howard and Ray, and Andy and Molly positive feelings such as safety and goodwill engender power relations that nurture mutually beneficial pastoral and professional care. In the context of the data, empathy seems to be closely related to feelings of safety and in turn these create an hospitable space for open communication.

The data show how the *actions* that arise from feelings and communication (or lack of it) are mediated by reflexivity. In this regard Foucault asks: "How is the reflexivity of the

subject and the discourse of truth linked?" (1988: 38). In terms of humanistic discourse, the supervision practices of Howard and Andy show high regard for the development of their students as *people*. This is amplified by Howard's anarchic educational leadership discourse and Andy's holistic discourse, both of which recognize the need to engage critically and, thereby, to cultivate intrinsic integrity. Howard and Andy both supervise from this inner locus of control: it mediates how they reflect and *act* on extrinsic control. In Greenfield's words: "…one has to balance values against constraints…one has to take action within a political context" (1993: 257). Both Howard and Andy weigh the value of their students' learning experiences and personal development against the constraints of university expectations. Howard balances values and constraints more equitably than Andy, who regards institutional expectations as secondary in importance. Nonetheless, the truth of the discourses in which they are embedded are reproduced in supervision practices that move Howard and Ray well beyond the confines of instrumental and depersonalized "job competencies" (Lippitz in Vandenberg 1997: 82) as construed and expected in "…a modern, professional understanding…of the education profession" (*ibid*.). Luna is constructed by a commercial educational management discourse: her supervision practices privilege commercial values above the personal development and fulfilment of Nadia. Luna's reflexivity plays a role in reproducing the truth of this discourse. She balances the value of research that moves outside of institutionally sanctioned norms (*i.e*. research such as Nadia's, which is not constructed in dominant discourse) against the constraint of having the research rejected. She says: "…if I know it's going to cause a problem, I'd rather they'd change it". This ensures favourable assessment, which ensures throughput, which in turn assures continued funding, and ultimately perpetuates supervision practices that entrench commercial values. Luna reflects on her supervision style, she expresses some regret that it inclines to be directive, but she balances values against constraints and acts in keeping with commercial injunctions. Her locus of control - her integrity - is constructed in commercial educational management discourse, the outcome of her reflexivity affirms the truth of this discourse and her actions strengthen it. Her supervision practices are in line with "job competencies" (Lippitz in Vandenberg 1997: 82) as construed and expected in "…a modern, professional understanding…of the education profession" (*ibid*.). As demonstrated by its silence on the personal aspect of the supervision process, commercial educational management discourse marginalizes personal feelings. Empathy is not an attribute that is highly regarded in this discourse. In fact it is ignored, as power relations

between Luna and Nadia demonstrate. I suggest that it is out of emotional literacy (the capacity to recognize feelings, name them, communicate them, and accommodate the other) that empathy as a feeling can arise. Whether or not compassionate action follows depends on reflexivity and the way in which reflexivity links to the values and thus truth of the discourses that construct and govern supervisors as people. This returns me to the importance of supervisors and students probing each other's ontological positioning, as it is at this level that the truth of the other can be understood and the value and constraints of this truth be weighed - at least to some extent - *before* entering a supervision partnership.

Taken together, the three case studies suggest that irrespective of how well supervisors and students are matched, the key to negotiating action in the supervision relationship is communication. The quality of the supervision relationship will depend on which strategies of communication are used and how they are used to negotiate power relations. More intricately, the case studies indicate that beneficial supervision arises from a calibre of communication that not only *respects* difference but *allows* and *explores* it. With this quality of *empathetic* engagement, action transcends into compassionate action (Balsekar 1992; Becvar & Becvar 1996; Bohm 1981; Brennan 1993; Capra 1982, 1989; Wheatley 1999) (see p. 81). Compassionate action allows new voices to be heard – voices that are easily stifled at the ground level of the supervision relationship, voices that have the potential to give the university an edge in the educational marketplace. I suggest that the intention to compassionate action and the communication that arises from it is a way to build the foundation of mutual respect central to Grant and Graham's assertion: "…if many supervision problems are to be avoided, good communication – based on mutual respect and leading to mutual trust – is essential" (1994: 168).

### 5.6 Recommendations of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee

I chose to include an exploration of the Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee's draft recommendations (CHE 2003 1-7) for several reasons. Firstly, this grounds the research in its local context. Secondly, as the Committee was given the mandate to translate government's policies for educational transformation into ground-level interventions, the documents are likely to be influential in the formulation of educational policy. Thirdly, the documents are an integral part of the new and ongoing

development of quality assurance in tertiary education. They are not meant to be prescriptive; rather they are living documents subject to negotiation by the wider community of academics. Some of the recommended interventions are currently being piloted (Van der Mescht 2004 pers. comm.) and by offering my interpretation of how they relate to the three supervision relationships researched in this thesis, I hope to add to the ongoing debate they have elicited.

For the most part the Committee's recommendations are based on the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 6: 4) approach to teaching and learning, which is based in humanistic discourse. The resources are also designed to assist academics and university managers to meet commercial objectives, which link to the professionalization of education as well as government's goals for the democratization of education. A number of problems arise when combining humanist principles with commercial ends: the objectives of one sometimes compromise those of the other. It appears that this creates a tension in the CHE (2003 1-7) documents between two strands of quality assurance: the need to develop self-surveillance as a means whereby accountability may be reclaimed by individuals and the need to implement institutionalized mechanisms of accountability. I argue that the two instances discussed below show this tension and, as such, represent *organizational* examples of contradictory subjectivity. Contradictory subjectivity occurs when a person (in this case an organization) takes up different roles that are not easily reconcilable or ways of being that are incongruent with whom they think, feel or desire themselves to be (Kendall & Wickham 1999).

1. Despite the acknowledgement that "…it is important to preserve as far as possible, the intense one-on-one supervisory relationship" (CHE 2003 7: 3) the Committee promotes a "…more pragmatic and efficient" (*ibid*.) approach to supervision in keeping with an international "…shift to a more formal, contractual and accountable relationship" (*ibid*.). The relationship of Howard and Ray shows that the "intense one-on-one supervisory relationship" (*ibid*.) is a *vital* fulcrum of change for students from previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds and, moreover, demonstrates the importance of pastoral care in fostering both professional and personal growth. The resources (CHE 2003) acknowledge the importance of intrinsic learning and, by association, the importance of person-as-product. However, they are for the most part silent on, and thus marginalize, the *personal dimension* of the supervision *relationship*

and thus banish *pastoral care* to the peripheries. I argue that the humanistic principles on which the Committee bases its recommendations are not consistently followed through.

2. In the CHE (2003 6) document a pastoral-humanistic ethic of care is recruited to processes whereby the practice of self-evaluative reflexivity is in danger of becoming appropriated to serve extrinsic, institutionalized control (see p. 79). This may occur if, as the Committee recommends, a teacher or supervisor's self-evaluation is subjected to *formal* assessment in "…a teaching portfolio which is open to scrutiny by peers" (CHE 2003 6: 11). The implication is that self-evaluative statements will be rendered accessible to, and assessable by, heads of department, deans, university managers, institutional auditors and so on, ever higher up the hierarchy. This subverts principles of humanistic ontology (self-determination – and thus academic freedom, intrinsic integrity, *etc*.) out of which the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 6: 4) developed in the first place. To the extent that an academic is open and honest in his or her self-evaluative statements, transparency may involve an unpleasant backlash so that, ironically, such formal assessment could *institutionalize* subterfuge, or to put it less strongly: window dressing. This demonstrates the unpredictability of the outcomes of power relations and is a pertinent example of Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) notion of the will-to-knowledge: how sanctioned and institutionalized discourse constructs knowledge - including subjectivity - and how people's resistances mediate it. The data show a similar example of subterfuge as a strategy of resistance to extrinsic forms of assessment and control. Commenting on the persistent opposition of existing management to open book or take home exams at Honours level, Andy reports: "…in fact people have been doing it all the time and they just haven't been saying anything. All this came out of the woodwork in the process of debating this…issue". In Foucaultian terms: resistance to what is sanctioned as sayable in institutionalized discourse is not directly expressed in words, yet becomes covertly visible in practice, and thus by implication, covertly sayable.

Regarding how supervisor participants interface the Committee's recommended teaching practices (see list p. 105) with commercial demands:

Luna balances the value of reflexivity as a strategy of learning, and questioning as a strategy of teaching it, against constraints of time which are imposed to a great extent by commercial demands, particularly the demand for deliverables. By choosing to tell her students what to do as opposed to leading them to formulate their own understandings and thus construct their own knowledge, Luna is better able to manage her teaching load, reduce risk and thus, potentially increase throughput. It appears that in this case *practice* of the theory of the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 6: 4), on which most of the Committee's "Improving teaching and learning resources" (CHE 2003 1-7) are based, conflicts with commercial objectives.

Andy's supervision practices apply a good deal of the Committee's recommendations constructed in the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003: 3) approach to teaching and learning. However, factors in his supervision style (the manner in which Andy favours Molly's personal development over her completion of the Master's, the way he allows space for all aspects of Molly's ways-of-being, including the space for play, and does not view the thesis-as-product as an all-important factor in her educative process) challenge rather than comply with the commercial injunctions underpinning the Committee's interventions. When his practices do comply with commercial objectives, this occurs more by chance than by choice.

Howard's supervision practices are aligned with the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003: 3) approach to teaching and learning. Moreover, his practices are also aligned with commercial goals. Whereas Luna supervises in a manner that privileges thesis-as-product and commercial demands, and Andy supervises in a way that benefits person-as-product and thesis-as-product, but snubs commercial demands, Howard's supervision practices balance thesis-as-product, person-as-product and commercial demands to the benefit of all these factors. I suggest that it is through practices associated with anarchic educational leadership discourse that Howard successfully integrates these multiple needs.

### 5.7 Towards improving quality in postgraduate supervision

Supervision texts note that it is rare for supervisors to offer students information "…anything relating to the *process* of doing a research degree" (Phillips & Pugh 1996:

89). To some extent Andy and Howard offer this information, but Luna does not appear to do so. I propose that the practice of sharing information on the process of doing a research degree will benefit if comment is offered on the process and experience of *supervision*. If students and supervisors share insights on what they think *and* how they feel about the research *and* their relationship, I suspect that both the work and the people would benefit and grow. According to research reported by Chapman and Sork (2001) (see p. 112) communication of this calibre is potentially very challenging.

I suggest that academic development programmes (for supervisors, students and managers) would benefit from the inclusion of training in brief intervention strategies for managing conflict and processing emotions in the supervision relationship. In order to facilitate open communication and the exchange of process comments, perhaps a guideline for discussing and negotiating expectations along the lines of the one developed by Grant and Graham (1994) (see p. 52) could be designed, but with some items designed to help supervisors and students focus on *ontological* issues: their values and views of reality that influence their ways of being in the world. In addition to *professional needs*, the guidelines should also address *personal needs*. Even if supervisors and students do not table such documents, at least these may encourage them to reflect on and become more conscious of their personal and professional styles and expectations. Matching may then be effected with more emphasis on choice than chance.

In terms of fostering open communication and care, the postgraduate student forum needs to become more visible. Correspondence by e-mail is not enough and in the case of Nadia, lack of contact communicated entirely the opposite message to what a postgraduate forum is all about: caring, sharing and forming a critical mass for action (Grant & Graham 1994; Zuber-Skerritt & Ryan 1994). The importance to students of the postgraduate forum is highlighted by the fact that all student participants in this research report feeling distant from the university system and data indicate that they are very dependent on their supervisors for support. Unfortunately, as Luna and Nadia's case study shows, this support is not assured. Students, supervisors and the university system all stand to lose if the supervision relationship goes wrong. Perhaps one or more people could be appointed as facilitators with whom supervisors and students could *personally* and privately discuss their concerns. A possible consideration in making such an appointment may be that facilitators should not be visibly "in" (Peters in Nias 1993) authority in the university

management hierarchy, but rather be positioned in what may be perceived as a more neutral structure in the system. Such an arrangement could also facilitate *ongoing monitoring* of the supervision relationship as opposed to the once-yearly and somewhat depersonalized survey format currently available.

Besides assisting students and supervisors to negotiate disputes, supervision facilitators, the postgraduate forum and the proposed guidelines for negotiating expectations could offer avenues to inform students on a silence I discovered in the data: knowledge of the *rights to intellectual property*. This concern is important, particularly against the backdrop of the commercialization of education. Student participants did not appear to be adequately aware of, concerned with, or informed about publication. The significance as well as the intricacies and ethics of publication need to be clearly communicated to students.

## 5.8 Limitations

Although I bring Foucault's insights into a dialogue with specialist voices pertinent to the field of this research, I did not embark on this project to write a thesis on Foucault *per se*, but rather to test and sometimes play with his claims and insights and to ground them in *my* exploration of power relationships. Thus I offer less a general criticism of his ideas than an engaged critical application of them as theoretical *frameworks* and practical *tools* for this specific research. Actually, it was only once the research was well under way that I turned to examine what others had to say about his work. Given Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996) views on the importance of autonomy in the construction of knowledge, I suspect he would have approved this approach. I considered incorporating more perspectives from (published and thus to some extent legitimized) Foucaultian critics, but decided not to do so lest the threads of my arguments strayed into a series of tangents and became less cohesive and succinct, and lest the whole shifted to a more abstract level but lost a sense of being solidly and specifically grounded. To the extent that you judge it to be so, the shortage of the voices of published Foucaultian critics is a limitation of this thesis.

Data were collected from one institution that is based on the Oxford model. Hence, the findings *may* be more apposite for similar universities. More intricately, findings may be more relevant to academics whose practices are aligned with the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 3) model of education than those whose practices are more in line with a "competency and skills based approach" (*ibid*.) to training (see p. 66).

As an analytical tool, push-allow-pull could benefit from refining and retesting. With regard to assumptions and the quest for neutrality, it could be argued that the conceptual scheme of push-allow-pull is perhaps too open to arbitrary interpretation and thus, researcher manipulation. On the other hand - and particularly in the context of this thesis which explores autonomy in the construction of knowledge - this openness may be an advantage: the constructs of push, allow and pull are neutral enough to enable the reader to develop his or her own understanding of how and why they operate in participants' supervision relationships and to bring this understanding into a dialogue with my interpretations.

As a student of education and a product of a humanities education within an Oxford-model university and by personal inclination aligned with humanistic ontology, I favour or rather am a subject of, humanistic practices associated with the "reflective practitioner" (CHE 2003 3) approach to education and learning. Because of my ontological positioning, which recognizes the relevance of my prior learning and personal experience to the research process, I chose to research supervision in the humanities and education. This project does not address supervision in the hard sciences and the professions. As I understand it, students and supervisors working in these disciplines are customarily ontologically aligned, so much of my discourse-based debate is redundant as it applies directly to their *professional* relationships. Of course, the debate is only redundant to the extent that people working in the sciences and the professions may or may not be *interested* in ontological issues. Nonetheless, the functioning of interpersonal - and to a lesser extent institutional - power relations as experienced by the student-supervisor participants and as conceptualized in the strategies of push, allow and pull is generic to people and bridges disciplinary boundaries. With regard to expectations and the guidelines for discussing and negotiating expectations that I suggest could be formulated to facilitate this process, it would need to be designed with a real appreciation of what is relevant to the hard sciences and the professions.

The actual voices of university *managers* are missing in this thesis in as far as I have used publications to draw a picture of interrelated factors in the educational domain that influence how managers are constructed. In practice managers are likely to be constructed by a merger of factors as represented in the picture I have drawn, their individual proclivities and the day-to-day exigencies of the workplace. However, my exploration of university *leadership* discourse - specifically, anarchic educational leadership discourse - is personalized in the supervision experiences of Howard. As I chose to focus on the ground level of the *supervision relationship* and data were collected with this focus in mind, this thesis does not evaluate the *personal experience* of university managers.

My exploration of power relations does not follow the supervision relationships from start to finish; some of the student participants had not yet completed their theses by the time I had completed mine. This is a limitation to the extent that it may or may not detract from my aim to show *how* power relations work to produce the knowledge.

### 5.9 Future research

As stated in the introduction, by researching relations of power in the academic supervision relationship, I hope to offer some insights to inform future research in the field.

Regarding a limitation I indicated earlier, research into the postgraduate supervision relationship in the hard sciences and technology could provide context-specific knowledge that could be helpful for supervisors and students working in these disciplines.

I have only tentatively explored what *seems* to me to be a contradiction that accounting or financial researchers may like to probe. In a strange twist of logic government funding for students in taught Master's programmes in South Africa is less than that for thesis-only students. This erodes my arguments, in terms of the growing dominance of the scientific model of research in South Africa as it links to the government's neo-liberal economic policy and attendant restructuring goals, particularly the goal of increasing the number of employable graduates (see pp. 60 & 63). Taught programmes appear to fulfill the "fitness

for purpose", "value for money" and "transformation" (CHE 2003: 3-4) criteria defined by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee (see p. 65). Also, by what I hear, taught postgraduate programmes are not necessarily easier for either learners or teachers than the thesis-only process. Why are taught postgraduate programmes marginalized by lower government funding? Is this due to a time-money ratio? And *how* is that calculated? And how is the calculation *rationalized*? Is there some sort of (corporate? international?) collective consensus around the value of taught postgraduate programmes? These issues of calculation are particularly well suited to a Foucaultian interrogation.

Psychologists may like to unpack the *academic* supervision relationship using psychology theories or question the benefits of a difficult supervision experience. Could it be argued that any experience, negative or positive, is appropriate to what we need to learn at the time? Is there a pattern in the personal profiles of students who drop out of postgraduate studies? This leads me to wonder: after a few years, how would students and supervisors evaluate their experience of their postgraduate supervision relationships and what meaning will they make of these experiences in the broader context of their lives?

To what extent do commercial demands marginalize visionary research as blue-sky and less useful and how does this influence the construction of our perceptions of reality and, by implication, our shared world?

What do students from previously disadvantaged education systems most need to help them to integrate their sense of identity with traditional academic discourse? How efficient and how effective are the intervention strategies designed by South Africa's Council on Higher Education's Quality Committee in terms of transformational learning and the production of "self programmable" (Castells 1998) graduates? (see pp. 104 & 215).

Publication and research are inextricably interlinked, in fact some argue that research does not deserve to be called research unless it is published. In the context of the South African government's statement: "…the value and importance of research cannot be over-emphasised. Research…is perhaps the most powerful vehicle that we have to deepen our democracy" (in CHE 2003 7: 1) and in the light of government's current neo-liberal

economic policies, I am interested in how publication translates into earnings and more intricately, into benefits. What kind of benefits and/or earnings and for whom? To what extent do publishers control knowledge? Who wields the power?

**Closing this research**

In this project I explored one fragment of space and time - a moment - where the interrelationship between supervisors, students and their contexts formed an intricate and complex pattern that I saw and examined and wondered at. It was like looking through a kaleidoscope and knowing that with the next twist or shake a new, unexpected pattern would appear. In looking and wondering I can only tell what I see: like all participants in this project I am actor, stage and play. It is for you the reader to decide what you see and take, or leave. I hope, at least, to have affirmed the value of critical reflexion: the need for us to question the worldviews that drive our actions, that shape our likes and dislikes, our expectations and resistances, our sense of self. We are creators and created, producers and produced. We have some autonomy to choose what we put back into the world and to ask: "If I am free to be different, then who am I?" Without critical reflexion on our reality, we are like silhouettes: opaque outlines of our human potential.

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# APPENDIX

## 1 DATA PRESENTATION: INDIVIDUAL SYNOPSES

Data are organized into the following grid as formulated during data analysis (see p. 145):

| | |
|---|---|
| 1, 2, 3 | WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF **INTERPERSONAL** POWER RELATIONS? |
| **1.** | **How does (name) see and construct him/herself as a supervisor/student?** |
| 1.1 | Motivations: worldview and abilities |
| 1.1.1 | Expectations |
| 1.1.2 | Motivations for supervisor-student matching |
| 1.2 | Care |
| 1.2.1 | Professional care |
| 1.2.2 | Pastoral care |
| 1.3 | Autonomy and dependency |
| 1.3.1 | Depending on students |
| **2.** | **How does (name) view and position/construct the other?** |
| 2.1 | As a student/supervisor |
| 2.2 | As a person |
| **3.** | **How does (name) experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing self and other)** |
| 3.1 | The vision |
| 3.2 | The process |
| 4 | WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF **INSTITUTIONAL** POWER RELATIONS? **How does (name) relate to the university / broader educational domains?** |
| 4.1 | Autonomy-dependency |
| 4.2 | Care: Professional-pastoral |
| 4.2.1 | The postgraduate forum |
| 4.3 | Expectations |
| 4.4 | Time, funding, throughput and publication |
| 4.5 | Competing discourses |
| 5 | WHAT IS VISIBLE? (FORMS MADE MANIFEST) |
| 5.1 | What is produced in terms of the thesis? |
| 5.2 | What is produced in terms of personhood? |
| 5.3 | What is produced in terms of the university/ broader educational domains? |

## 1.1 HOWARD

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS?

### 1 How does Howard see and construct himself as a supervisor?

1.1 Motivations: worldview and abilities

Supervision is like teaching…it's really an extension of my job, my role as a teacher. And *that* I take quite seriously…that's kind of who I am. Somehow, in this role of a teacher, I don't really think that I have much to *teach*, but I *do* think that I am able to kind of unlock what people already have…to know and find out ways of developing that. *That* seems to be something I can do. It's not really about *tell* people…they don't so much *learn* from me ….I'm more like a kind of trigger.

So supervision…I kind of like teaching in that way, because you're *guiding* someone as they're grappling to formulate this research question out of their interest in the field. And there are two things happening simultaneously. One is a narrowing down to make the research *work* but, at the same time there's a broadening out…of self expression, in a philosophic sense, without which they can't get anywhere either…because a research culture springs from that…from roots. If you ask questions like: "What do *you* think reality is?" How do you deal with that without the grounding…how to focus on ontological and epistemological issues? One needs to go back to first processes. There's a need in education to make an ontological contribution…it's quite an important one. It can be the one to get them over the hump of how they've been taught themselves. Particularly when students come a narrow route…from disadvantaged backgrounds, educationally. They're ill prepared. They really have *not* been encouraged to challenge or think much.

### 1.1.1 Expectations

The natural expectation of students is sometimes unrealistic… supervisors do sometimes slip up. And the student can be very powerless in this relationship…they can be the victim. So now the practice of supervision is institutionalized. If I've got a gripe about my supervisor, I can legitimately put it down on paper in a report…bang…there it is…which is good. It wasn't there before. I will therefore, at the end of this year officially get feedback from all the students…and they'll get to see my report on them. But it's very rare to get *real* feedback from students about how I'm doing. It's *hard* for them to give feedback. By and large I have to infer from body language…their response and so on. It's very unlikely that they will ever say …"Jeez, you're doing a good job supervising, or, thank you for this, or…that". But I think that's normal…part and parcel of being a teacher.

What my colleague and I would like to see from students is critical engagement with everything that they read. We want their theses to be different…and where it comes from.

We don't want blue-sky research at a time like this. With our country's history we want stuff that can actually kick in there and make a difference.

### 1.1.2 Motivations for supervisor-student matching

Yeah…it's an interesting process. My colleague and I deliver the course jointly. We start off with the students in a group. The more we talk, the more we explore their research leanings, the clearer it becomes that this is my call…I'm interested in *that* or I know more or have done more research or supervision in that field than my colleague has. So there's the element of expertise. And the other is much more mysterious…and that's the personal one. You just take to some people much more easily than you do to others. If I get a really good vibe from someone early on…I'm going to try and get that student, quite deliberately...kind of almost make *sure* I get that student to supervise. I guess something interesting is going on there…because this is the start of relationship…and it's quite an important one. It's fraught with problems…it's fragile, dangerous, explosive...it's all those things. It's also potentially

very rewarding for both…certainly for me. So, there's got to be something I *like* about the person…something that interests me…something intriguing about them that makes me look forward to supervisions, otherwise it's a bit of a plod.

## 1.2 Care

### 1.2.1 Professional Care

When you asked me to construct a metaphor of the relationship, I thought a bit about the Master-apprentice sort of obvious thing...the apprentice learning from the Master, but I don't like it much. Perhaps because it emphasizes the power distance and I don't want there to be much. I don't want that to be uppermost in what we do and how we do this thing. But there's an element of it…and you can't ignore it, because it's about learning conventions…a new genre, which perhaps unfortunately, is fairly laid-down and full of convention and fairly clear expectations…generally quite good ones. And I have to teach it to my students, so in a sense, they are apprenticed.

I see a lot of theses that are pieces of absolutely dead research. A complete oversimplification of complex problem…a superficial bit of enquiry…couple of questionnaires…an attempt at analyzing…very superficial data. Nothing's happened *here*. You see, *that* for me would not be supervision…I would say that there hasn't been supervision at *all* in that case. There would have been *direction*: '*This* is what you need to do…chapter one should be like *that*, chapter two like *that*…. Do that, and we'll give you your Master's'.

Of course, you can't undervalue the product…I wouldn't want to make that mistake. The products are important. The university wants them and of course the students want them. The world wants them. And there's something quite magic about the finished product…students just love it. It's truly an enormous thing, to produce the Master's, but if the process has been unhappy, or dissatisfying, or one in which no real growth has occurred…really…I would not be satisfied…it's not a good sense of fulfilment. I'd feel like I failed …it's just the product.

### 1.2.2 Pastoral Care

I think there's quite a strong nurturing element…and I mean that in the best sense of that word. I don't think it has a bad sense, it's such a nice word…nurturing. I think students need nurturing. I think we all need nurturing, actually, all the time. But only, here's a particular case where a student is embarking on a fairly big piece of research and there has to be quite a lot of caring going on. So, there's an element there of…it sounds a bit corny…of parenting. I think it's possible for students to see that they have all this knowledge, talent, skill, so it's about developing what they already *have*. The final quest, really, is to find *themselves*…that's really why we learn, and why I am teaching…to help people find out who they are. Ja…and the change…it's about how to make them change. Particularly if they come from an educationally disadvantaged background, the change includes taking on board an academic discourse…interacting, correcting, processing…and you can't *do* that unless you are *there* as a person.

## 1.3 Autonomy and dependency

I don't think one can get away from the power-distance aspect of supervision, but I try to play that down as much as possible. Sometimes to a fault where it's so obvious what a student should be doing and he's not doing it and I won't tell him: 'This is what you should do'. I really want him to find out either what *I* think he should do, or something else that *he* thinks he should do, which will lead him out of the problem….of being stuck, perhaps. Everyone needs direction really and I think supervisors generally struggle with just how far to go. If a chapter comes in and it's bloody awful and it's all over the place, what do you do? Do you actually strongly suggest this is how it should be restructured? Do you simply give it back and say: 'It needs restructuring, go and do it'? Do *you* restructure it…like do a new outline and say: 'Write it like that!'? Where do you draw the line? And that's *hard*. It's become harder and harder the more open we've become to registering students who've come from appalling backgrounds and they really don't know what you're talking about when you say: 'There's no structure' or 'There's no argument in *here*'…they don't understand it. So just how strong your guidance is, is always problematic.

Another example is the literature review…students struggle so with it. They find it extremely hard to present it as anything else but a shopping list…names…a paragraph on this one and a paragraph on that one…until you're just tired of names. My question is always: 'Where are *you* in this chapter…what are *you* saying?' And they say: 'Am I not meant to be telling you what other people say?' 'Well, *no*, actually. I know what they say and your readers will probably know too. Ja, give an idea, but that's not the *point*. The point is what are they saying about what you're *doing*? What *you're* doing. *You* drive this thing…not them!'…ahgrrrr!!!

The sorts of students that I work with mostly are quite dependent on me. That's the most worrying part of the job…the dependency. I sometimes feel that they wouldn't know how to go to the next stage if I didn't tell them what to do. The pastoral role in an inverse proportion to the level of sophistication of the student's background…so if they've come from an impoverished educational background where they've never had to think, really, or write an essay…because that *happens*…then of course, the dependency level rises hugely. If you don't actually map out the next step, they've had it. But in a remarkably short period of time they can turn a corner.

I think what I'd perhaps like to stress is the changing nature of the relationship. And if that doesn't happen, there's trouble. That it's a relationship that is dynamic…it's a process…not a thing, and it's appropriate in the earlier stages for a supervisor to be quite strongly in control and point the way and it's equally appropriate to gradually step back. If you are out in front on this journey all the way then you're in deep trouble, both of you, because in the end it's not going to be the student's work and you can't then say that the student has learned anything or grown. Got a degree. Great. So what.

### 1.3.1 Depending on students

[no data]

## 2 How does Howard view and position (construct) Ray?

### 2.1 As a student

When I get a student who comes through a route like where I come from and probably where *you're* coming from they're very ready to engage critically…they're used to that. I would think that the person's not changing…there's a *readjustment*, really. Whereas with people like Ray there comes a sense of change. He can actually become a different person…if he works hard.

He seems to want to work hard. I think the signs are there. He'll never be satisfied again with what he used to be or with what goes on in schools and education. He will *always* be a pain in the ass to so called institutions and power which is really what everyone in education should have in common…to prod…at improving and asking questions.

He came in with a very strong agenda. He wanted to do research for the wrong reasons. A lot of our students are educators and if they come from historically disadvantaged groups that don't *have* the infrastructure or the culture of success, then they're probably being stuffed around by Bisho and experiencing a largely dysfunctional system. And you realize they're on a bit of a *plak* [mission] to expose this dysfunctionality or incompetence. But that's not a good reason for research. I mean…do research to show officially and formally how *strongly* they disapprove of what's happening? How *incensed* they are by the injustice and the incompetence, the lack of professionalism. And as a result of that position, very often their writing is rhetoric. They sound like politicians…their speeches. That's how they write, which is very problematic. If you haven't grown up with it, the discourse of academic writing is quite hard to acquire. Invariably, early versions of proposals from students who have that kind of mission is utter rubbish. You've got to throw the thing away virtually. Of course you can't *say* that…you have to lead them towards *seeing* it…towards seeing that empty words and rhetoric is not academic writing. It's nothing. It's empty. They need to go to the next level. They also need to problematize their own position. *Huge.* But that's it. That's the move you've got to make happen…or it'll never happen, for them. So that's the big job, to

move them to a level where they can think and engage critically…where the point of research is not simply to register your protest.

I think Ray is a natural inquirer. He's a naturally critical person who's unhappy and dissatisfied. He did Honours with us so he came *in* from a stronger position…he had at least been exposed to critical thinking and been taken down that road. Nevertheless…his first proposal was rubbish…rhetoric. However, there was an inkling…an idea that I liked. I think he's naturally inclined to scholarship…very able.

I think there's a lack of confidence. He did well in Honours…one of our top students, so I think there's some pressure to do well academically.

I'm not mentoring him into anything, I don't think. As an educator, Ray's doing stuff that's absolutely top priority…very practical, but I'm not consciously making him more promotable. I'm not introducing him to an academic life. I doubt if he'll ever leave teaching, he loves teaching. For me mentoring means deliberately grooming someone into a kind of pre-determined place, whereas I don't actually know where he's going. I don't think he does either…we'll both be surprised at the end of next year to see where he's ended up…I hope, you know.

2.2 <u>As a person</u>

Generally, a Master's student is starting from a long way away as an academic. But, at the same time Ray brings so much anyway as a rich person himself, which may not be what is normally valued as *academic* knowledge…he brings his own experience and his own gut-feel and his interest and who he is as a person.

In a way, I'm parenting him through this process, because he's opted to go into a period of growth…he doesn't just want a degree, you know…it's more than that. In any case, studying with me, he's not going to just get a degree. If I don't see evidence of development and growth we're not going to get there.

There's a suggestion of a parent-child metaphor lying around with all my students. It's quite strong with Ray, interestingly. It's less strong with others. And that's a personality thing…the kind of guy he is…with his beautiful open face. He's this wonderful man, who I think is at heart is a gentle person…and kind of easy to nurture for that reason. He invites it…he's prepared to make himself quite vulnerable, which not all students are. With some of my students I don't get terribly close and the distance is perhaps a bit bigger. But he's one of those whom I think I might get really close to as the process goes on. And we'll be good friends, I think, forever after that.

## 3 How does Howard experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing himself and Ray)

### 3.1 The vision

I like the fellow traveler metaphor quite a lot. The Master's is like a journey…full of hazards and cross-trails. I'm probably the guide…yes, I am. Up to a point. I'll be the guide, the one walking in front, finding the track and saying: 'Go with me, you better know which are the right paths and for a while I'd need to show you the way'. But there will certainly be a point soon when *he'll* be the guide, *he'll* be so far in his studies…it will have taken its shape and he'll know what to do. Because in fact after a point I *won't* know. It's not my research…it's *his*. And that's important for me. And that will get more obvious when he's crossed the really big one which is handling the data. Every student I've had has come to that point: 'Here it is, mountains of data…now what?' In a sense they forget what they're looking for, or rather, they never actually knew what they're looking for. They think they're looking for answers but in this kind of research there aren't any answers…there are almost more questions. Because they don't see any answers they get terribly worried. So I think when he's past that stage, which I expect will happen, he'll be out in front and I'll be watching him disappear!

3.2 The process

As I was saying earlier, we start off by exploring their research interests and working on rough drafts of their proposals. We meet in a group and we copy everything everyone's written in the last two weeks…ten copies…dish them out. 'Right, let's go…talk us through it. Have you read it?' 'Yes, I've read it.' 'Questions?' And then my colleague and I hold back. And the students don't ask many questions…not yet. And then later on, the group...pretty well led by my colleague and I…will begin asking really *hard* questions: 'What did you mean there?' or 'Is that a really genuine research question?' After a few group meetings we move to individual face-to-face sessions. That's when the first draft of the proposal gets handed to me.

*You* must know what courage it takes to write a proposal…to put yourself down on paper? I mean…'Can I show this to anyone?' And then…ouch …cringe while they read it. So I think Ray was very short on confidence there. Partly still the old legacy of committing…to yourself…that's *me* on paper. And it's delicate of course…a tricky area. Ray's put himself on paper…exposed himself…very vulnerable. And you know…what *is* text? *We* don't look at text as fixed in any way. I mean text is text. It's negotiable.

You've got to test it…'So *this* is what you think? *Why*? But you could think *that*, couldn't you?' But that's not a part of the tradition of the kind of education that Ray would have had excepting in the Honours year. So he fell back on what he knew…almost although he shoved the Honours year aside….aaghhh…a sort of reversal. He was struggling…struggling so *much* to work out what he was doing. He couldn't work out what it was really at the *core* and the *heart* of his study so he was using the rhetoric of politicians.

It turned out well because our next session was a breakthrough session…I'll say that …Ray is on track. I hope that he *read* more. I *did* give him a key article…I gave them all a key article. About a week or so passed and as he walked in he said: 'You know what's wrong? Our schools are waiting for someone from the outside to change things…to make things happen. It should be coming from us'. And I knew that he was through. It's amazing…that magic

moment…satisfying…it's very fine thing to see…for anyone…but in the *context* of where he comes from and where I thought he might be going…those moments are *extremely* profound. An hour later the board was filled with ideas. Wow…incredible…he walked out of here on a kind of high. So you look for *that*…sometimes it's a moment…something's happened.

I would now expect that when I see him again - and I hope I won't be disappointed - I'll see an honest grappling with a real issue. It may be quite naïve, I expect, quite unsophisticated…but it'll be a great beginning.

Ray's written a good proposal and a good proposal really is half the work. I know that Ray will lead this thing through because of the breakthrough he had in his thinking. I expect now not to have too much guidance left. When he hits his data analysis he'll probably need a workshop. And then my role will be smaller after that, more like a reader…read, comment, read, comment. Maybe a final few comments and then a final hard look. I'm a bit of a pain when it comes to that, but my students accept it graciously.

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER RELATIONS?

**4 How does Howard relate to the university / broader educational domains?**

4.1 Autonomy-dependency

The powerful structures at [this university] do not neatly fit into one pattern and so they function differently, have different expectations and affect me differently. But of course the issue is clouded by the fact that there is no university. There are only people and the structures they put in place. It's about the tension between agency and structure. Agency being individual *action*…willful action…willed action. Structure being systems that are institutionalized, structured, systemic. *There's* a tension…it's at the heart of every organization. The study of leadership and management for over a hundred years has concerned itself with that. I find the anarchic argument appealing…I base my own

management and leadership style on that…that there is actually no such thing as an organization. I mean…it's not like God made them. They're not like trees. *We* make them…*we* create structures…so that something can happen. And sometimes it's useful to have hardly any structures…otherwise the structures can get in the way of agency, quite frankly. Academic institutions are beautiful examples of that and academic departments, I mean…if you overload them with structures you've had it. You really don't want to overburden academics with too much bureaucracy. In my opinion, the only structure that makes sense is the structure that agency brings about.

### 4.2 Care: Professional-pastoral

As a supervisor, I experience the university as co-operative, helpful, supportive. Of course the issue is clouded by the fact that there is no such thing as the university. There are only people and the structures they put in place. The powerful structures at [this university] do not neatly fit into one pattern and so they function differently, have different expectations and affect me differently.

I think [this university] has tried hard to transform, to accommodate students who come from educationally impoverished backgrounds. Still a long way to go of course!

#### 4.2.1 The postgraduate forum

[no data]

### 4.3 Expectations

Naturally I supervise all sorts of students, I have to, it's part of my job. You have to produce a certain number of successful Master's candidates. That makes it sound a bit like a job…that's not really what it is for me…but I do need to say, there is an expectation that I will supervise.

Supervision is a strange domain…it's public and private. It's got to be both and to the extent to which it's private does not necessarily mean that it is therefore less public. The public side lies in the accountability and the quality control. Now supervision reports are the rule…*rule*…regulation. It's a new expectation. So there's the public side…internal auditing becomes public openness. It's a quality assurance procedure…tied into a kind of worldwide obsession and preoccupation with quality assurance. Not that I'm against it. I believe that we should look for ways of ensuring and guaranteeing quality…because there's so much crap. I read a lot of crap.

### 4.4 Time, funding, throughput and publication

As a department we're very up-front when it comes to making students aware of the time-funding issue. Time never was much of an issue but in the last 3 years we've become more aware of how important it is…and it's pure economics. Our students are almost invariably part-time students so they're expected to finish in two years…that's full subsidy. So if a Master's student earns the university R50 000, which I think is about right, you get first prize. Well done. If they go into a third year it's halved. If they go into a fourth year you lose it. If a student goes into a fourth year, that student is still taking the supervisor's time and the university's time but they're bringing b-all in…except the student fees…which is not much compared to the subsidies. Ja…there is considerably more pressure on throughput. We're all talking about cost…and how can we increase throughput.

They rate departments on how viable they are. That's the thing these days…you can't just do what you like…you've got to be quite strategic and say…well…is it worth doing? What's it bringing in and what's it taking out…and what's the sum of that?

### 4.5 Competing discourses

The guys who make big bucks are the sciences…the top earners…huge numbers… they can lecture to quite a lot of people at the same time, but also sciences are more heavily subsidized…so a science graduate earns a lot more than a humanities graduate.

The science research model is a very successful one from almost every point of view, except the one that matters most, which is 'To what extent does this research mean anything to *you* as a student? Is this *it* for you? Is this where your passion is? Is this where your heart beats?' So, with that as a basic point of departure, *if* that is your point of departure, then you'd be very reluctant to present ready-made programs of research with neatly defined areas for each student. And apart from that, it's quite difficult actually in the social and human sciences to take a big issue and break it into its parts. It's not easy to do because it's not an exact science. Well, I think we've got a lot to learn from the science model, let's not slam the thing, because actually it works. It works in the sense that it's *productive*. People get through their research and they publish. And the supervisor gets to publish as second author and sometimes first, because the postgraduate students are publishing.

The model is beginning to influence us though. Now, there's pressure on us from the NRF (National Research Foundation) to apply for rating. Everybody now needs to be a rated scientist. That's also the scientific model and the idea is that once you've got a rating, even if it's a C, you almost automatically get funding. Interestingly though, politically, the NRF came to visit Rhodes to speak to academics generally and their message was: 'This is the year of the social scientists, we really want to back you guys. So write your proposals'.

I applied for a research grant this year and I put a lot of effort into it…took me bloody weeks to prepare. It's not a lot of money, nothing like what the scientists ask for. And I deliberately learned from them, I asked them: 'How do you do it? Tell me what you do'. And they told me. So I put together my Master's students and one PhD and I looked at their fields of interest…*with* them…I didn't sit in an office and do it. *With* them, as a group. I said 'I'm applying for a grant. To get the grant, we need to kind of *prove*, that we're working on a project and that each of you is looking at one aspect of that project. 'OK?' 'Yes, yes'- they're happy with that'. 'Now let's look at your interests and see what emerges'. Not the other way around, you know. Rather, 'what are you doing and how does that make a project?' It worked like a bomb…for me. I haven't heard yet whether I've got it, but if I get

it, then Ray will probably have his fees paid for him next year. So it would be great to get it! It'll make a difference to all their lives.

So I must also say, against the argument that I've been giving, that there could be an argument for the science model…an approach where students slot into the supervisor's research. I say that because of the context we're in. South Africa in 2002 is a country in deep trouble. The education system is a shambles. It's worse than it's ever been to be truthful. Schools are dysfunctional. There's a teacher shortage of crisis proportions. And because of that context, it might actually be more appropriate for people like myself who have, I think, more of a birds eye view of the entire problem and its implications, to guide students quite strongly and say: 'Actually, this needs looking at…this is a real problem'. We don't want blue-sky research at a time like this. With our country's history we want stuff that can actually kick in there and make a difference.

I talk a lot to the hard scientists at [this university]. I tackle a lot of them on things like research, for example, and we start talking about the ethical implications of what they do, and the philosophical underpinnings. They usually don't know what I'm talking about. I think the success of the scientific model in some way links with who they *are*, who they've *chosen* to be…and they're just different people, actually.

It's still quite rare to have qualitative research be heard mentioned as highly regarded or as respectable as more positivistic or survey based stuff. In my years here I've noticed a change…very slowly though. Many hard scientists don't for a moment think that there might be another way of doing research is actually possible and perhaps valuable and va*lid*. Rather do a survey. Study a hundred people…then you produce findings that we can use. Well, the fact is, that sort of research is a lot easier to do, because it's superficial. You're just skipping over the surface. Bang, bang, bang. Answer these ten questions, tabulate the answers, present them in percentages, graphs, whatever you want to call it. Absolutely simple stuff. But you don't learn anything…you don't learn anything you didn't know.

The difficulty with qualitative research is that it's got to be read, you know. A rich case study is a marvelous thing, but you've got to read it. There's a commitment there. You can't absorb it and know it and see the implications by looking at a page with some neat graphs and therefore make certain decisions that may influence policy. It's not like that. It's a slow process of reading it, taking it in, *and* it's cumulative, because you have to look at several studies in the same area.

## 5 What is visible? (made manifest)

### 5.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

Ray has finished his proposal and it's bloody good…excellent…that breakthrough he had was just exactly right. He submitted another draft with very few problems and then the final one came in a couple of days ago…it's ready. We're sending it through to Higher Degrees.

### 5.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

It's…potentially very rewarding for both…certainly for me…It's amazing…that magic moment…satisfying…it's very fine thing to see…for anyone…but in the *context* of where he comes from and where I thought he might be going…those moments are *extremely* profound. Wow…incredible…he walked out of here on a kind of high. So you look for *that*…sometimes it's a moment…something's happened…Ray found himself.

### 5.3 What is produced in terms of the university / broader educational domains?

I talk a lot to the hard scientists at [this university]. I tackle a lot of them on things like research, for example, and we start talking about the ethical implications of what they do, and the philosophical underpinnings.

I applied for a research grant…very deliberately copying a science model, but applying it in a way that takes into account the interests of the students…who they are and what they want to do. I'm very interested to see if I am going to get my funding, because the research is all qualitative.

## 1.2 RAY

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS?

### 1. How does Ray view and construct himself as a student?

1.1 Motivations: worldview and abilities

My main motivation for doing a Master's is work-related. As an educator I'm trying to improve my own competence within my field of work and to equip myself with the theoretical knowledge for management and leadership at school level. I think I will be able to practice some of the theory I learn, so my research is also geared to finding out from a research perspective if the theoretical ideas can be applied to a setting…specifically at the school where I am at the moment. Ultimately that's why I'm *here*…to find new ways…to learn from the situation.

I don't think my intention is consciously to accumulate paper or to see myself having upward mobility. For me…it's a basis of knowledge upliftment. I'm also taking cognisance of the transitional phase of education in South Africa…there's a lot of questions, and many a time there's not so many answers. I feel I need to share my knowledge with people who are perhaps not in a position to acquire it. So in a sense I see myself as trying to disseminate my knowledge and make other people part of it…but *with* them, on an equal basis.

It's also for my own enrichment. One of the principles of the new curriculum is that we should instill in the learners to be life-long learners. It's a principle I try to instill in myself…to stay on learning.

My personal ideal is I want to be recognized as being a good educator, without necessarily occupying a power position. I would rather serve. I believe that the power lies in the

people that I want to serve. All my life that was my modus operandi…I would rather swim amongst the fish than move upstream and be solo.

### 1.1.1 Expectations

At the starting point Howard and his colleague informed us: 'These are the expectations from the department's side…to fulfill the requirements for the Master's course'.

My expectation is that from Howard I will get the necessary guidance…not necessarily to conduct the research…but to make sense of my research. Because ultimately I will be the one that does the research. So my expectation is that he will be able to say: 'OK, what *meaning* can you make out of what you have in front of you?' Meaning for myself and for my research study…to make the links…but ultimately to come up with the questions myself.

What I find very, very challenging is to find the appropriate reading material to make that justification for your research topic. I think that's part of the usefulness of a supervisor.

For me the role of a supervisor, I'd have thought, was to navigate me in the direction that he imagines and perceives that I am heading but also to allow me to move on my own.

### 1.1.2 Motivations for student-supervisor matching

I don't know if there's an incentive for Howard to supervise students. What I've sometimes seen is that certain research students will have to go about and search for a supervisor. With us, because we enroll with the Education department, everything is made possible within it. So depending on which field of study you're going to follow particular supervisors will automatically supervise those students.

We're at a level now where we've agreed - and it's based on the supervisors' suggestion - that it's time now to move from a group and work on a one-on-one basis with one of the two supervisors that we are comfortable with.

## 1.2 Care

### 1.2.1 Professional care

Howard has crystallized a lot of things for me. He was able to…I don't want to say assist…but rather *clarify* my thinking without influencing it. I see my supervision as a process of crystallization. And you know…it doesn't matter how small a crystal is…if you expose it to light, it will reflect that light…and shed out different beams…so it can show you new directions. And I expect when I get into the actual research *that* might just be the case. Knowing the person who is my supervisor, the research could take other directions.

Insecurity for me can come from…do I have the epistemological knowledge of what is expected of me? Because when you are reading conflicting theories, at times you paint yourself into a position where you think '*This* is the one I want to side with.' Then somebody else comes up with another perspective that puts you totally off. So that raises possible insecurities in me…at times it's difficult for me to make up my mind…where does it place *me* now? Knowing, if I adopt a certain position, I will need to justify it. You can't beat around the bush, especially when you're in relationship with a person…not necessarily a *power* position…but a person of authority because he sits with a broader knowledge of the issues that you want to address for the first time. I think that's also true when you have to justify why you are setting up your proposal in a certain way. If someone's going to tease you and probe: 'Why are you saying this? Can you elaborate? Where are you heading? Where does this come from? Can you substantiate?' and so on…at times that is fearful. So, yes…then I get a sense of insecurity. For me, it's based on that I might have a superficial, at this stage, grasp of the theoretical issues at play in my research.

### 1.2.2 Pastoral care

Although I'm insecure at a level of knowledge, in our interaction and in our relationship, never was I fearful of Howard as a person. He was never dominating, never taking a stance where I felt that on a personal level that he will not accept what I'm saying, or try to ridicule me, or make nonsense of my presentation or my contributions…never at all. So I've never felt threatened in the relationship. In an environment like that there is a sense of security more than insecurity.

From my experience of what's happened thus far, there's a lot that I've discovered about myself…and other people.

## 1.3 Autonomy and dependency

Howard doesn't have any hard or fast rule: 'This is what you're supposed to do'. The expectation, maybe, of many students is that you will be fed the answers. You struggle to contextualize your ideas…you can't frame them…you can't put them into a plan. With Howard it's not a situation where he puts his own ideas forward…it's the other way around…he's taking your own ideas and questioning you…he'll build on what you say and then guide you and direct your ideas towards your own question.

All along things were made clear for me, allowing me autonomy, allowing me to set my own goals and to formulate my own questions.

In all our dealings…it was humane: 'Although I am your supervisor, we're also equal. We're both learners in this process. I'm not here because I know everything'. It's not a high-handedness: 'I am the ultimate person in judgment here'. No! We work on an equal footing. His role is there to support, to scaffold what I don't know, and it's done on a human relations basis: 'We are co-learners, co-constructors of your knowledge, not necessarily my knowledge as a supervisor'.

In the group sessions, you were like floating around between your proposal and what you are hearing from other people. In the individual sessions…the second phase, it is more like: 'Keep on your toes. You are on your own. You are supposed to do this on your own. You have to become, in a sense, independent. Rely on yourself. Put things in place for yourself. Go and do prior research by yourself to develop your own position'. So you realize that you have to be disciplined…you have to develop your own set of rules, knowing your deadlines, knowing that for every follow-up appointment *this* is what you need to achieve. You know that you are accountable. Not only to yourself, but to a person that's making some sacrifices on behalf of you…who's there to support you and to scaffold you in your learning process. You need to be committed to yourself, to the process and to what you're doing…so as to show that same commitment to the person who's guiding you.

### 1.3.1 Depending on students

There were benefits within the group, because we were able to complement each other's thinking…if I had an idea, I could rely on my peers to feed my ideas, and even question my ideas and stimulate my thinking…so it was useful to start generating my own ideas and to come up with an initial proposal.

They didn't plan this course, first, and we approached them and asked them to start a Masters course and they said OK…after consideration, they're prepared to do it…on the understanding that it's going to be a full thesis. Okay, because their normal intake is only next year. So they concede and we concede and we proceed.

**2. How does Ray view and position (construct) Howard?**

2.1 As a supervisor

I think Howard must have some sort of philosophy himself and from what I can gauge, it's more or less the same kind as mine…one of life long learning.

I think one advantage is that he's coming from the same place as me. Because at one time or another he was an educator, moving through the ranks…had similar experiences, probably had similar questions.
I think he understands that students will end up doing the things they do…like going off at a tangent when you're reading the literature. Maybe he draws on his own experience…that was the route that he probably also followed…so he could identify with it and not see it as a fault.

He's a person of authority in the sense that he knows his field. He sits with a lot of knowledge.

He sets a platform of equality. We are equal when it comes to the learning process although our contributions may differ, based on our levels of knowledge and experience.

2.2 As a person

His *nature* is so…humane.

He's not somebody who dominates or imposes his ideas on you.

I feel comfortable because although he has titles behind his name, he's a down to earth type of person …there's no airy-fairy stuff with him. And he's very straightforward.

Our styles, maybe complement each other…he's the kind of person I can work *with*.

## 3. How does Ray experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing himself and Howard)

### 3.1 The vision

I'm seeing my whole topic as an iceberg. I need to be aware that what I see may not be the whole thing…I will have to go deep and have a thorough investigation and be as open as possible to whatever is out there…to know the magnitude of the question I am going to research. With an iceberg you only see what you see and you think you see everything. The research process for me…I see myself as being at the start…like an explorer…sailing around that iceberg. Also, it's the beginning of the end of a journey that I've set myself out on…a journey of life long learning. If you go on a journey, it's not always smooth sailing. There's ups and downs…there were times initially that I wondered whether I am at the right place…should I continue with this research? Am I ready for this? Am I equipped for this? With Howard as my fellow traveler, it seems that we were able to negotiate an understanding that we are there to assist one another. He appreciates where I am at because he was there…he came through the same process and understands my fears and trepidations. I think the hard days still lie ahead…when I need to go and do my own data gathering, try to make sense of it, start writing up…that's when I will be able to see whether this route I am taking, this journey, is for me and if it is working. Gauging from the initial stages, if things unfold as they are now…then hopefully yes…I'll get through.

### 1.2.1 The process

When we were still in a very, very early stage we started by meeting as a group…the other students and Howard and his colleague…and we started to brainstorm. What is it that we want as students? What is our field of interest that we want to research? My trend was that I'm doing this research because I feel people are looking for answers as to why implementation of curriculum 2005 is failing in schools. So I am asking myself…shouldn't we look for solutions within the school? What's the role of leadership? Can't they make it happen and see that it's being implemented successfully? And Howard said when a student speaks like that, it suggests that they already have all the

answers, so why go and do research? And if that's the case, then he normally tells them: 'You don't need to do *research*…go and write a book!' OK. So, although I…to put it strongly…I felt kak (shit) at the time, it made sense afterwards. I went home to think about it…then…OK…it's *truth* in what he's saying. OK. So I accepted it as valid criticism, because research is supposed to answer the things for you. You don't have preconceived answers to it. Although afterwards I went back to him and said: 'Look, you need to have *some* of your own prejudice that you will take into the research. I have experience of what is happening in schools and this is my understanding of what needs to happen. So I'm not entirely accepting what you're saying, but I accept the criticism…that I need to have an open mind…but I *can't* say that I'm not coming from *some*where. I have *some* perspective that I feel I can justify'. I think the criticism was done within the context of the academic question. It was not levelled as a personal thing, so that made it acceptable. It's constructive and you can almost identify…although you feel a little bit embarrassed.

Also in the group meetings, they were able to guide us in our literature search. I can't be rigid. I don't have a system. As a person I'm very much unorganized…especially when it comes to study…I can't focus on one thing. That's maybe a drawback. I will read different things, and without the necessary, predetermined purpose…I will just go on and on. If for instance I want something on instructional leadership, I will start off with that, but ultimately I will end up doing other stuff. Because, when I read, and hear something, I'll *think* this relates to what I want and in the end I'll be *far* removed from my focus. Howard's approach is 'It's fine…it's natural …it's OK to be like that…you can do it, but keep in mind that sometime or other you need to come back…don't linger too much on the outside'. It didn't feel like he was putting pressure on me. More specifically, he was able to tell me: 'Look, this reading will suit your intentions so go and read up on this person and include it in the proposal'. Also useful was his suggestion that it's a good idea to try to narrow down your theoretical reading, because the other readings will come afterwards when you do the real research. 'First get your specifics right, then you can start fanning out'.

I think the group environment was beneficial, but the supervisors were not able to guide you on the quality of your work because it's a broad forum and they need to apply their minds to different people at the same time. Maybe at that level they didn't necessarily pick up the shortcomings within my proposal. It's only when I met with Howard on an individual basis that I was able to rely on his guidance more specifically…get the real niche in my research field…narrow it down. He could put more input into *my* research proposal…draw my attention its shortcomings…guide me and say: 'Look, your proposal is too broad and the people who are going to finally assess your proposal are going to ask *this* kind of question, and they want to see *that* reflected in your proposal. You've got three positions here…what is it that you want to do?' Then he'll tease the thing out of me…he writes the ideas down on the board…he puts up a frame to help you contextualise them.

And he'll say: 'It's not just writing for writing's sake, you need to have an argument. Reflect on what you are doing. What is it that you are challenging? What is it that you want to unearth? And s*ay* why you want to address these things. And don't just take a quote for a quote's sake or a book for a book's sake…come up with the reasons why you are doing these things'. That for me was insightful…his role is indispensable when it comes to that.

When I take my proposal…where it started off, and where it is now…I know what is it that is expected of me…what a proposal should entail, where to start from and where you need to move towards. But now I am alone…trying to put something together and I realized that I'm not sure. Eventually I had something on paper and went to him for supervision. I didn't know what to expect…one is never certain when you hand in something…there's always trepidation. Am I on the right track? What will be the comments? Well, his first comment was that it seems that I've hit the road now. He can see a clear direction as to where I'm heading and that was perfect…although I still don't know *if* I'm heading in the right direction! There's still this uncertainty because I don't think I have an entirely in-depth understanding that 'OK, this is it!' Anyway, we worked through the proposal…looking at nitty-grittys…and he shed more light on things… and on

what's still missing. He suggested useful recommendations as to how I should fine-tune it…get a nice smooth link running through the argument and up to my research question. In this session I think there was more positive feedback than what I've become used to from Howard…the cut and dry criticism, although constructive. And when I walked out, there was a sense of achievement…that I've almost accomplished the final product. Yes, a sense of accomplishment.

So I'm thinking now about the next stage…planning how I will collect my data. Luckily I only have to complete the Master's over two years, so I still have time…I can follow more than one route to get to my sample.

We must accept that I'm only a novice researcher at the start-up phase. I'm sure if you interviewed me at a later stage I might put another picture together of the situation

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER RELATIONS?

**4 How does Ray relate to the university and broader educational domains?**

I think that my research is focusing on something of great magnitude, because it's a national issue…it's in the interests of the country…of everybody…education relates to everybody, irrespective of who you are.

4.1 Autonomy-dependency

Our department was given their own Higher Degrees Committee. So I can say…there's a hell of a lot of autonomy…you've got your own voice, you can do things the way you want to do it…as long as you remember that there needs to be a standard that you need to accomplish. So there's room to move…it's not a very rigid type of process and situation.

My sessions with Howard opened a window into the evolvement of management theory. In the past people were confined to a world where they put procedures, structures and systems in place and then everything runs on those. But because organizations don't have to do with machines and commodities…it involves actual people…there's a new call for recognition of the lives…of lived systems…meaning that you need to take cognizance of the people…what they feel, what's their expectations, their need, the relationships. It's about turning the thing around and saying: 'You're the people, you're in the situation. What do you think your own procedures should be? Work them out for yourselves and even if you *do* have structures, don't feel confined to the structure. If you need to work outside the perimeter of the structure, surely feel free…if, *if* it stays within the vision and the direction of the organization. As long as you can *account* for what you are doing'. Allow people the opportunity to take risks so that they themselves can become empowered and capacitated and ultimately make the systems and procedures work for *them*.

I am free to do the research the way I want to do it…so as a student my autonomy is guaranteed and safeguarded. The university does not have power over you…it has power as far as its own academic standards are concerned, but your own ideas and thinking is entirely up to you. You have your own voice…if you have a story to tell, tell it.

4.2 Care: Professional-Pastoral

When you asked me to construct a metaphor about my relationship with the university, I had difficulty coming up with anything tangible…because my only interaction with the department and the university is Howard…so I can only talk about my interaction with him. As students, our support is confined to the supervisors…and we can see them at any time.

It's not always practical for us to make use of the department's facilities…the computer lab and the library…because we're teaching in normal hours, so we asked: 'What's the possibility that you provide us with keys so that we can come into the department after

hours and use the lab and library facilities?' They said they'd look at that and see if it's possible, but up to now we haven't had any feedback.

### 4.2.1 The postgraduate forum

This is the first time that I hear about that.

## 4.3 Expectations

There is this booklet of the University...the Higher Degrees Guide and that sets out all the things that you need to think about. The university sets its own standards and its own requirements…it's got to be there. It's like driving in the street…if there's no stop signs, there's sure to be chaos…so you need gatekeepers to set some standards.

## 4.4 Time, funding, throughput and publication

We all know that [this university] has it's own traditions and it's not keen on shedding its roots…or allowing new voices. And I think [it] is making a great fuss about it's standards *etc. etc.* and it's own level as a research institution. There are people here with gray beards and gray hair with their own perceptions and positions about what research is…and it's entrenched in tradition. They have their own expectations as to what will make a good research proposal. Ultimately you need to design your proposal so the research will sell…in terms of publication or putting the university on the map.

You only have to open up a newspaper nowadays to see how the acquiring of a certificate is attached to material gain…how it can open up doors for you…how it can improve your life…so it's very much commercial. It's about making money. Many institutions, when they advertise a Master's degree…in the end it's attached to how many fees they can extract from a student and how much funding they can get and that is not always directed towards the student… sometimes it's more for the well-being of the institution.

4.5 Competing discourses

As a student activist…I'm coming from the era of the 80's…when education has been in turmoil. There have been running battles between state and students at that time. And my research now is based on that. The ideal *then* was that you want total transformation…it seems that the direction that we're taking now is not the direction that was demanded then. So I wanted to do research to see if the demands put forward when it was still during the days of the so called struggle are the same. I sit with that bias: 'This is the so-called perfect world that we were fighting for. Is it being realized? What are we doing? Are we moving towards that? How has it unfolded? Has it been addressed with all this educational and societal change that has been taking place?'

## 5 What is visible? (made manifest)

5.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

Gauging from the initial stages, if things unfold as they are now…then hopefully yes…I'll get through.

5.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

For me, the whole process is a process of empowerment…I gain from the readings and from the insights that Howard shares with me. There's a lot that I've discovered about myself and other people. It's almost as if I'm on a daily journey of research because the things that I read and the insights that Howard shares with me…I can apply to my work experience. Likewise, I can take my work experience to supervision sessions and relate it.

5.3 What is produced in terms of the university / broader educational domains?

My thinking on educational management been very much influenced by this process…and not only at the workplace level. I'm serving as an office bearer in the trade union movement and on a regular basis we interact with the Department of Education, so I feel that in a sense I'm empowered to engage departmental officials and say: 'If we look at educational leadership, these are the kinds of things that we need to do…this is how you need to interact with educators…with schools. If we say that we want to turn education around and address our past…our legacy of problems…this is the way to go'.

## 1.3 LUNA

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS?

### 1 How does Luna see and construct herself as a supervisor?

#### 1.1 Motivations: worldview and abilities

Being a supervisor and doing research is not purely my job…it's about who I am and what I'm interested in. I love doing research. I'm an organizational development person…a person who wants to make a difference, to analyze things and get it into action. I'm not a person who is into a particular theory necessarily, I'm a methodologist, so supervision brings me into contact with lots of areas that I would not normally get involved in and I like that wide spread. It's all about the conquest of the learning and seeing certain students grow. If a student has never been trained in thinking analytically…and they then learn to do it, that gives me a lot of satisfaction. In a teaching environment where you sit in a class or you have seminars you don't get that much back, but even when supervising students who are performing poorly…they still bring something…you always get things back. There are always new challenges and I just love making sense out of research: What do you put in the Literature review? How do you use that? What method do you use that fits? What do you use to bring the things out of it? I'm very excited about research…to have those things that go 'Wow!'…things that jump out at you as you analyze…it's just so wonderful.

##### 1.1.1 Expectations

I'm like one of those old fashioned academics…I'm the supervisor and then there's the student who wants to work with me and then we just work. I don't talk about expectations…about any of the things in the book [the Higher Degrees Guide]. I'm coming from this old fashioned school that an academic place is a place where adults

come together and they want to learn. I'm not particularly proud of it. I'm not saying it has to be like that, I'm just saying that this is how I am. And I've tried in certain situations to put rules down, but it's not me. I think I'm too busy or I'm doing too many things to do any of them really punctually, according to the rules and the regulations. The intellectual pursuit for me is everything and just being with the people and just working around it…and then everybody must just work hard and get there.

You don't get much back from students…except for the intellectual stimulus. They won't tell you how you're doing…the last thing they want is that you're badly disposed towards them. I haven't had students who have been grateful…we never get a thank you or anything much. We put in a lot of effort and they just go. I suppose it is my task, but I *do* think I go beyond the call of duty, often.

### 1.1.2 Motivations for supervisor-student matching

I don't think I'd choose to supervise as many students as I do. I'm supervising projects because I'm a nice person or because they've asked me to…but one, I'm not really their choice and two, it's not my area…they're just stuck. So those things are not very enjoyable. It's actually a mistake to supervise a student because they can't find another person.

With Nadia there was a shortage of supervisors…or at least people with a good grasp of methodology and developing the proposal and things like that…so there was nobody else to supervise her. I think that if Peter was there at the beginning of her research then she would have gone with him. Now Nadia is with Peter *and* with me, but before then I had put a lot of effort in, so I also want to be acknowledged…this is the game in the academic world.

If a student is doing a Master's by thesis only…we could just refuse them if we don't have anybody who wants to do that topic. But when we take students into a coursework Master's it's more difficult. You can push them into a research that you want to do, but if

they're not happy about it they can't just leave, so then they do a thesis that they don't like doing, which is not very nice. You have to be passionate about your research…for the method or the content…but something enjoyable has to be there.

Another thing is the thesis as such, I much prefer supervising when we do consulting work, because that leads to something.

And another thing, I don't think that you should supervise people with whom you don't really get on…but sometimes you don't know that from the beginning. The relationship and the content all needs to be connected for that exciting research endeavour to happen. If you supervise a student that you don't have that much…not even in *common* with…rather, that much to *talk* about with, plus the topic is not really in your field, then you kind of get into your role as academic supervisor and you just do the things that you have to do.

## 1.2 Care

### 1.2.1 Professional care

When I think of supervising I think of having somebody to mentor. I like the idea of mentoring. When I lecture I don't feel worthwhile at all, I just think I'm wasting my time and they're wasting theirs. There's no sharing. I think the system does not understand that supervision involves personal relationships…they just think it's forms and rules and regulations, but it doesn't work like that. I really don't think that you can keep the professional part separate from the personal…things are contextualised. I want to prepare my students for life and life is not separate. When they go with me on client consultations, it's about how they look at me…how I move my hands and my feet…and when and how I say things…that's what research is about.

### 1.2.2 Pastoral care

I think of *all* my students as my children. Supervision is like bringing up a child in a way…when you see your own children growing…it's exciting…so that makes me feel a bit worthwhile. Sometimes students will come and talk to me and I have a kind of counselling session with them. But where does it stop being a supervisor? With some people you just connect and it's easier…with other people it becomes a task…then I call it 'counselling', otherwise I would just say 'be friendly'…just sit together or go and have a drink together. Instead of ordinary human interaction, everything has become a task. That pastoral help comes up all the time and I'm afraid I don't think I'm patient. I think students really are not very strong, personally, they can't make an effort, they can't just push when they need to…they just whine and I just haven't the time for this. When I think of what I have to do in one day and the responsibilities that I have to juggle…internally, I get very frustrated with them. I know you can have boyfriend troubles and you can have this and that, but life is still there. They are 24 and 25 years old…what are they going to do the next year when they're in the real world?

## 1.3 Autonomy-dependency

My Master's students are afraid of me…apparently they all are in the department! I don't know why, but anyway…they say I'm very strict…although I think I'm very lenient. I think I'm bad in that I don't really set deadlines for them. I might sit with them and say: 'Lets make a year plan', but then I don't enforce it, because I'm so busy I don't think of it. When it comes to handing in the proposal…I usually work with them very closely, because there's that deadline, but then after that they just work and I wait until they come to me with something. And when I happen to look and see that she or he hasn't come with their work, I think 'let me just find out what's happening'. If they don't hand in I say: 'Well, it's up to you, if you don't finish it's not my problem'. I feel I'm like a resource ….I can offer people to come to me, but if they don't want it then that's fine as well. I put a lot of responsibility on them.

I think I see students as more mature than they are…I don't give enough credit for their youth or their inexperience. And I also think that they think of me as being much more the expert than I think of myself. They think I can just do it, that I know every single thing. Sometimes I say to them: 'You can do it this way or that way, lets *try* one of the two and see if it works out'. And they look at me like '*No*…we are not just *trying* the things out, you have to tell me what the right way is'…and I don't know either because something may be right according to the whole context! Students think you've always got things under control…they see you in a particular light that is very different from how I see myself. But we are also very insecure about lots of things…it might not be about how to do research. There might be other insecurities…like stereotypes…if you're not a woman you can't do your research on women, if you're not black you don't understand black people. If I think that the student may have that perception, it influences me, and then I go very much like: 'Don't you want to do this? Are you sure about that?' and then they get confused: 'What is she saying? Does she not want me?' The combination of being quite confident about certain things and being insecure about others is very confusing for the student.

When I give feedback to them I would rather do it in the form of asking them questions…problem posing…so that *they* can do it: 'What is it that you want to say? What do you want to talk about?'. But again I feel that it will take too much of my time, so I actually tell them how I think it should be, which I don't think is right. I think, rather than sitting with them for three hours, I should sit with them for *six hours*!…and pose questions. They'll eventually come to the realization of doing the structure. I think technical things like how you write about a sample…that needs to be told…but to come up with the structure or the logical argument…I think I should sit more and discuss more with them, rather than just giving them what I think is right. They would probably learn more if you do the problem posing than if you do it the way I do.

Some people ask for too much direction and others don't want to take the kind of things you say. I don't usually make comments about the content because that's what the student wants to say and you have to respect that, but I do make very strong comments about

structure and logic and how you build up your argument. They sometimes say…I mean you *hear* what they say about you…that I impose too much my way of doing things on them…that I say is has to be like *this* or like *that*…that I'm very forceful, that I push things in certain directions. Maybe at a certain point I do. Some people like it and others don't. So I think I'm not containing and not structuring enough on the one hand…but then maybe I'm a bit too forceful with how I see the research.

### 1.3.1 Depending on students

It takes a long time and a lot of effort to do your own research, so in fact by supervising students, you are doing more research than what you would be able to do yourself.

## 2 How does Luna view and position (construct) Nadia?

### 2.1 As a student

She's terrified of me…and it's difficult to work with someone who's afraid of you.

Students see you in a particular light, which is very different from how I see myself.

Nadia is in a critical paradigm and I think I *do* know what her methodology entails. She thinks I *don't* know what it is about, so any comment I make…well…'It's because she doesn't know that methodology'. She thinks I'm wrong. And then it's very difficult to give feedback to her.

Everything around her is tense…she does not relax and when she's tense she can't think clearly and any comment you make it's this *huge* thing and then it's all going to *collapse*.

Nadia does not allow me access into what she's doing.

2.2 As a person

(Sigh) In a way I'm quite fond of her.

She's so tense.

She's sick all the time.

**3 How does Luna experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing herself and Nadia)**

3.1 The vision

Basically for me this particular supervision is best described by a feeling of frustration. That's how the whole experience has been for me. With Nadia it's all tasks and tasks that are kind of awkward. Fulfilling tasks is onerous, but doing things is fun. Her topic I'm sure I could be very interested in…I'm doing things with other students in similar areas…and I like her methodology. But students can actually keep you away. You have to talk about how you collected the data, how participants interacted with you, what you found out…the contextualization of the data gives you so much *more*. You have to have a *feel* of the research…not just what's written there, because that's cold and that doesn't always give you a full picture…and then I can't help with the interpretation of the data, and *feeling* if it gels. I read it to see that it hangs together logically and all of those things…but that sharing is not there…I'm not connected. You see, I'm like the police.

3.2 The process

I like critique in a positive way…I would love students to be confrontational. With Nadia, I would say: 'I don't like this or that' and then she would say: 'Well, if you don't like that, then I'll do something else'…instead of discussing. If she had to say: 'I think it might be better this way'…then immediately I would go into: 'OK, let's try it' or 'I think it might

be difficult because of *this*, but try *that'*. But it is very difficult when a student is afraid of me and I think 'Why?' Because I'm straightforward…I just tell them. But she takes it as a veto: 'OK, we're not going to do that'. That's it! Finished!

It's very difficult to critique in a situation where, for instance, you make a few comments about the literature review and Nadia's thinking…you can just *see* it happening…'This is going to take another two months…I'm not going to be ready' and then she gets sick. She's sick all the time. Nadia will come and she will cry and cry again and then not come and see me for three days…trying to avoid me, or being sick and not telling me that she is sick. So I don't know. And then she gets defensive, and then it's like: 'Ja, but it's because this is how the methodologists in my discourse do it'.

So when Peter joined the department I said: 'Let's show your work to Peter', and in fact he had quite similar comments to me…so from that point of view, I feel quite secure. And then I heard via-via, that she actually would like him to be her supervisor. So eventually I went to her and I said: 'Nadia, would you like Peter to be your supervisor as he's doing so much work with you?' *I* had to go and say it. Why did *she* not come to me and say: 'I'd like Peter to be my supervisor'? Because she's afraid of me and it doesn't work if someone's afraid of you. And then she said 'Yes', so I went to the Dean and I had the things changed…now there's co-supervision. And I said to her: 'Fine, you work with Peter, but I'd like to see each part when it's done so that I can see that I'm happy with it, because I'm still a supervisor…I still have responsibility over it'. But I don't think I'll have much input anymore. I think if you feel that, you must just let go…not get into acrimonious situations, or impose your power or your structure.

Nadia came in here one time and got very upset. She told me personal things and ever since that time I have not seen her either, so I think she thought that maybe she'd overstepped something. I didn't ask for it, it just came. And it came at a bad time, because I was not feeling great either, I was feeling quite sick and tired, but I listened. And now she probably thinks that that stands between us as well. So a kind of distance has been created. I must say, I get frustrated…instead of ordinary human interaction,

everything has become a task. The excitement of doing research and doing of it together does not work out if the other person does not feel the same way as you.

And I hate whining…that kind of 'I'm suffering' business…because that's also a strategy…to get what you want. I think strategies must be like this [*a straightforward gesture*], not like this [*a roundabout gesture*]…because I'm not going to say 'OK come on…' You've got to actually *tell* me. Like right now, I don't know what she's doing. She's down the corridor but she avoids me. She hasn't talked to me for two or three weeks. So what do I do? Do I let go, because I don't want to impose? Do I go and ask, because I don't want to show that I'm not interested? I want to be there if I need to be there, but I don't *know* if I need to be there. I can say: 'Look Nadia, by tomorrow I need to see what you've got'. Or I could say: 'You haven't come for a long time, maybe you should go to someone else'. From an authority point of view I can do that, but it's not me! I mean, I've always done my supervisions the way I've done them. And I know that if I would have been a more administratively sound supervisor, I would have made all those plans. So that has really shown that there *is* a need for that administrative aspect of being a supervisor. I can't start doing it now, because that's not the relationship we had.

Why this supervision relationship is a disaster and others are not? It's not about the topic. It's basically about the relationship. And how does that relationship come about? I don't know. And how it's going to work out? The proposal's approved but as I said, right now I don't know what is happening or where I stand. When I think it's time I'll check and see what's happening…and then I'll just take it from there. I think I'm going to get a wad of text and then read it? I don't know.

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER RELATIONS?

**4 How does Luna relate to the university / broader educational domains?**

I feel that I identify with the students…I don't feel like I'm part of the system. It's not fighting the system…it's just that the student and I have to somehow get through it. It's

like the two of us holding hands and there's this jungle gym…you have to go up and down and round about and then at the end the thesis is waiting…and we've gone through the system!

I always want to make the link with the outside world…tell students that the university system is there, but it's not really that important…it's much more important to think about things in a way that they'll be able to use it when they go out in the world…and do research in that way. Like when they collect data…and all the dynamics of collecting data and meeting with people, and who are you as a man or woman, as a black or white person...that's the kind of things I talk about.

4.1 Autonomy-dependency

Academics are extremely free…I can basically do whatever I like…almost. That's one of the nice things of being there Nobody really stands in my way…not at the university. If I want to go out and do some consulting…if I want to set up a research center…if I want to change my course…I can. If something bad happens, well then you're in trouble…your organization doesn't stand behind you maybe, in the same way as a business would.

4.2 Care: Professional-pastoral

If I would have a problem about something…I go to my Head of Department…he's always very supportive. He's a very good administrator and he knows all those little rules. Administration is just one of those things I don't like doing and I think there's an understanding that this is the kind of support he will give me. And if he can't decide on something, then I can go straight to the Vice-Chancellor…you can just talk to him as a person. Some people are afraid of the hierarchy…I'm not really afraid of anybody.

### 4.2.1 The postgraduate forum

[no data]

## 4.3 Expectations

I have read the Higher Degrees Guidebook, but I don't know anything about it. There have to be *some* rules and regulations and procedures. Basically that's what the system does. It just gives you certain rules and actually not much work needs to happen to have your proposal accepted. After that there's a certain set of rules of when you submit your thesis and that's all I know.

I'm an organizational animal but not an institutional animal…institutions drive me a bit nuts…especially if it's kind of conservative. I've got my own values and norms and things…I'm a very chaotic, holistic type of person…although everybody here in the department thinks I'm very organized and organizational. If you want to make it in the university you have to play the game…if you play the game you will get promotion, you will get money…all those sorts of things. It depends what kind of person you are. If you don't want to play the game…you're never going to go up there. I mean, they're not very flexible. It's an old-man game…that's about all I can say about it!

## 4.4 Time, funding, throughput and publication

This business about publication...it's all a whole lot of rubbish. There's so much repetition…I like most of my papers to be completely new and it takes me months. I write two or three at the most. Why would I write more? For what and for whom? But even publication doesn't matter here…it depends on whether you're part of the club or not…so however hard you work…there's always another criteria. It's very much like that. I mean even if I published like mad, I'm just not the right person so it tells you, don't even try. Then you start doing what you like doing. I've just always done my own thing and not played the part. All these games…they just take so much of one's time…it's about doing research and doing exciting things, to me. Also, with a students' Master's thesis, I could

never presume that they should ask me to be their second author. If they offer, that's nice…people must just do what they want to do.

When I raise funding for projects, it's for my students…I get money for my *students*. So they can't complain there. I pay those students to be here. They get opportunity to be involved in research. I continuously convey the message: 'Look, there's opportunities here, grab it, let's do things *together'*.

If a really exciting research comes up…why not leave your thesis and wait and get going on that? A university is about opportunities to learn, it's not about marks and handing in essays. It's just a place to be and if you only have two months to finish off your thesis and you get seventy percent rather than seventy-five percent, I don't think that makes the slightest difference. At the end of the day I have to make sure that the thesis is passed…but no one's going to ask: "Did you get seventy or seventy-four percent?" They're going to say: 'Oh this person has been involved in this and that project…isn't *that* interesting'.

## 4.5 Competing discourses

If a student comes to me, I don't see the dollars on their face: 'Oh that one's a heavily funded one, let me put more effort into them'.

I'm a person who wants to make a difference, to analyze things and get it into action. Some topics I don't find interesting and then I sometimes say: 'So *what*?' I mean it's a bit cruel to say, but like…we've *got* that information. And it's not necessarily bad, but sometimes it can become a little bit wallowing…it's obviously *their* issue…so they're researching their own problem. And I think up to a certain point we all do things that relate to ourselves but sometimes it can get a little bit too much. Some research topics are very self-referent…like virginity, and *this* and *that*, and how do I *feel* about it…and then they want to *talk* about it…it's a completely different style. In fact people and their styles of research go together.

These days there's another change in paradigm…it was from positivism to postmodernism and now there's this whole new narrative approach…to talk and to contextualize. But when you write an academic report you somehow need to do the very Western way, which is to where you look for categories and underlying structures…that's the way I structure my research. For instance we have project meetings and people want to sit and say for a whole hour how they *feel* about things…and that's fine, that's another paradigm. And I say: 'OK, what kind of data did we find here? How can we categorize it? Shall we talk about this one or that one?' Then they say I'm old fashioned…now we do the critical approach and if you're not in that paradigm you can't tell us what to do because you don't know about these things. It's quite interesting actually, I quite like the challenge…because to what extent is there an underlying logic that all research needs to have? I'm working very hard on those new paradigms and those new ways of writing-up. For instance some people write up in the form of a play. Also, the traditional way is to say: '*It is* described'…rather than saying: '*I* have described' That '*I*' has not been acceptable for a long time and it is getting acceptable. And then there's the whole thing about gender. I write 'she'…with a note in the beginning to say what I'm doing. All these things…do I accept them or not? I also have to consider that when I submit the thesis for examining, I want that person to pass. So if I know it's going to cause a problem, I'd rather they'd change it.

## 5 What is visible? (made manifest)

### 5.1 <u>What is produced in terms of the thesis?</u>

The proposal's approved but as I said, right now I don't know what is happening. When I think it's time, I'll check and see what's happening…and then I'll just take it from there. I think I'm going to get a wad of text and then read it? I don't know.

5.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

I don't know where I stand. Frustration…that's how the whole experience has been for me.

5.3 What is produced in terms of the university / broader educational domains?

Nowadays ninety percent of our students work in postmodern paradigms. I'm working very hard on those new paradigms and those new ways of writing-up. I also have to consider that when I submit the thesis for examining, I want that person to pass. So I think, maybe students see it as us just wanting it our way, but it's not just us. If I would be the only marker I probably would accept some things more easily than when I know somebody else will be marking it. But if I know it's going to cause a problem, I'd rather they'd change it.

## 1.4 NADIA

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS?

### 1 How does Nadia see and construct herself as a student?

1.1 Motivations: worldview and abilities

Research sounded like something that would interest me because I'm very interested in academic and theoretical things. I'd quite like eventually, to just write around particular issues and publish…perhaps work as an academic. It didn't strike me at first that the course I registered for would be *applied* research and that it would be so different from theoretical stuff. I realize *now* that commercial research is not for me…unless there's some sort of developmental outcome that benefits people in a humanitarian way.

I've always been interested in anthropological perspectives, context based things and socio-cultural approaches…and particularly in the mediation of knowledge. I am also interested in health research. So I found a way of bringing these together using a critical paradigm. I can honestly say, I'm not highly passionate about my topic…but I am about my methodology! We know that the biological and the social frames us, but we don't always apply that in terms of how we can help people or intervene. This position takes into account the historical, the social and how that constructs something.

Partly why I find my critical paradigm appealing is because I've always been the type of person who looks at underlying levels…not just at the surface of the things. I'm confronted all the time by my own identity and by issues like HIV/Aids. Working with this methodology is like deconstructing who I am as a person…not just in a broad social macro-identity, but in terms of traits or things I do. I think my critical methodology is very…I'm trying to find the right word…tolerant…in way and in *that* sense it really draws me in. It makes a lot of sense to me. In a way it's representative of my spirituality…not my religion…but my personal spirituality. At one time I questioned: 'If I

separate spirituality from religion, is it contradicting or confronting my religion?' And *that* was scary! I thought: 'Am I shattering my own beliefs? and so then 'Who am I?' But in the end, my methodology just made my religion clearer…who I am, and the way that I want to practice my spiritually…with compassion. It helps me to question how I see the world, and how I live in it. I still choose my religion, but with a new sense of clarity…which is quite inspiring actually. Ja…it's something I resonate with…in a way it's *who I am* as a person. It comes intuitively to me. I'm not trying to just latch onto something the way some people latch onto postmodernism or 'I'm a humanist' or 'I'm a social worker' or whatever. I think my critical methodology has helped me see that you *cannot* latch onto things. It's about looking at things in a different way…not assuming…not taking beliefs for granted.

### 1.1.1 Expectations

I think the main thing that I expect of myself is to work hard and I think also to pay attention to the criticism or critique…because I think it's useful, it's valuable. And to try and stay motivated…it's very difficult to stay motivated.

From the supervisor, I expect support. Support is a big thing. More than anything, more even than expertise. I think support comes first…which I felt a big lack of this year. Then the second most important thing is expertise in the methodology and then third, an interest in the topic.

Subconsciously there was also the security in this location, which I realized a year later…that being in an academic environment is secure as opposed to going out in the working world and being on your own.

I expect some sort of mutual respect.

I think in a professional role as a supervisor you shouldn't take things personally. If the students criticize anything about the Master's course Luna takes it very personally. She's

very tied in with the course…she's given it a lot and I think she feels unappreciated a lot of the time. But so do the students, because we are also working as interns and at the end of the day we're not getting paid much and we're not getting a thank you or anything like that.

### 1.1.2 Motivations for supervisor-student matching

There was no choice really. All of us were being supervised by Luna initially…there really was no one else. And she kind of asked: 'Is that fine?' but there wasn't any one else you *could've* asked, so you just said: 'Yes' and that was that. Her expertise is in another methodological approach. Everyone was using it excepting for me and she kept on asking me if I didn't want to use it, too. I think she felt safer with that as well, but I couldn't agree to it. I am very interested in my methodology, very passionate about it. It was a bit difficult, but we settled on working together.

There are conflicting roles between being a Master's student and an intern and Luna's role as our intern supervisor as well as our Master's supervisor…that comes into play as well.

About a month ago Peter agreed to be my co-supervisor. Changing supervisors was more of a personal matter. I would have preferred him to be my main supervisor…it gets very complicated with one person saying: 'Do this' and the other person saying: 'Do that'.

## 1.2 Care

### 1.2.1 Professional care

I can see Luna's perspective on things, but she'd always put *down* my methodology in supervision. It became evident very slowly…it wasn't direct…just little things coming through. It upsets me a lot, because I try to maintain a passion and she isn't helping me. Obviously there are valid limitations of every methodology, but I've chosen this methodology…I've got to live with it. I think, being much younger, I haven't yet

formulated such strong views about any particular paradigm. Yes, I love this paradigm, but I'm willing…and fairly open to other paradigms as well.

There was not only the lack of support, but there was no motivation…she's not interested in my topic. I think my project made her feel uneasy, because it has to do with culture and race and ethnic group and all these sorts of things that she doesn't like.

Luna never offered me encouragement like: 'I'm interested in this' or 'How about finding out about that…it might be useful for your project'

### 1.2.2 Pastoral care

Emotionally it's been hard sometimes. At the beginning of the year we all got the cold shoulder for a week…with Luna walking around very angry and stroppy. And we'd sit there, all of us…like…'Where do we start?' I've only just realized it now actually, it's been like a mother thing…which is why she probably gets very upset about any sort of negative thing said about her or about the course. It's very much like a parent-child relationship that we have with her.

In the department, the lack of personal boundaries compromises a lot of our relationships. You don't trust other students because they're close to Luna, yet they're such lovely people…I know there are privileged relationships in the department and there are others who are obviously not within that circle. And you think: 'If I tell them this, are they going to tell Luna? You've got to think twice and you shouldn't have to do that.

I think the downfall of our relationship was that it became very personal.

## 1.3 Autonomy-dependency

Luna's ideas are imposed *on you*…it's almost as if, while you feel like you're being given a choice, you're actually *not* being given a choice. At Master's level you are clear about

your ideas…you may not have the expertise and you may not know a lot…but you are clear about what you want to say. I think all of us have done a lot of reading on our topics and we *do* know basics of our topics and our concepts…and yes, there can be debates, but it becomes frustrating when there's constantly an issue…for instance around the concept of culture.

Last year we were almost like her colleagues and she would ask us: 'What should we do about the course? How would we like the structure?' We grew very used to that collaborative approach, but this year it became very different. It became top-down…we were told to do this, told to do that…which is very different. And all of us had a problem with that. We had huge issues with it. And there's still that problem now.

I feel respect for my elders and for supervisors and that's how I treated our meetings.

1.3.1 Depending on students

The way the organization has been set up…its mission…is to bridge the gap between the academic environment and the workplace and to use our expertise to fuel work and get money into the academic environment.

I went to share with another student of Luna's who was also having supervision difficulties. In terms of support, people that have had similar experiences have bonded on that level.

**2. How does Nadia view and position (construct) Luna?**

2.1 As a supervisor

She feels safer in her area of specialization. My critical paradigm is not her field…she doesn't agree with the ideas.

She's not interested in HIV/Aids research.

I'm not saying her advice is not good…she does know a lot…but when it comes to conceptual things about my methodology, that's where it's problematic. I think she tried to read and do some extra.

Luna *is* very busy.

I have worked with her in another capacity as well…as a boss…rather than supervisor…so I know that she can be quite a slave driver.

Luna takes things personally.

She feels very unappreciated a lot of the time. We have said: 'We know you don't feel appreciated, but we *do*, we *do* appreciate you'. We have to constantly keep saying that to her.

At one stage I treated her as someone I revere and have a great deal of respect for…and then I thought: 'No…her manner is not professional at all'.

2.2 <u>As a person</u>

Luna is a likeable person and she can be fairly easy to work with.

She's got a good side and a bad side of course…but in my experience, I feel more negative than positive.

## 3 How does Nadia experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing herself and Luna)

### 3.1 The vision

I was thinking about the parent-child relationship…and my teenage years with my mother. My relationship with my mother is different *now*…but *then*, it was a very difficult…a very emotional time. That's just what my relationship with Luna felt like. I felt the same sort of feelings of guilt for speaking my mind or expressing myself. The same sort of: 'Now you're making me feel guilty'…'But no…*you're* making *me* feel guilty' sort of relationship. I kept feeling it's my fault. Thinking about it now, I displayed a lot of regressive coping mechanisms…I would need to let off steam by crying…I could just burst into tears at any moment…which was unhealthy, because then I feel out of control. When I was growing up I used to paint as a lot as a sort of coping mechanism. This year I drew a picture…of a girl covering her face. I felt just like that [*Nadia spreads her hands across her face*].

I experienced Luna as being quite manipulative…in a very sort of covert way…not openly. It was like: 'I should be very grateful for having a supervisor at all…I should be grateful for all these things…I shouldn't complain or say anything or express my views'. I'd go away and look at these things and then I thought 'No!' Sort of like being in protest all the time. That's how it felt, like I'm in protest…but silent protest. Even for my topic…in a way it's confrontational and it's protest against 'Why is this ethnic group being left out?' I'm talking about HIV/Aids…it's talked about mainly as a black thing or a white thing…but what about the in-between groups? We talk about intervention…but what about cultural intervention? What about the lack of education? And what is education? What is reliable information…are parents reliable? Those kinds of things. In a way it's allowing me to step back and look at my own ethnicity and culture…it's been quite challenging. And often I don't want to look at it…perhaps that's also part of my painting of the hiding girl covering her eyes…it's something I don't want to think about because then I *have* to stop and think about myself.

3.2 The process

It was very rarely that I'd have supervision. Initially it was assumed to be once a week…the internship one week and then the thesis the next week. It never did happen. It would be like: 'Oh, we haven't seen you for a while, I think we should have a supervision meeting'. It used to be open-door policy…nowadays you have to make an appointment…which is fair enough, you've got to set boundaries as well and I do realize that Luna is very busy…she's supervising a lot of students.

Before Peter became co-supervisor he sat in on one of my supervision sessions with Luna and he agreed with all her criticisms of my work. I went away and I thought about what they had discussed and I didn't agree with them…so I e-mailed him later and said: 'This doesn't make sense to me, this is what I think'. And he said: 'No, you're right'. I felt very disturbed by that.

One day Luna said: 'Lets have a supervision meeting', which I found it quite odd, because I hadn't said anything to her. She sat down with me…it was a sort of vague…we didn't talk about the real *why* or anything…she just brought it up and said: 'Well, if you want to change your supervisor you can, but I would prefer if I stay as your co-supervisor because I have worked on your project'. But she was very upset as well. And at that point in time I thought I'd better settle with it because I'm in the department, I have to see her every day, I can't be nasty about anything. So we settled on that, but she still wants to be brought in on supervision, which is difficult for me because conceptually, I think, she doesn't know much about my methodology. I would've liked to just change supervisor altogether.

I felt like I was being constantly undermined. I mean how do you write about something when someone keeps saying: 'Culture is everywhere…it doesn't exist in the same sense that you're talking about"? I think she felt that I was being very ethnocentric or culturally biased. But from the perspective of my critical paradigm, culture's *there*. We had

problems at the proposal stage when she made me take it out and I thought: 'She's avoiding the issue, put it back in'. Those kinds of things were frustrating.

I managed to work with it for a while and I thought: 'Just be happy…no one else is complaining'. I know that the other students had some little gripes, but their supervision with Luna was very different to mine. I thought 'Why am I feeling like this?' and for a long time I thought I was just imagining it. I thought there's something wrong with *me*. It took me a long time to pinpoint what was going on. Then I thought I'm either going to sit with this and be frustrated and not finish my thesis, or do something about it. I was having this whole emotional breakdown…I wanted to change supervisors…I thought 'I don't like Luna any more'. And eventually a friend brought me back to stability and said: 'Look, go and speak to Luna's other student who's had the same problems as you'…which is what I did. That helped.

I can honestly say, I'm not highly passionate about my topic…but I am about my methodology! I feel that if I can respect her ideas, then she can respect my ideas as well. Instead of that kind of interaction, there were always these little passive-aggressive comments about my critical paradigm and its methodology. But I just kept quiet and let them ride. With regard to my views within the thesis, of course, I expressed *that*. But at the end of the day I would always come out of a supervision session feeling: 'What have I gained from this meeting? Nothing'. At one stage I treated her as someone I revere and have a great deal of respect for…and then I thought: 'No. This is not professional at all'.

In the middle of the year I had wanted to quit for health reasons and Luna said: 'No…just carry on with it'. By then I hadn't told her anything because I didn't want anyone knowing my personal business. So it was only later on this year that I told her about something that was worrying me and it was as if she was in a different *place* to me. It was like: 'Here I am confiding in you, wanting support'…yet she just *burst* out at me. I couldn't make it for a seminar…I was not feeling well. And she was so harsh, so dismissive, as if she couldn't care less. Then she went into this whole thing…divulged a whole lot of her own personal stuff…I just didn't know *what* to do. Then she wasn't

talking to me. And I thought: 'OK, I can deal with this', but I was very upset that I had been treated so abruptly. I accept that she has difficulties as well…or that she's maybe in difficult place too, but that's when I felt…I've had *enough* now. I think that was the downfall of our relationship. It became very personal.

I think I've reached a place of reason, now, where I'm civil and I do my work. And Luna has toned down a lot. Yet somehow, I'm afraid she's going to take the new supervision away from me…going to destroy everything that's been said…say 'Do this' or 'Do that' and undermine all of it…and then it's just going to be gone. At the end of the day I've resolved that she can have her say…I don't have to agree with it…but if it means a last-minute changing of everything then…No…I'll stick with one person's advice.

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER RELATIONS?

**4 How does Nadia relate to the university / broader educational domains?**

My relationship with the university? I'm not sure if you can call it a *relationship*…I'm really only familiar with the department…and as a department it's not very open.

4.1 Autonomy-dependency

The internship is about being students bridging the gap between the workplace and the academic environment. In some sense, you're getting experience, but you do feel *used*.

4.2 Care: Professional-pastoral

Our head of department…his relationship with the students is very different…we know he's *there*, and I guess that's fine…I mean he's not our supervisor…he's a support in other ways.

A lot of people gripe because it's just so miserable being in our department. And what can you do about it? Nothing. It's just like 'Oh well, you're welcome to come and talk to us'. There needs to be an active, *ongoing* monitoring and evaluation system for watching the relationship and evaluating the courses. I think we could learn a lot and the supervisors could too. Hopefully, evaluation will be put in place.

I know there are privileged relationships in the department and there are others who are obviously not within that circle.

### 4.2.1 Postgraduate Forum

I've read stuff on the website…most of it has been about labs. I e-mailed the guy to ask if there's a forum to discuss supervision and he never ever responded…so I thought: 'OK, obviously these things are not important'.

## 4.3 Expectations

I'd like to feel that my contribution to the university is going somewhere…that I'm offering some worthwhile input…not just being used for commercial ventures.

## 4.4 Time, funding, throughput and publication

I got very angry at one stage. When I initially signed up for the course I thought it's going to be helping communities and it's activist kind of work, which is what I'm interested in. And yet I didn't see it happening…it seemed all about money, and I can't handle that…I need to find a place where it's not all about money. I think it's also about the way the organization has been set up…with that mission…to bridge the gap between the academic environment and the workplace and to use our expertise to fuel work and get money into the academic environment.

### 4.5 Competing discourses

There was a lot of money coming into the organization for these commercial research projects…all about organizational issues. I'm more interested in humanitarian issues. Quite a different agenda. I think there *is* a mid-ground…maybe our organization hasn't really found it yet.

I think we choose things that are reflective of who we are. People latch onto a paradigm…I can see that happening in the department…like post-modernism…they latch onto that or onto 'I'm a social constructionist' or 'I'm a social worker'. I'm definitely anti-latching-on.

I think, being much younger, I haven't yet formulated such strong views about any particular paradigm.

## 5 What is visible? (made manifest)

### 5.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

I felt very *stuck*. I'm feeling very motivated now…since I have another supervisor. I woke up the other day and thought: 'I *am* going to finish my thesis this year…I don't know *how*, but I'm going to *do* it'.

### 5.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

I was like…I don't know…very depressed… at the stage where I would be emotional about anything. I would come home a frustrated, complaining, whining person…just horrible to be around. And you know, it's awful being like that…I had to dump all this load somewhere…fortunately my partner supported me, but I felt like I was being unfair…unbalanced.

I used to do creative writing and I haven't done that the whole year…now I'm creating again. I've had images just *coming* to me, and I don't know what to *do* with them, there are so many. Where did that go for the whole year?

5.3 What is produced in terms of the university / broader educational domains?

I completed my supervision report the other day and I went into some detail. Maybe something will happen.

## 1.5 ANDY

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS?

### 1 How does Andy see and construct himself as a supervisor?

1.1 Motivations: worldview and abilities

Why do I supervise? Partly it's just professional, of course…we're expected to. And people approach one for supervision, especially if you've enthused them at an early level about something or other. Obviously we encourage that…as a department. *I* encourage it in the sense that I love doing it…not that I'm hugely experienced yet…but what I've done so far has been really so enjoyable. I suppose there's a selfish aspect to it…if only to see the lights coming on in *any* student…to see things happen. It's one of the ways I've found of affirming my presence in the world…teaching and seeing students at *whatever* level wake up to their potential and to themselves.

The personal enjoyment is partly about just engaging with an engaging personality on some level and working with that personality and being worked *on* by that personality. And it's often quite revealing for me…a lot of it is *me* being taught. I don't claim to be an expert in many of the fields that we're delving into…so sometimes it's a matter of: 'You teach me and I'll help you get a decent piece of writing out in the end'. I mean…I can see a bad argument when it bites me in the ankle! It's *that*.

I'm getting heavily into the ecological stuff. So partly it's me wanting to promote a field of study…an holistic view of the way we operate in the world. To do that one has to challenge all sorts of narrow points of view…blindnesses and ignorances. The ecological crisis is the great crisis of our time, which subsumes and outreaches any other crisis we can think of. In South Africa…in my discipline…ecological studies are very embryonic. There's a huge silence…people just haven't looked at it. It's a *huge* industry elsewhere…it's taken off in a big way in the U.S.A. and Canada. So I'm kind of catching

a wave here in terms of ecological criticism. Part of my agenda is to get other people involved too, so they can also catch the wave…contribute to it. It's a wide-open field with plenty of scope and lots of fun things to do, so I can see myself pretty much doing that for the rest of my days.

### 1.1.1 Expectations

Some students don't even know how to ask the questions and *that's* really hard to work with. Molly's asking questions all the time and that's what one *wants*. That's just great.

She has to work really *hard* at getting to the ideas…the conceptual level. And that's my job…to keep pushing her to start arguing and start coming up with patterns.

Molly has been *very clear* that I only have a quarter of her time this year. There's a quarter teaching, there's a quarter family, a quarter quilting and a quarter for the thesis so she's taking it fairly slowly. I don't think she really minds how long it takes. I'm fine with that…I don't want to pressure her at this stage. There have been points where I've wondered if Molly will actually *finish* her Master's. I think she *does* have a lot of staying power, but I feel that there's a part of her that might not want to get too embedded in the later stages…finessing the argument. And if she feels that she actually doesn't want to do that…I wouldn't resent it or feel bad in any way.

### 1.1.2 Supervisor-student matching

In our field, it's almost incumbent for the supervisor to choose to supervise something that he or she is really interested in and passionate about and can see that the student is, also. It's a good foundation.

Some students have come straight out of the teaching that I've given them in Honours…including Molly, which I take as a real accolade.

I think the personality issue is so important. One almost wants to advise students to get together with supervisors they *know* they're going to get on with on a personal level. Because otherwise it must be…it can be horrendous.

I regard all the students I've had so far as friends…getting involved together in stuff that we're interested in. So there's a curious mix there, of friendship and professional interest.

## 1.2 Care

### 1.2.1 Professional care

For me, being friends doesn't interfere with the supervision process. I mean I don't feel hesitancy in therefore being critical of the work. People appreciate that. And I don't have a problem doing that. It's almost part of the friendship…that one is very rigorous about that.

My own supervisor was *so* relaxed and *so* supportive that it was useless…or next to useless. He'd say: 'Jolly good old chap…watch your split infinitives on page seven'. So I ended up giving my stuff to somebody else in an informal capacity who just *shredded* me. I'd come out of our meetings shaky, but with my brain just buzzing. Wonderful. That way of working…although it might shake up the student a bit…gives the stimulus that's needed. I guess I try to hit a bit of a middle ground between the two extremes that I encountered. That's quite a tension to maintain…to give the detailed, sparky stuff…but not pull my punches too much on what I think is inadequate.

I've tended to guide the proposal stage pretty tightly. I'm very vigorous at that stage and we go through four or five drafts of it before I'm satisfied. I try to offer students the perspective that this is only an *initial* stage: 'You're not going to be forced to stick with what we've got here. If you change your style in some ways…as long as you don't hurtle off and do a different topic altogether…they're not going to worry about it…no one's going to look at it again'. So you kind of relax a little bit about it…take it quite seriously

in terms of clarifying a student's thinking, but otherwise…make a bit of a team effort in playing the game…for the formality of it, and to get it out of the way. Because it can be quite inhibiting, I think…to be stuck on the proposal and not the real work…even though it is part of the real work, really.

### 1.2.2 Pastoral care

You just get so involved with the person and go through all their turbulence and turmoil. Things like illness and crises…they do arise…and you have to cope with them. Molly doesn't seem to have any of that, somehow…or she hasn't *yet*. Obviously something might happen…but she's doing fine and so far I haven't had to cope with crises on her part.

I regard all the students I've had so far as friends. Partly maybe…it's just *me* …I *like* having friends, I guess.

It's one of the ways I've found of affirming my presence in the world…teaching and seeing students at *whatever* level wake up to their potential and to *themselves*.

## 1.3 Autonomy-dependency

We end up kind of leaning on each other in many ways. I wasn't *that* familiar with the particular thinker Molly is studying, but by just chewing her way steadily through his works and giving me analyses every so often, she is teaching me a huge amount about him, which is wonderful. And I can reciprocate by saying: 'Hmm, ja, *this* is great, but *that* isn't…how about pushing in this direction or that direction?' As we read more, she teaches me more and *vice versa*…the balance is always changing and different relationships become evident.

I suppose we're both connected to each other in different ways, but also to the outside world where we operate in innumerable ways…we're both kind of channeling energies, if you like, into this project from various perspectives…and with differing agendas.

The supervision relationship is a hugely complex thing…always shifting. There has to be a sense of the independence of two beings in the relationship. There's obviously a certain amount of pull one way or another within the constraints of the set up, I suppose. But my aim is less to constrain than to liberate Molly's views into their fullness.

Obviously, with giving feedback, there's a delicate balance between putting my own ideas into the mix and allowing Molly's ideas to emerge organically from what she's seeing…so that she *does* feel that they *are* her ideas…you know…that I'm not writing the thesis *for* her. In a sense it's also something that I'm trying to draw out of the work itself. I've been able to say: 'Well, this is the way I see it' and explain that, but hopefully she'll take my input critically as well…and work it through in her own way.

It's been pointed out to me before that, in a way, I'm almost more *there* for students than I am for myself in this process…in terms of achievement or accolades. Sometimes there's almost a slightly self-sacrificial aspect to it…and I have to watch that. I have to be careful not give *too* much…or spend more time than is necessary. I found this in the first few theses I supervised. I was really spending too much time on them…being too close, too finicky. I've got to step back a bit…both for the student's sake and for mine. Time and commitment do have to be balanced against all the other stuff in one's life, other demands.

Molly is independent…doing her own thing…she'll make her own decision as to how far she pushes her Master's studies. I hope she'll finish…but also, she's having fun…so I think to myself: 'Ag well, it's Molly's pace and she can go with it'. I don't want to pressure her out of having fun at this stage.

I think you get supervisors with particular ego-demands. If a supervisor is unable to shelve their ego and allow a student to achieve what they want or need to achieve…it's a disaster…and very demoralizing for the student.

### 1.3.1 Depending on students

Molly and I are very good friends…she's been a very stabilizing influence in my own slightly turbulent last couple of years.

A lot of it's about helping Molly her find a way through a segment of work that is a part of a whole mosaic for me…one that she does not see herself as part of in quite the same way as I do. I've got a huge eco project developing so it's a whole kind of career thing for me as well, I guess.

## 2 How does Andy view and position (construct) Molly?

### 2.1 As a student

I think she worries that she's not going to make the grade…she suffers from an ongoing…*crisis* would be the wrong word…an ongoing sense that she might not be up to this. It's misplaced, I think.

She's not someone that generates ideas very readily…on her own. She kind of works *up* from the bottom…and she has to work hard at getting to the conceptual level.

She asks all the right questions.

She's well capable of doing the Master's. Coming back into Honours after so many years out of school…she *pulled* it together…and *cracked* it. So, I'm confident that she can do this.

Molly always seems to be very grateful for any criticism that I give. Where I've disagreed or remained unconvinced by what she's said, then I say so and she accepts that with great humility and grace.

I'm accepting that the Master's is not vital to her career in any way…to her life…in the same way that it might be for a younger, hot blooded student who's really thinking quite keenly of going into academia as a career…or getting out of here. She's approaching it from a very different life point… and so there's a certain relaxation about it. It's not *just* for fun…but it's not for professional reasons really.

She is a pretty self-contained, mature person…whose self esteem is not going to take a huge whack if she doesn't finish.

She is teaching…I mean, she's kind of getting into that despite herself…and I think she's quite a good teacher. So ja, one doesn't know where it will carry her, actually, in the end.

2.2 <u>As a person</u>

She has an enormous capacity for puzzlement.

If she wants to do anything with her life, it's actually *sew*. She just *loves* that. That's what *really* sets her alight. She loves sewing and quilting. I encourage her to think of her Master's thesis as an analogous process to quilting…putting all these different pieces of the thinker's work into an overall design.

Molly's just so…*steady*. She just kind of…goes *on*…*does* things…nothing seems to faze the process. Really, it's quite extraordinary.

## 3 How does Andy experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing himself and Molly)

### 3.1 The vision

I find climbing a pretty holistic kind of activity. It's very absorbing because even if you're on an easy climb, you don't think about anything else other than where you're going to put your hand next. So it's very cleansing in a way…almost meditative. It's private, but it's a partnership too…there's always somebody on the other end of your rope…so it's a very two-way thing happening all the time…the give and take. The kind of climbing I do is very non-competitive so it's very much a partnership…an acceptance of what you do and what you don't do. And if you don't feel like doing a particular climb, that's cool. And if you fall off something it's no great shakes…nobody's going to sneer at that. It's all a matter of encouraging one to do better or get up the thing, but if you fall off, there's no judgment involved…that's just the way it is. There *is* a certain drive to achieve…if not to get to the top of something that you haven't got to the top of before, it's to get to the top of something you *have* got to the top of before, but a bit better, you know…more smoothly, more efficiently, more beautifully, more gracefully.

And I love that atmosphere, you know. In a sense that it embodies some of who I am and perhaps something of the kind of philosophies and attitudes that I bring to the rest of life, or try to. There's a sense of a kind of personal achievement but within a helpmeet, common goal sort of situation. You lead I'll follow…ja, you lead it and maybe I'll lead it too…I'm there anyway…we're both there to keep each other safe. And just being together in beautiful places…that's also the attraction of climbing for me. It's holistic in the sense of it being both a mental and a physical thing. It's a great workout bodily, because you're always in different positions and there are different kinds of climbs when you bring different muscles into play. And as it gets harder it gets quite mental too…because you have to start working out sequences and balance and what's going to go where, because if you don't get the sequence right you're out of there. So it's quite strategic in that way. And I like that balance of head and body and activity. Ja…and it's a

matter of overcoming fears…knowing that you may peel off but you've just got to trust it and trust the gear and trust your mate and hope you'll be all right.

### 3.2 The process

Normally I try to set aside a timeslot every week, which will be the student's supervision spot …whether it's taken up or not. That's kind of fallen away with Molly…because we see a lot of each other anyway…either in the department or inter-visiting. If anything comes up…then we can just sit down and chat about it. It's been very informal with us.

I'm not pushing her too hard. She's coming up with work on a fairly regular basis. She's read a fair bit of the basic ecological criticism…the academic theory, of which there's not a huge amount, fortunately. So Molly's been working her way through some of that stuff…kind of playing around with the ideas and trying to get her head around them…but still in a fairly tentative, unformed sort of way. She's also offering me very detailed analyses of pieces of the works that she's studying, so a lot of it is fairly basic kind of ground-up stuff that's she has to do. And we've been talking about difficulties she's run into. We haven't really gone further than that at this stage. Once we get into a level of having to weld her analyses into some sort of argument…and she has to develop an eco-critical stance for *herself*…she might baulk at the jumps a little bit more and need a bit more support. Then we'll try and get her reading together and formulate things a bit more clearly. It'll evolve.

My criticism has been fairly light at the moment, partially because I know that the stuff she's doing at the moment is going to go through huge renovations. At this stage I'm just tackling the ideas…picking up where she's hesitant or lost…trying to help her through that…making sense of the works *with* her. It'll be much, much more rigorous when she gets round to forging an argument. Then I start nit picking…both in terms of coherence in argument and in terms of writing style.

Molly always seems to be very grateful for any criticism that I give. Obviously I try to deliver it in as constructive a manner as possible…not in a dismissive manner. It's not like we've had any huge differences of point of view. Most of her stuff has been good…there's only the one piece I thought she really hadn't got her head around…so I said: 'You haven't got it together on this one yet' and she said: 'Ja, no, I can see that'. She recognizes the justice of that…and that's as far as the disagreement has gone. It's amazing.

The proposal stage went well. She was still pretty hesitant…quite unsure about what she was going to do. I tend to guide the proposal stage pretty tightly…and I think she was grateful for the supportiveness at that point, you know. I suppose I do get quite…maybe too much…I don't know…too rigorous towards the end. I think I'm a bit of a compulsive proofreader. I've had to learn not to be quite so rigorous at the early stages.

Molly suffers quivers of…unconfidence…pretty regularly…She keeps saying things like 'I don't know if I can really do this' or 'I'm not really totally sold on this thing'…comments like that. I suppose my only difficulty has been persuading her that she's good enough to do this…So I just keep supporting and pushing and saying: 'What you're doing…it's fine'. Part of Molly just stubbornly refuses to take this thing seriously…but when she's doing it she has a hell of a lot of fun, which is great. I don't want to pressure her out of having fun at this stage. So I just say: 'Well OK, just go with that, have fun with it'. I think she *is* capable of producing a really quite interesting piece of work. It's a *new* field. So it doesn't matter if it's ground level…that's what's *required*, in a way…It's *still* going to be contributing quite a lot to the field in South Africa.

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER?

## 4 How does Andy relate to the university / broader educational domain?

My relationship with the department is good, partly because I just don't get involved in personal politics. I don't socialize with my colleagues, not because I don't like them, but just because I just…basically don't! An occasional dinner is about as far as it goes.

### 4.1 Autonomy-dependency

I've really had to feel my own way in terms of how to supervise.

### 4.2 Care: Professional-pastoral

There was a workshop on supervision early in the year that I didn't go to. Something the Academic Development Centre did? That's the only thing I've ever come across in terms of university support for the staff. I haven't personally felt the need for much support…because I haven't encountered any major problem. Unlike some of my colleagues…where…jeez…there's a major fallout or personality clash or the student goes off the rails for some reason…there's a suicidal crisis…that kind of stuff happening. *There* I think, some better support mechanism would be very necessary. I don't think the university has anything remotely like that.

In terms of departmental support it's a bit better. We've recently reformulated our methods of calculating workloads. For the first time postgraduate supervision is actually counted into our workload so you get some tutoring at the undergraduate level taken off depending on how much postgraduate stuff you're doing. So that's quite lekker [nice]…because some of these things take a huge amount of time, depending on the student. So that's support of a kind.

#### 4.2.1 The postgraduate forum

[no data]

## 4.3 Expectations

Why do I supervise? Partly it's just professional, of course…we're expected to.

Staff are under pressure to turn out postgraduate students per se…you want to have 'I have supervised X, Y and Z' under the belt…and that's all part of one's career ladder in some way. Nonetheless I'm not putting much pressure on Molly to finish…nor to finish within a specific timeframe. I don't think she really minds how long it takes…and nor do I really.

## 4.4 Time, funding, throughput and publication

Funding is now becoming dependent on staff getting students on board with group projects…it hasn't really hit our department yet but it's certainly happening in other ones. If you've got a particular goal in mind for your own career…an ego-driven investment in that…then the impulse *is* to compel the student to do what *you* want done. If that kind of ego comes into play…you have to guard against it. If you don't…you can actually scotch students' opportunities. And that's terribly dangerous. I am quite aware of that. Fortunately this ecological thing is big enough and loose enough and I'm quite happy to see anything happening in the field from any quarter, because it's all grist for the mill at this stage. Hopefully it'll continue in that way…big enough to avoid any sense of competition.

The whole organization induces a certain competitiveness. In the broader sphere of academic discourse, publish or perish means that people are competing ever more fiercely for space in a limited number of journals. It almost encourages you to produce acres of crap, because you've got to have publications on your CV…never mind whether they're any good or not. I just don't do anything that I don't want to do…never mind *what* the system says. I'm getting into the position now where I'm being solicited for stuff and sometimes I've said: 'No…it's just not central to what I want to do'. I *won't* write anything that I think is not integral to who I am and that I feel I can do with real integrity

and spirit and fun. As it happens what I do is going to benefit the system anyway…but that's more luck than anything. For other people who don't feel that way or don't write as easily, or who don't enjoy doing research…they just want to be teachers…it's pernicious.

I'm sure Molly will be able to produce something publishable in due course…she's not ready for that yet. I would hope so…I would like to see all our Master's students publish something of their theses.

I've got an eco project going which I've got a bit of funding for…

## 4.5 Competing discourses

People take academia too seriously…they take *themselves* too seriously. Students slot into it immediately…when I give them something fun to read, then they're suspicious and actually back off it: 'What? *Fun*? So you're *supposed* to laugh at this? I don't know about *that*?' They get very uncomfortable, which is something that I think is so unfortunate.

For anybody at any level…from Master's downwards…the end product…the exam or whatever…is only one bump on the road. I think the road is much bigger than that…'Just understand the work…*that's* what it's about. What's it doing to the constitution of your brain-cells?' *That's* what we're really interested in. But of course it's hard to convince students…to get them to see that broader perspective. Maybe it's partly about our assessment system…there's so much emphasis on marks. It's so normative. I've just managed to push the department…and to my surprise, the faculty and senate…to allow us to experiment with our exam system at Honours level…to have open book or take-home exams. In fact people have been doing it all the time and they just haven't been saying anything. All this came out of the woodwork in the process of debating this ridiculous issue. Hundreds of universities all over the planet do it…and they treat it here as if you're trying to rebuild the Titanic from the bottom up! Remarkable reaction. None of my colleagues seem to want to experiment in the same way, but blow me down I'm going to

experiment with *my* courses! Ja…I think you can build assessment in a different way so that it's really part of the learning experience instead of this boring, frightening, summative rush at the end. I think it rubs off on the postgraduate thing…if we can generate excitement at the lower levels, we can keep the postgraduates coming through.

## 5 What is visible? (made manifest)

### 5.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

The proposal is approved. It'll evolve from there.

### 5.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

A lot of it is about *me* being taught…there's a sense of personal achievement but within a helpmeet, common goal sort of situation. Also Molly's having a hell of a lot of fun, which is great…we're both feeling kind of puppyish about it.

### 5.3 What is produced in terms of the university / broader educational domains?

The ecological crisis is the great crisis of our time, which subsumes and outreaches any other crisis we can think of. One has to challenge all sorts of narrow points of view…blindnesses and ignorances.

I've been shunting ideas around for years and most of them get lost in the administrative mud, you know. But a couple of more of my ideas…like the ones on assessment…are being picked up and that's exciting

## 1.6 MOLLY

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INTERPERSONAL POWER RELATIONS?

**1 How does Molly see and construct herself as a student?**

1.1 Motivations: worldview and abilities

When I think about why I'm doing it my immediate reaction is madness! I vehemently said I will never do a Master's. It's certainly not been a lifelong ambition. After I graduated I did *think* about doing Honours…but it wasn't practically possible. Y*ears* later…by luck or circumstance…it's possible to do the Honours…so I do it. And the Master's kind of led on from that. I was working in a store at the time I did Honours and when I finished it I carried on working…but I guess my old normal life wasn't quite the same anymore.

The Master's probably also came with prodding from my friends. I must pay tribute to one of my lecturers from my undergraduate years. He gave me the push I needed to enroll for the Honours course and he became my mentor…he gave me a lot of his time, helped me get up to speed, encouraged me. Then after Hons he prodded me to tackle a Master's. And Andy was also…not really prodding…just gently niggling. I'm really not sure *why* they were prodding *me*…I wasn't a hot-shot student, I was pretty mediocre…but they did.

I remember thinking that seeing as I am a South African and as I live here…if I ever *do* try to carry on and do a Master's, it should be close to home. Then I read a very, very inspiring book by Jonathan Bate called 'The song of the earth'…and that was a starting point. Shortly afterwards I saw a collection of works by a South African thinker. Again something clicked…about the tension between science and art. Around the same time I heard a priest commenting on a line in the Bible: 'And I shall give you dominion over the earth'…and he was saying that we shouldn't even begin to *think* that we have dominion over the earth…that it's *ours*…and that he prefers to use the word 'stewardship'. Ja…so

that was another little spark along the way. All that fed into a feeling that I have…and I say this extremely hesitantly and in a very small voice...the ecological has to be there if there's going to be any kind of hope. Unless we learn to live in harmony with the earth…change the way we relate with our environment…we are going to become extinct. So that's our choice.

So, even though I vehemently said I would never do a Master's…that sequence of events, together with Andy's prodding…made me decide to take the plunge. It had probably been stirring around for a long time…I was obviously looking for something and the thought of spending the next twenty years working in a store becoming increasingly grumpy…wasn't that exciting.

### 1.1.1 Expectations

If I have any expectations, other that just getting my Master's finished…it's proving to myself that I *can* do it…and that I'm improving myself. I mean…I don't expect the world to open up to me because I've got a little Master's from the bottom corner of Africa!

The university limit for a full thesis is two years, but I'm not putting any pressure on myself. If it takes me two years…great. We have a sort of joke. I tell Andy that at least half of me is a mother and one quarter…probably more…is a tutor. So he knows he only has a quarter of me.

### 1.1.2 Motivations for supervisor-student matching

Andy had taken such an interest in me when he taught me in Honours. He is actually responsible for my staying the course because I actually wanted…I was going to…leave. Then he nurtured me into the Master's. I don't want to say solicited, because that's a bit strong…but it's that kind of meaning as well

I just like him very much…he's an inspiring teacher…I suppose it's easy to work for him because I want to.

## 1.2 Care

### 1.2.1 Professional care

They say you shouldn't mix business with pleasure…but our friendship doesn't get in the way of our supervision process.

If I don't hand him work for week or so, he will casually ask me: 'Hey, what's going on?' So he *does* keep tabs on me but there are no formal schedules or deadlines.

He does pull me up when he needs to. For instance I remember a month or two ago…he pointed that out that it was necessary to get more into the theory. Maybe in a different situation a supervisor will come to you and say: 'I want more theory from you' and then you'd try to squeeze it out, whereas he came at it much more gently and encouraged me to try and get my head around it.

Sometimes I'm a little afraid of being *too* creative because it really is possible to see things that are not *there* sometimes. But I'm sure that Andy will pick up any flights of fancy on my part. It also works the other way. When I first started doing close analyses of segments of the work…after a while Andy would say: 'Try to see the ecological'.

When I go on a tangent…a side road…Andy says: 'There's no such thing as a side road'.

He certainly is pushing me…to question.

### 1.2.2 Pastoral care

He nurtured me into the Master's.

He has a very…eclectic way…even when he's teaching…it's difficult to describe.

I'm fond of Andy. I mean, we're good friends. For instance, he will pop in and have a meal with us, or pop in and end up staying for a meal…so it's a nice sort of relationship. Sort of family…I suppose.

1.3 Autonomy-dependency

When he offers criticism…I don't take everything he says lying down, I don't think.

I almost owe him a debt…but it's not that…I don't feel as if I must pay him back or anything.

He's there *with* me.

1.3.1 Depending on students

I have a casual, coffee relationship with a fellow ex-Honours student who is now doing her Master's in another discipline. Conversations with her and her support have been invaluable.

**2 How does Molly view and position (construct) Andy?**

2.1 As a supervisor

He's an inspiring teacher.

He's certainly not a person who draws up deadlines and timetables: 'You *will* produce this by *then*'. So he doesn't constrain you in *that* way, but he does…I don't want to use the word control, because it's too strong…guide is probably more like it.

He's very sharp. I have a great respect for him. And he knows his subject much better than I do. So he fills gaps.

If his feedback is negative…he's very gentle. His criticism is very useful, very valid.

He knows the process.

He's efficient. He doesn't sit on my stuff…gives me feedback almost immediately.

He's great I think…very encouraging…and kind of *solid*…pragmatic.

2.2 <u>As a person</u>

I'm fond of Andy…he's sort of family.

He's my friend and I like him…we have fun. There's no tension.

He's gentle.

**3 How does Molly experience the supervision relationship? (The process of constructing herself and Andy)**

3.1 <u>The vision</u>

When I think about our supervision relationship, I think of play and surprise and challenge…and an element of child*like*ness. Imagine a playground with lots of bright colours. For me, bright colours symbolize happiness and fun. There's a long complicated jungle gym…a brightly painted one, a challenging one, with lots of different obstacle courses…kind of rambling and with all sorts of hidden things to discover along the way. I don't know if you've seen the modern jungle gyms? You probably have an image of the square…just one structure with probably three tiers up and three tiers across, divided into squares? Those are the old fashioned ones. Jungle gyms nowadays are quite different…they're constructed out of wood with tyres and netting-rope things and

different levels…almost like an army training obstacle course. It's quite exploratory, but it's contained as well. It's manageable…depending on how big or small you are. And multi-textured…it's actually quite an organic jungle gym, I've just realized…there's not much metal in it. It's probably also connected with climbing…ja. Andy's obviously more experienced than I am, but he's not standing there saying 'You better climb up that one'. He's there *with* me.

Making a quilt is a metaphor that came to mind when I think of the process I'm going through with the Master's…and again, I'm seeing bright colours. There are a few processes to making a quilt. The first process is called piecing. That's when you take a big piece of material…I'm talking very literally now…and you cut it up, you craft the pieces, and then you sew it back together again! So you end up with a different piece of fabric, a different pattern, a different design and effect from when you just had one plain piece of material. OK. So the next process is when you have to sandwich it onto a backing with a layer of filling inbetween, and then finally you quilt it, which is the finishing touch. In my thesis, I start off with analyzing the thinker's work, which is one complete piece, and at the moment I'm busy cutting that up…and crafting it into these lappies [bits of cloth]…these separate analyses. So it's very detailed attention to each piece. What I'm going to do with these pieces, I don't know, because I'm going to have to do this whole process in my head and I don't know if my head is big enough! I'm then going to have to thematize these blocks of analyses…that's like the second quilting process. I think that's about as far as I'm going to go…I mean, I still have to put it together into a readable format. I don't actually think I'm going to get to quilting this thesis! That will just be the prettying up of it…the binding and the dedications and checking that there are no spelling mistakes. The quilting part will be a breeze…well I hope it will be. I just wish I had a sewing machine, instead of a computer to make my thesis!

## 3.2 The process

Towards the end of last year, before I registered…I began formulating my topic. I wrote my first draft proposal at the end of last year. This was on Andy's advice. He said the proposal is hell and if you can get it out of the way then you can start the year working, otherwise you can waste up to six moths sitting with your proposal. He knows the process. So I did that…and I think the first draft was probably complete twaddle…But he was very gentle…he didn't say: 'This is crap'. He just gave it back to me with a few comments and a *pile* of books and said: 'Read these'. I got a bit uppity then…I asked: '*Aw man*…what do you expect of me?' Anyway, I tried to do that…it was quite a pile…and I didn't actually get through to the end of all of them. But he gave me the right books and it helped with my conceptualization, which isn't very strong…it's a skill I need to learn.

I finally got the proposal together at the beginning of this year and it was *hell*, actually. He drilled me. He really drilled me. He made me rewrite it…I don't know…I lost count after draft number five. And he did very close commentary. A lot of it was mostly theory, which goes with conceptualization and it doesn't really excite me that much. But he pointed out that it's part of the process, that you have to do it, and if you want to get it through the Higher Degrees Committee, this is the way you *do* it. So we did it! Back to the drawing board again and again and again…then the proposal went through without even having to be defended. So…that was *not* a pleasant part of the process. Since then I've been playing and doing my little weekly offerings.

I usually hand in something every week, but it's not a chapter…it's more a piece of rough work…a detailed analysis of a segment of the thinker's work. When I'm finished with that part of the process…well…I'm not going to think too much about *that*, yet! We don't have formal meetings…we chat quite a lot…go and have coffee and talk about it. And when I'm really struggling to get my head around something Andy says: 'Just leave it then, and come back to it later…don't worry about it'. That kind of attitude…pragmatic.

When he gives me feedback, I check for the ticks, I must confess. And when it's negative it's always well considered, so I have to take it…you know…like a man! Then he's very gentle. He doesn't say: 'Rewrite this!' He'll say: 'I think you need to give this another go'. His criticism is very useful, very valid. It pushes me further…to consider different aspects…to question. I mean, I don't take everything he says lying down, I don't think. We've got a little tussle on the balance of nature. I haven't really locked horns with him about this…and I haven't done enough reading or thinking about it to take him up on it, but I'm sure that I will. It's something that we all assume…that nature is balanced…that there's a pattern out there...the seasons come and go. He says: 'You can't assume that nature is always balanced because of things like cataclysms…the ice age, volcanoes'. I'm very conscious that nature's not a fixed concept…but in fact, I was depicting nature as a kind of benign steady influence out there and he was saying that I can't look at it like that…it's more than that.

Self-discipline is really difficult…to set times to work because it's the only way I can fit it into my life. I need to work here in my office…at home it's impossible because my children keep distracting me. Other difficulties? Well, you know it how it goes…not knowing where to go next…which I'm sure is pretty common. Also, because I'm analysing separate pieces of the thinker's work…I get into one part, sail along and then finally the thing's finished…and then I have to start all over again on the next piece. Well, that's not entirely true, because they *are* all crafted by the same person and he actually says they really are one long work. So there are things that connect them…but I'm struggling to find the thread that runs through. It's almost as if he is sitting on my shoulder and laughing in my ear. Something else that worries me is finding the ecological when it's not there. You know, distorting the work to fit my thesis…a danger. I certainly *am* looking for the ecological in the text, and sometimes I think I might be looking too hard. But I'm sure that Andy will pick up any flights of fancy on my part. It also works the other way. Sometimes he says: 'Try to see the ecological'.

At one stage I could've got completely lost on a mediaeval mystic and done a whole thesis on her…it was one of my side roads. I'm sitting in the staff tearoom one day and I ask

:‘Does anyone know who she is?’ ‘Oh yes’, say quite a few people: ‘She was a mediaeval mystic’. So I go off to the library, find a few books…and start reading. The most interesting thing about her for my purposes, is her idea of *veriditas*…a Latin word which has been translated as moisture in greenness. So *there’s* the ecology…the importance of things that are growing…of greenness and obviously, moisture as life. So she took me on a trip. Like the text I’m studying…each piece of his work is like a new journey…another road. Andy certainly didn’t enthuse about my trip, but fortunately his attitude is: ‘There’s no such thing as a side road’.

Sometimes I get quite tired but mostly I’m having fun. I’m starting to be afraid that I might just burn my brain cells out completely…but that’s what academia’s like, I think. I have a casual, coffee relationship with a fellow ex-Honours student who is now doing her Master’s in another discipline and the same thing is happening to her…going on all these amazing…as she calls them…‘mindgasms’ and afterwards you just hit slumps where you can’t sift through all this data and you don’t know where to go next. Conversations with her and her support have been invaluable. I think the whole process is quite an up-down thing.

WHAT IS SAYABLE IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL POWER RELATIONS?

## 4 How does Molly relate to the university / broader educational domains?

I don’t really have a relationship with the university. My relationship is my pay cheque at the end of each month, really, and whether my proposal went through the Higher Degrees Committee or not.

### 4.1 Autonomy-dependency

The university needs us as much as we need them. It’s in the universities interest to encourage students to write theses. Producing research is a big part of the university’s business, I suppose.

There has to be a structure. You work out what the structure requires and you produce it, but that's not all I'm doing. And yes, I *will* produce that, because it's what's required of me and also because it'll be quite nice to say: 'I've got a Master's'. And so I need them…they're solid, they've worked out the process, they know what's required.

### 4.2 Care: Professional-pastoral

Part of why I'm here is because of support from the department. I have a tutoring job and without it I would probably never have started the Master's…because by tutoring I can earn some money and stay solvent. And there are some good people here with good knowledge…if I've got a question, I can throw it out in the tearoom and everybody is so kind. They really do go out of their way.

The university's a bit kind of…*out there*. But they were kind, for example, when I was applying for bursaries and my undergraduate results weren't on the computer…They were very good about fishing them out of the archives. Things like that. Ja…the university is as supporting as a bureaucratic system can be.

The university is quite comforting there in the background, but it's not cozy or warm or inviting…it's a solid, stone building. It's been there for a long time, it has traditions, but it's a bit cold....distancing. As a structure it's a lot less fun and organic than the jungle gym. I'm having fun while I'm doing this…but they don't really care about what Andy and I are doing…playing on the jungle gyms…they just want the finished product.

#### 4.2.1 Postgraduate Forum

I haven't received anything from them…maybe because I'm a staff member and I don't use my student e-mail address any more.

## 4.3 Expectations

The game is just about following the steps, abiding by the rules…and doing what's expected: 'Produce a thesis'.

## 4.4 Time, funding, throughput and publication

The university limit for a full thesis is two years, but I'm not putting any pressure on myself. If it takes me two years, great. I'm actually registered full-time…which is a bit of a silly thing to do, I think…in fact I am doing it part time.

## 4.5 Competing discourses

I don't know if this is an apposite example of how the thesis has influenced or changed my daily life and worldview…but whereas two years ago I wouldn't have thought anything of the wastage in packaging, now I find I'm getting quite irate…imagining where all this tin-foil and cellophane and cardboard comes from. And where is it all going to go to? Then I thought: 'But you shouldn't be getting cross, you should just not buy these products'. At home I've finally got the family trained to use the different bins. And then all these big bags of paper collect and I've got to go and post it!…because there's just a little slit in the recycling bins…I think they're designed for A4 office paper…not for your oats boxes and potato bags. And there I am thinking: 'I've got to go and post all the paper again…is this worth it?' And I stop myself and say: 'No, I *must* do it'. If everybody did it, it would make such a huge difference. What the thinker I'm looking at shows us, I think, is the search for harmony…humankind in symbiosis with the earth…knowing that it's actually an impossible task to reconcile tensions, but doing it anyway…and I'm just inadequately trying to follow his footsteps.

## 5 What is visible? (made manifest)

### 5.1 What is produced in terms of the thesis?

The proposal went through without even having to be defended. Now I usually hand in something…it's more a piece of rough work…every week.

### 5.2 What is produced in terms of personhood?

I'm sure my perceptions have changed. I can't go back to where I was before I started, so it's very difficult to measure.

Sometimes I get quite tired but mostly I'm having fun.

Andy's there *with* me.

### 5.3 What is produced in terms of the university / broader educational domains?

What the thinker I'm looking at shows us, I think, is the search for harmony…humankind in symbiosis with the earth…knowing that it's actually an impossible task to reconcile tensions, but doing it anyway…and I'm just inadequately trying to follow his footsteps…recycling packaging and getting the family involved too.

## 1.7 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

### HOWARD

**H:** The interview? Lovely. I like taking about what I do, you see. I guess most people do. You know, I've done so much interviewing…it's great to be on the other end. It's interesting. In fact …I've all the time been thinking about what's happening…because I'm a researcher…so *that* sort of attention, I was quite conscious of, today. Yes. I'm as interested in the process as much as the content. I'm fascinated by the phenomenon of interviewing…the process of interviewing…what you can do with it. I'll be fascinated to see what you get out of Ray. I'd be very interested to see how he describes what I've described…about him…very curious. Ja…I thought you handled the interview extremely well. Gave me lots of room. When it seemed to me like I was now really…not answering the question any more…and talking about my own passions and interests…you let me do it.

**H:** (Written communication) On reading the transcript and listening to the recording, I realized how unclear I am about the dependency/power/guide issue. Thanks for making it surface.

**H:** [about constructing metaphors] …So…it's a long way round to saying that I'm a bit uncomfortable about consciously trying to construct a metaphor. I probably used quite a bit of metaphor, I don't remember actually, what I said…but I probably resorted to metaphor myself, quite often in here. [*indicating the transcript of the previous interview*] I don't know whether you're analyzing it in that way. I can't remember…

**H:** Oh. Well, I enjoyed it, but you know, I'm not going to not enjoy it. I love what I do and I like talking about it. In fact, talking about it pushes you on. I said some things today that I couldn't have said a few days ago because I hadn't gone that route, hadn't thought it through. So my own thinking has been pushed ahead…the whole scientific thing you brought up has opened up all kinds of things to me. No, I enjoyed it very much…challenging…I

found it challenging. I'm not really thinking consciously of your role, in terms of how intrusive you are, or manipulative. You've introduced three or four things into the interview, ideas, thoughts, notions, which were kind of fresh, different. I don't know whether they came from our first interview or not…I thought they were coming from there. I didn't think they were coming from out the blue. There's no reason why they shouldn't come out of the blue of course. But I didn't feel taken off guard at any point, so I assume actually that they were all coming from what we had said…maybe from what you've been talking about with other people. There are clearly things that are interesting you and you want to hear what I think about them and I was very happy to talk about all of them. I didn't feel uncomfortable. And I thought they were good leads into areas we haven't really discussed but which are pertinent to the question. So…ja…good experience.

**Q:** My experience of the interviews is that it's sometimes difficult being inbetween the supervisors and their students…

**H:** Oh. OK. Well, I suppose it's personalities. It's also kind of how supervisors see their roles, I suppose. Or how threatened they feel, or how threatened students feel. It's a strange domain…it's public and private. It's got to be both and to the extent to which it's private, does not necessarily mean that it is therefore less public. The public side lies in the accountability and the quality control. Now we have to write reports on our students every year and students have to write reports as well…it's a new expectation. So there's the public side. If I've got a gripe about my supervisor, I can legitimately put it down on paper in a report…bang…there it is…which is good. It wasn't there before, the student can be very powerless in this relationship…as I was saying earlier, the power-distance thing. They can be the victim.

**RAY**

**Q:** Just one surprise question…I'm likely to ask this at the end of all the interviews. I'm interested in how you've experienced this interview…

**R:** I think it's insightful, enlightened. Because what it does achieve is to make me think about what I'm doing. In a sense …it assists me to think about my thinking of my research and my relationship with my supervisor…'what's it's purpose…what does it feel like'…and reflect on it. It's another avenue to make a reflection on a relationship which one would've thought, it's an automatic one. Because you are a Master's research student, you need to have a supervisor, it gives you that chance to look back at it. Because, ja, it questions…'What is this relationship? What is the purpose of this relationship?' It's stimulating because it's triggers off a new thinking of a relationship that you thought is totally automatic.

**R:** A conversation is always insightful. Although this may be a forced situation, in the way it's been conducted I think it's very much informal…almost personal. It makes it more of a conversation type of experience…an exchange, for you of something that's based on building your knowledge, and for me on reflecting on the knowledge that I'm developing…and making sense of my experience. It gives me an opportunity to reflect back on what I have done, why I am doing it, what my experience of it is ….to gain a better insight into why I am engaging in this process. So, yes, it's useful conversations that we have.

**R:** I think this is what is significant about the interviews too…in a sense it allows me to look back again and see where I'm coming from. I would've liked it if you'd have come a year later, because it possibly would have assisted me in a lot of ways because I would have been into it in great depth. If you were coming a year later then surely this would have been something that I could have used to stimulate my research. Because with somebody coming to you and asking you pertinent questions as to what it is you're doing, and why are you doing it, and how is the relationship working for you? I think it's insightful.

**R:** [about constructing metaphors] Although I've tried to separate according to the categories of your outline…it's all happened within one whole…so yes, it should be

linked…one happened as a result of the other…That's why I say its interrelated…it forms a tapestry that you can't draw apart because the one strand is always influencing the other one.

**Q:** I really enjoyed this session…I guess I'm like you, I enjoy sharing thoughts and experiences. I'm just a bit worried about some of my sharing. It could be construed, in terms of *research interview technique*…á lá Kvale and Saidman and similar instruction literature…as leading the conversation to where I need it to go…particularly the section I've marked, [Ray's replies to the questions: What do you think of Rhodes's standards? What do you think it stands for?] Maybe we should strike it off the transcript…what do you think? Please feel free to delete anything you think may fallen foul of this trap. Giving you the transcript to edit helps to keep me on the straight and narrow!

**R:** Maybe I can just go back to the last interview…because you suggested that you might want something to be removed because you thought you may be using leading questions, phrases. And the area, where I think you are concerned, how I read it, is the question of autonomy. Just to clarify…I am free to do the research the way I want to do it…so as a student my autonomy is guaranteed and safeguarded. The university does not have power over you…it has power as far as its own academic standards are concerned but your own ideas and thinking is entirely up to you. You have your own voice, if you have a story to tell, tell it.

**Q:** Oh. Ok. So did you take anything out of the transcript?

**R:** No…nothing.

**LUNA**

**L:** It was a nice vibe…drinking a cup of 'tea'…a glass of wine! It was fine. It's quite nice to talk about it because sometimes you actually realize certain things that you don't realize until you talk about it…because you start talking about it and you think 'actually, it's true, you know'.

**L:** [about constructing metaphors] Now the thing is, it's all the same, it's all part of the same thing…I cannot separate it. I wanted to find a nice word, but it's something to do with multi-faceted…it's like a ball of colours, but all the different colours don't stay in the same place.

**L:** I think if I've answered the kinds of things that you want me to answer then I'm happy. And I think it must be quite nice for you to have the two very different situations…it opens a whole comparative thing

**Q:** And then, the usual question…how have you experienced the interview?

**L:** Ah…and so now we have to say nice things! I found it very interesting. I wasn't very happy about doing it with Nadia because it's not nice to me and I actually feel insecure about what she told you about me…So, I didn't really like that particular one. But then I thought one has to be a bit grown up about things and you can't just talk about one that you feel happy with because the aim is not about me, the aim is about doing research that may be useful and hopefully what we have said about it is going to help you towards your research. I'm very interested in this topic. I think it's a great thing to do research on, that's why I wanted to be involved

**L:** I wanted to take part in it…I think it has helped me to reflect…like the thing of not being a good administrator…I somehow knew that but it helped me to reflect on it…and if I had stayed here, it would have helped me a lot for future purposes…some things I could maybe do better. And also, I've been quite 'down' about being here…it actually made me a

bit excited about some of the things I have done… So it was nice on the one hand. I would have preferred it if I didn't have to talk about the one [Nadia], but I did say yes.

**NADIA**

**N:** OK. It's been great… really nice using the idea of metaphor. At first I looked at it and I struggled with metaphor…as in what's that again! It's been quite difficult having to think about the process…because I think I've just been trying to get back to a nice place…not so much dealing with all this…in an analytical sort of way. It's been good…and nice questions as well

**N:** I should ask…and how has your experience been?

**Q:** I've enjoyed it…I'm very inexperienced, so I'm always a bit nervous about it…have I posed things correctly…am I going in the right direction? So I've tried to leave it quite open and then I worry about how much control I'm supposed to have. It's been interesting. I've actually enjoyed the interviewing much more than I thought I would. I was very nervous at first and it's been easier than I thought it would be… I think I gave up in the end on the shoulds and should nots. In the end I prefer to listen and sometimes have a bit of a conversation.

**N:** [about constructing metaphors] I think using the metaphor…almost memory work helps a lot. Because when I think of my interviews…you're sort of thinking of the next step. 'Should I ask about that?' and 'the other thing was also interesting' and thinking what you can ask or not, and whether you're allowed to say something or not …about yourself or…and when you transcribe…it's like 'what was I thinking about then?'

**ANDY**

**A:** Ja…great…I've enjoyed it. It's quite useful, in the sense that I'm thinking about this a bit more…I *might*…I mean, I think about it, but I don't necessarily formulate it in any compact way to myself. And just to think about commonalities between the various students that I've had is quite useful. So, thanks…ja…It's been very relaxed… nice.

**A:** I did think about it a little bit in the car this morning…it's about the only free time I've had. And the one's that come up are very reductive…you talk about capturing essences…I thought, no…it's not right. So I don't know what to do about that…it's a complex thing.

**Q:** OhK

**A:** But I don't know, maybe you can guide somehow.

**Q:** Well…we can play…put it that way. We can look at the metaphors that you think are quite reductive and maybe something comes out of that and we can play with it?

**A:** Hmmm. So, are you determined that I come up with something!?

**Q:** It would be nice…we can play…it can be something that comes up immediately, you know…

**A:** Well, ja, I suppose.

It's not holistic enough, ja, it's reductive. If one could combine a metaphor of planets revolving and a spider web and dogs playing in a field and people climbing a ladder…and you put all those together somehow, maybe you'd start capturing something of the relationship…but to put it in one metaphor doesn't feel right for me.

**Q:** Aw jeez…I'm trying on the one hand to hear your resistance and respect that and on the other hand…

**A:** Well…as long as you build in my resistance...that's fine…my misgivings about metaphoric narrownesses…One can maybe suck just about anything out of any metaphor one chooses if one tries hard enough.

**A:** I've enjoyed this one as much as the last one…it's fine. It's not something that I've found a need to think about in the intervening period. It went well so I didn't feel 'I should

have said that' and you gave me the transcript anyway …with a few comments I had on that…which was fine. So I haven't thought about it much really. I've felt totally relaxed about what you're doing and I think I've said all I need to.

**MOLLY**

**M:** I feel slightly uncomfortable because I'm aware that it's an artificial situation…but it's fine. It's fun as well because you've been asking me these questions that make me think.

**M:** [about constructing metaphors] When you gave them to me I thought I can't possibly think of metaphors. And then the one for my supervisor came to me almost immediately… and that's jungle gyms….it's very difficult to unpack metaphors…to explain them. I sense that you're wanting me to say more, but I don't really have any more to say. I've got the picture in my head and I don't know if I've conveyed it to you, but that's about as far as I can go…

**M:** I think this interview is quite different from the others. I would never have thought about what I'm doing in these terms so it's been digging around a little and then getting insights….otherwise I don't think that I'd ever have imagined Andy and I playing around on the organic jungle gym. It's been fun, thanx. And the series…I think it's got easier as it's gone along…at first it was a bit intimidating…not because of you, but because I didn't know what to expect, or what you were going to ask me, or was I going to make a fool of myself…and all those things. And that little tape winding away…it makes it very solid. And I think the middle interview…the second one went better than the first one…the typescript. I felt that I was more coherent than on the first one.

Shoo…I think I might miss them It's been good for me…it's been worthwhile for me as well. I'm pleased I've done it. Thanx.

## 2. RAW DATA

As stated before, presenting raw data allows the reader to examine participants' statements in the context of the interviews. Editing to the raw data comprises the omission of statements that have no relevance to the research focus and editing relating to confidentiality.

The first raw data transcript - Howard's first interview - shows how data were coded in the open and axial coding phases of analysis. Underlining in colour is used within the text to denote open codes. Symbols are used to represent axial codes and are shown in the left hand column of the pages.

Open (theme) codes:

| | |
|---|---|
| O | Autonomy |
| O | Dependency |
| O | Strategies of resistance |
| O | Expectations |
| O | Abilities |
| O | Professional care |
| O | Pastoral care |
| O | Conflict – difficulties, inconsistencies, fear, discomfort |
| O | Agreement – consistencies, positive developments, happiness |
| O | Undecided |
| Multi-coloured | Relates to more than one code – colours as above |

Axial (relational) codes:

| | |
|---|---|
| $ | What is sayable (usually followed by a, h, and/or c) |
| $a | What is sayable in anarchic discourse |
| $h | What is sayable in humanistic discourse |
| $c | What is sayable in commercial discourse |
| # | Subject position (sometimes followed by w, m, and/ or ss) |
| #w | Worldview |
| #m | Motivation |
| #ss | Matching of supervisor to student |
| + | Positioning the other |
| [no flag] | Interpersonal power |
| * | Institutional power (sometimes followed by d, e, and/or c) |
| *d | Institutional power: competing discourses |
| *e | Institutional power: expectations |
| *c | Institutional power: care |
| & | What is visible |

Axial codes

## 2. RAW DATA

### 2.1 HOWARD

**Transcript of first interview**

**Q:** Thank you very much for doing this. I really appreciate your time. So…perhaps we can kick off with the first question: What motivates you to supervise?

**H:** Well…it's like teaching. It feels like teaching…so it's really an extension of my job, my role as a teacher. And *that* I take quite seriously…that's kind of who I am…in this role of a teacher…somehow I think…I don't really think that I have much to *teach*, but I do think that I am able to…somehow…to kind of unlock what people already have…to know, to find out, ways of developing that…that seems to be something I can do. It's not really about *tell* people…they don't so much *learn* from me ….so much as I'm a kind of…*trigger*.

**Q:** Mmm…like …growing people?

**H:** Ja. I think it's possible for them to see…that they have all this knowledge, talent, skill…it's about developing what they already *have*. The final quest, really, is to find *themselves*… that's really why we learn, and why I am teaching…to help people find out who they are.

So…supervision…I kind of like teaching in that way…you're guiding someone as they're grappling to formulate this research question out of their interest in the field…at first it's very wooly and vague. The process is one of focusing and narrowing down, but simultaneously a broadening out the person's ability. Particularly when [like Ray] they come from a disadvantaged background, educationally…they're ill prepared…there's not a challenge to think much. And so there are two things happening simultaneously: one is a narrowing down to make the research *work* but, at the same time there's a broadening

#w
*c #m

out…of self expression, in a philosophic sense, without which they can't get anywhere either…because a research culture springs from that…from roots. There's a need in education to make an ontological contribution…it's quite an important one which can be the one to get them over the hump…of how they've been taught themselves.

#w
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If you ask questions like: What do *you* think reality is?' How do you deal with that without the grounding…how to focus on psychological and epistemological issues? One needs to go back to first processes. It's very much the case with students like Ray, who have come a narrow route…they've come through a very impoverished education system where they really have *not* been encouraged.

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At the other end of the scale, occasionally I get the high flying minded student…who's comes through a route like where I come from, and probably where *you're* coming from…they're very ready to engage critically…they're used to that…and that's two different experiences…and then you fly. Supervision sessions are flights…they take off and within an hour you talk theology, philosophy, psychology. You're out *there*…you come back… and off you go again…and a week later you come back…it's really much, much richer. Really immensely different. I would think that even though the person's not changing…it's a *readjustment*, really…to get on. They're really so much better off. Whereas people like Ray…there comes a sense of change…he can actually become a different person.

#m +
$h

**Q:** I was going to say…meeting the teaching *together* with the growth of the person…addressing both….

+

**H:** Yes…if he works hard. He seems to want to…work hard. I think the signs are there, that there's going to be a certain sort of …he'll never be the satisfied again with what he used to be. He won't be satisfied with what goes on in schools and education…he will *always* be a pain in the ass…to so called institutions and power…which is really what everyone in education should have in common…to prod…at improving and asking questions.

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*d
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*e Naturally I supervise all sorts of students, I have to…it's part of my job. You have to produce a certain number of successful Master's candidates. Supervision is good in that

#m way…that it's necessary. That makes it sound a bit like a job…that's not really what it is

*e for me, but I do need to say…there is an expectation that I will supervise.

**Q:** Is there pressure in terms of the amount of students that are expected to get through in terms of time and numbers?

*de **H:** There is a certain pressure. We're not an undergrad market, so it never happens… as much as it happens in, say, Psychology or English, where there are hundreds of first years. That's a really great situation for the university. There's one teacher with 400 students…I mean do the math…We *never* have that, it *never* happens…the closest we get…is about 40…with one lecturer…even *then* we may put two lecturers in…'cause we're not actually teaching, we're work-shopping…that's the scenario here…And because of that, because we don't have that nice scenario of lots of students and one lecturer, we are expected to have more happening here. Yeah, we have traditionally had up to 100 Master's students on the books.

**Q:** Wow…that's a lot

* # **H:** I think … it's obviously the right number, 'cause in our last revue we came out OK…middle of the heap of the departments. They rate departments on how viable they

* $c are. That's the thing these days…you can't just do what you like…you've got to be quite

*e #m strategic and say…well…is it worth doing? What's it bringing in and what's it taking out…and what's the sum of that? Then they rate you on that departmental review. The last review was two years ago and we came out around the middle of the heap, so we're

* # regarded as a department that's OK…not losing…not making…kind of *there*. The guys

*d who make big bucks are the sciences…the top earners…huge numbers…you know, they can lecture to quite a lot of people at the same time. Departments that have big first year classes always do well…for obvious reasons. The sciences, by and large, do well. They

may not only have more numbers of students, but sciences are more heavily subsidized…so a sciences graduate earns a lot more than a humanities graduate. *d

**Q**: And what about the time pressure? I understand there's time pressure on a Master's student to finish in a year.

**H:** Well, time has *become* an issue…in the last 3 years we've become more aware of how important it is…and again it's pure economics. Our students are almost invariably part-time students, so they're expected to finish in two years…two years part time equivalent…that's full subsidy. So if a Master's student earns the university R50 000, which I think is about right, you get first prize. If you get them through in two years...You earn R50 000. Well done. If they go into a third year it's halved. If they go into a fourth year you lose it. So the pressure now is *huge*. If a student goes into a fourth year…that student is still taking the supervisor's time and the university's time but they're bringing b-all in…except the student fees…which is not much, compared to the subsidies. Ja…there is considerably more pressure on throughput. We're all talking about cost…and how we can increase throughput. *e $c

**Q:** Are students made aware of that?

**H:** Yes. Very much so. +

**Q:** OK. At least they're aware of that, because some departments don't make students aware of that…so often the pressure is very much on the academics, without the students even realizing the extent to which they add to that.

**H:** No…we're very different here…we're very up-front. #m

**Q:** And tell me…Ray…how is it that you came to supervise him in particular?

#ss

**H:** Yeah…it's an interesting process because we deliver the course jointly, my colleague and I. The more we talk, the more we explore their research leanings, the clearer it becomes that this is my call…my game…yes, I'm interested in *that*…I know more…I've done more research in that field…supervised more in that field, say, than my colleague has. So there's the expertise - if you can all it that - element. And the other is much more mysterious…the one you'll find far more interesting...I suspect. And that's the personal one…that you just take to some people much more easily than you do to others…If I get a really good vibe from someone…early on…I'm going to try and get that student, quite deliberately...almost make *sure* I get that student to supervise. I guess something interesting's going on there…because this is the start of relationship…and it's quite an important one. It's fraught with problems…it's fragile, dangerous, explosive...it's all those things. It's also potentially very rewarding…for both…certainly for me. So, there's got to

+ be something I *like* about the person…something that interests me, otherwise it's a bit of a plod.

**Q:** And did he come with a loosely formulated idea of what he wanted to research?

+ **H:** Yes...but…it was less…in one way…and tight in another. He had a very strong agenda. He was actually wanting to do research for the wrong reasons.

**Q:** OK…and what are those…wrong reasons?

**H:** It's quite common…with us. A lot of people come from education…they come from

+ schools, and if they come from the kind of groups we're talking about…the historically disadvantaged groups…they probably come from largely dysfunctional organizations and they're experiencing a largely dysfunctional system. And the schools that suffer the result of Bisho's incompetence are not the ex model C…that is to say the ex-white schools…and nor the private schools, because they're very strong…the infrastructure is there. They have a culture of leadership and learning that's… *there*. Can't be shaken. Not easily…The schools that *are* affected are the ex black schools…by Bisho's incompetence…because they don't *have* the infrastructure. They don't *have* the culture of success…so they really

get stuffed around so much by Bisho. And they are largely, unfortunately, dysfunctional
+ schools. So the students coming in from those contexts…they want to expose this dysfunctionality or incompetence. But that's not a good reason for research. We all know these schools are falling apart and not working, and we kind of know why…so…just what
+ do you want to do with this research? And you realize they're on a bit of a plak.

**Q:** Like a formal protest…bound…in a book

**H:** I mean…do research to show officially and formally how *strongly* they disapprove of what's happening? How *incensed* they are by the injustice and the incompetence, the lack
+ of professionalism. And as a result of that position, very often their only writing is rhetoric.

+ They sound like politicians…their speeches…that's how they write. Which is very problematic. The discourse of academic writing…is quite hard to acquire…if you haven't grown up with it. Invariably, early versions of proposals from students who have that kind of *mission* is utter rubbish…you've got to throw the thing away, virtually. Of course you
$ah can't *say* that…you have to lead them towards *seeing* it…towards seeing that empty words and rhetoric… it's not academic writing. It's nothing. It's empty. They need to go to the next level. They need also to problematize their own position. *Huge.* But that's it. That's
#m the move you've got to make happen…or it'll never happen, for them.

There's no critical engagement. So that's the big job, to move them to a level where they
$ah #m can think critically, where the point of research is not simply to register your protest….that's not research.

**Q:** Bringing someone towards critical and academic thinking…that's quite a task…

$ah #m **H:** Ja…and the change…it's about how to make them change. The change includes taking on board that discourse…understanding it, being able to use it…interacting,
#w correcting, processing…and you can't *do* that unless you are *there* as a person.

**Q:** I suppose… it strikes me … the difference between supervising and teaching as *job*, or as *vocation.…*

# **H:** Yeah…I do quite a lot of external examining so I see a lot of theses from other universities…dissertations that come along…where what I get is a piece of absolutely dead research. A complete oversimplification of complex problem…a superficial bit of $ enquiry…couple of questionnaires…an attempt at analyzing…very superficial data. 'Here's my findings, thanks very much…give me my Master's'. Nothing's happened here. #m You see, *that* for me would not be supervision…I would say that there hasn't been supervision at *all* in that case. There would have been *direction*…'*This* is what you need to do…chapter one should be like *that*, chapter two like *that*…. Do that, and we'll give you your Master's.'

**Q:** So…that leads me to think of the difference between product and process, really…

**H:** Ja…but you can't undervalue the product…I wouldn't want to make that mistake. It is important. It's truly an enormous thing, to produce the Master's…but if the process has $h been unhappy, or dissatisfying, or one in which no real growth has occurred…really…I #m would not be satisfied…it's not a good sense of fulfilment. I'd feel like I failed …it's just the product. But the products are important for the reasons we've mentioned, the *e university wants them, and of course the students want them…The world wants them. And there's something quite magic about the finished product…

**Q:** So talking about product and process, why do you think Ray decided to do a Master's?

+ **H:** Well, I think Ray is a natural inquirer. He's a naturally critical person who's unhappy and dissatisfied…who thinks…well, it's mess out there…particularly in his field of interest… the implementation of curriculum 2005…which has been a fiasco in the past…so there's nothing new *there*. He did Honours with us…did well in it…one of our top students. So he came *in* from a stronger position…He had at least been exposed to

critical thinking and been taken down that road. Nevertheless…his first proposal was rubbish…rhetoric. However…there was an inkling…an idea that I liked. I think he's naturally inclined to scholarship.

**Q:** Ah…so…good So…the process so far, as you've described it to me…the nurturing of a critical discourse…a discourse of research …leading him away from the rhetoric…what have been his resistances…what has been difficult to bring him up to the point that he's at now?

**H:** I think there's a lack of confidence. Some pressure from the Honours…In Ray's case…a lack of confidence. Even though he came from Honours. *You* must know, what courage it takes to write a proposal?

To put yourself down on paper…I mean…'Can I show this to anyone?'. And then…ouch …cringe while they read it. So I think he was very short on confidence there, I felt. Partly still the old legacy of committing…to yourself…that's *me* on paper. And you know…what *is* text? *We* don't look at text as fixed in any way. I mean text is text. It's negotiable.

You've got to test it…'So *this* is what you think? *Why*? But you could think *that*, couldn't you?' *Everything* they read…we want their theses to be different…But that's not a part of the tradition of the kind of education that he would have had, excepting in the Honours year. So, he fell back on what he knew…almost as though he shoved the Honours year aside. He said 'But who am I? I'm this unhappy person who wants to know about education…so let me do a proposal' and… aghh…a sort of reversal.

**Q:** I'm wondering…how did he manage to cope? How did you manage to ease him through that?

**H:** Yeah. That's delicate of course. It's a tricky area…talking about the person who's put himself on paper…exposed himself. Vulnerable. Very…vulnerable. The way we get

round it actually, is that we meet in a group and we copy everything everyone's written in the last two weeks…10 copies…dish them out. 'Right, let's go…talk us through it. Have you read it? Yes, I've read it. Questions?' And then my colleague and I hold back. And they don't ask many…not yet. And then the group, later on...pretty well led by my colleague and I…will begin asking really *hard* questions: 'What did you mean there?' or 'Is that a really genuine research question?'

+ $a Their response is that they'll make notes, and try to answer…they're exploring this shaky terrain. One way that works well…let the group contradict…so I'm not personally speaking. 'It's up for discussion, let's go.' But it usually leads to a face-to-face session.

+ & He was struggling…struggling so *much* to work out what he was doing…He couldn't work out what was really at the *core* and the *heart* of his study, so he was…using the rhetoric of politicians. 'Here it is…here's my writing'. It turned out well because…our session was a breakthrough session…I'll say that…that Ray is on track.

**Q:** How did that happen?

**H:** Ah, it happened in his head. Between the group session and the individual session, about a week passed…maybe more, maybe two weeks…and as he walked in, he said two things. And I knew that he was through. It's amazing…that magic & + moment…satisfying…it's very fine thing to see…for anyone…but in the *context* of where he comes from, and where I thought he might be going…those moments are *extremely* $ah profound…He said: 'You know what's wrong? Our schools are waiting for someone from the outside to change things…to make things happen. It should be coming from us'…An & hour later, that board was filled…with thoughts…Wow. Incredible…walked out of here on a kind of high

**Q:** How fabulous!…Turning things around.

**H:** Oh yeah…that happens. I hope that he *read* more. I *did* give him a key article…(I give them all a key article)…around agency…structure…and the tension between agency and structure. $a

**Q:** When you say agency?

**H:** Agency being individual *action*…willful action…willed action. Structure, call it what you like…systems. Institutionalized, structured, systemic. *There's* a tension…which is at the heart of every organization. That's it. The study of leadership and management for over a hundred years has concerned itself with that. $a

**Q:** With the balancing of these issues?

**H:** That's it…that's at the heart of management…and leadership. Leadership is slightly different…The anarchic argument….*that* I find appealing…I base my own management and leadership style on that. And…the *organization*…there is actually no such thing as an organization…that's the first thing…do you realize? There is no such thing as an organization $a #wm

**Q:** I'm intrigued…

**H:** I mean…it's not like God made them. They're not like trees. We make them…we create structures…so that something can happen…and sometimes it's useful to have hardly any structures…otherwise the structures can get in the way…of agency…quite frankly. Academic institutions are beautiful examples of that and academic departments…I mean if you overload them with structures you've had it. You really don't want to overburden academics with too much bureaucracy. OK. Structure and agency?…the only structure that makes sense is the structure that agency brings about. $a * $a $a

So…bearing in mind….to return…I think that's where Ray saw himself…he suddenly saw 'That's where I am, that's where my interest is'. +

I would now expect…I haven't seen him since…but I would now expect that when I see
+ him again…and I hope I won't be disappointed…to see an honest grappling with a real issue. It may be quite naïve, I expect, quite unsophisticated…but it'll be a great beginning.

**Q:** I'm wondering…do you have any ideas on what he may be expecting of you, in terms of your input…expertise? Has he expressed any sort of…

**H:** No. I don't know what you'll find…speaking to other people who supervise…but it's very rare to get *real* feedback from students about how I'm doing. By and large I have to infer from body language…their response and so on. The sorts of students that I work with
+ #ss mostly are quite dependent on me. That's a worrying part of the job…the dependency. I
+ sometimes feel that they wouldn't know how to go to the next stage if I didn't tell them what to do. So it's hard for them to give feedback.

**Q:** Do you think it would be useful to have feedback?

*ec **H:** Well it happens actually…It's now institutionalized…the practice of supervision. Supervisory practice reports are the rule… *rule*…regulation. With effect from this year, every Master's and PhD student has to write a report at the end of year…about how supervision's going. And the supervisor has to report on every student. Well it's not actually a report…it's a form. It's a quality assurance procedure…so it's *that* kind of background…tied into a kind of worldwide obsession and preoccupation with quality
# assurance. Not that I'm against it…I believe in quality assurance. I believe that we should look for ways of ensuring quality…guaranteeing quality….'cause there's so much crap. I read a lot of crap.

But I'm completely into quality assurance…I will therefore, at the end of this
*ec # year…officially…get feedback from all the students…and they'll get to see my report on them. But with feedback…from students on what *I'm* doing…there's not a lot of that…even with the group of high flyers…the one's I was speaking about earlier. It's very

+ unlikely that they will ever say…'You're doing a good job supervising or thank you for this or….they kinda just…'Ok that's it!' But I think that's normal…part and parcel of
# being a teacher.

**Q:** So your style…how would you describe the tension between the pastoral and the academic, or professional, aspects of working with Ray…the amount of directing…the dependency?

# **H:** Well…everyone needs direction really. The dependency is the most worrying thing for me. The pastoral role increases in an inverse proportion to the level of sophistication of
$ the student's background…so if they've come from a really horrible, impoverished background, where they've never had to think, really, or write an essay…'cause that happens…we get Master's students that have never written an essay. Never written anything more than ten lines…with an Honours degree! Then of course, the dependency
+ # level rises hugely. If you don't actually map out the next step, they've had it…but in a remarkably short period of time they can turn a corner.

# …And on the other end of the scale there are be the likes of (names) who have challenged *me*.

**Q:** Well, I guess I'll need to start winding down now. I'm interested in how you've experienced this interview today?

**H:** The interview? Lovely. I like talking about what I do, you see. I guess most people do. You know, I've done so much interviewing…it's great to be on the other end. It's interesting. In fact…I've all the time been thinking about what's happening…because I'm a researcher…so *that* sort of attention, I was quite conscious of, today. Yes. I'm as interested in the process as much as the content. I'm fascinated by the phenomenon of interviewing…the process of interviewing…what you can do with it. I'll be fascinated to see what you get out of Ray. I'd be very interested to see how he describes what I've described…about him…very curious.

# +

Ja…I thought you handled the interview extremely well. Gave me lots of room. When it seemed to me like I was now really…not answering the question any more…and talking about my own passions and interests…you let me do it.

**Q:** Well...thanx a lot Howard.

**Written Communication**

#

**H:** …On reading the transcript and listening to the recording, I realized how unclear I am about the dependency/power/guide issue. Thanks for making it surface.

**Transcript of second interview**

**Q:** If you'd like to talk about constructing a metaphor…

**H:** I was a bit puzzled by why you're doing this…I'm a bit uncomfortable about consciously trying to construct a metaphor. [explains about metaphor]

**Q:** There was one there…you referred to yourself as a trigger.

**H:** A trigger. Hmm. Ja. The other problem I have with the task really is that I don't know that I could produce one that could capture the complexity of what's happening in the supervision. Ray, by the way, has finished his proposal and it's bloody good…

**Q:** Oh…great…

**H:** Excellent…that breakthrough he had was just exactly right. He then submitted another draft with very few problems and then the final one came in a couple of days ago, and it's ready. We're sending it through to Higher Degrees.

So…the metaphor…I think the trigger is helpful. The difficulty with the metaphor is that it's such a rich thing - it's so complex. On one hand you're almost the teacher and pupil kind of relationship…because you're starting from a long way away, in a sense, as an academic. There's a lot of fairly direct guidance that has to happen. But, at the same time he brings so much anyway, as a rich person himself, which may not be what is normally valued *academic* knowledge…he brings his own experience and his own gut-feel and his interest and who he is as a person. So immediately then, the thought of a metaphor that suggests a power distance is not really appropriate anymore. Of course there is a power distance, you can't get away from that, you'd be naïve to think that there isn't…I don't think one can get away from that, there's a power distance, but I try to play that down as much as possible. Sometimes to a fault where it's so obvious what a student should be doing and he's not doing it and I won't tell him: 'This is what you should do'. I really want him to find out either what *I* think he should do, or

something else that *he* thinks he should do, which will lead him out of the kind of problem… of being stuck, perhaps.

I think there's quite a strong nurturing element…and I mean that in the best sense of that word. I don't think it has a bad sense, it's such a nice word…nurturing. I think students need nurturing. I think we all need nurturing, actually, all the time. But only, here's a particular case where a student is embarking on a fairly big piece of research and there has to be quite a lot of caring going on. So, there's an element there of…it sounds a bit corny…of parenting. I'm parenting him through, because he's opted to go into a period of growth…he doesn't just want a degree, you know…it's more than that. In any case, studying with me, he's not going to just get a degree. If I don't see evidence of development and growth we're not going to get there. So there's also a suggestion of a parent-child metaphor lying around with all my students. It's quite strong with Ray, interestingly. It's less strong with others. And that's a personality thing…the kind of guy he is…with his beautiful open face and…you know how he is…

**Q:** …smiling, giving…

**H:** He's this wonderful man who I think at heart is a gentle person…and kind of easy to nurture, for that reason. He invites it…he's prepared to make himself quite vulnerable, which not all students are. Some of my students, I don't get terribly close to them and it's more of the supervisor-student relationship…the distance is perhaps a bit bigger. But he's one of those whom I think I might get really close to as the process goes on. And we'll be good friends I think forever after that. So there's that element.

I thought a bit about the Master-apprentice sort of obvious thing...the apprentice learning from the Master, but I don't like it much. Perhaps because it emphasizes the power-distance and I don't want there to be much. I don't want that to be uppermost in what we do and how we do this thing. But there's an element of it…and you can't ignore it, because he's learning conventions. He's learning a genre that he doesn't know. I've got to teach it to him actually. It could be as simple as saying 'This is not how you do a reference…the comma's in the

wrong place' or as complex as 'Wow, this paragraph is muddled, it's murky, can we unravel it?' or 'You haven't referred to this really significant writer in the field, you just ignored the guy or the woman'…it can get to that. Whatever it may be, he's learning a genre and perhaps unfortunately, it's a fairly laid-down, it's full of convention it's fairly clear expectations…generally quite good ones. And I have to teach it to him, so he is in a sense, apprenticed.

**Q:** Almost like a mentorship?

**H:** Hmm…mentor wouldn't have come to me…

**Q:** …because in some of the literature that I read from abroad…well, in the U.S.A. they don't even use the word supervisor…they call it promoter…

**H:** …or advisor…Mentor…means many things. In it's loftiest expression…people refer to others as their mentors in a very general sense…meaning they've learned so much from them…they are like touchstones of wisdom…and all sorts of things. So there's that broad, fairly lofty idea of mentoring. We use the word in our department quite commonly but we use it in its professional sense…Essentially I think…perhaps because of my experience, of mentoring in its active form as you're being mentored into something. So if someone new arrives on the staff the person needs to be mentored into the position.

**Q:** Ok, I'm with you. I hear that.

**H:** And that's why it wouldn't come to mind to use with Ray, because I'm not mentoring him into anything, I don't think. I'm not consciously making him more promotable. I'm not introducing him to an academic life. I doubt if he'll ever leave teaching, he loves teaching.

**Q:** Why the word popped to mind for me, was because of something you said in the earlier interview and mentioned this time as well…about bringing the person that you are working

with to a greater sense of themselves…of who they are. And I was thinking of mentoring in that sense…but as you said, nurturing is a very good word...a much better word…

**H:** You see, I don't know that mentoring says that, really…but it is clouded by my experience…for me it's very deliberately grooming someone into a kind of pre-determined place, whereas I don't actually know where he's going. I don't think he does either…we'll both be surprised at the end of next year to see where he's ended up…I hope, you know.

**Q:** Mmm, nice.

**H:** It's like a journey. So fellow-traveler I'd go with. I'm probably the guide…yes, I am. Up to a point. I'll be the guide, the one walking in front, finding the track and saying 'That's not the way, this is the way' but there will certainly be a point soon, perhaps halfway through next year, when he will be there, *he'll* be the guide, *he'll* be so far in his studies…it will have taken its shape, and he'll know what to do. Especially when he's crossed the really big one, where all my students need guidance, which is handling the data. Designing the thing is easy, explaining what you're doing and how you're going to do it… all of that is really a piece of cake…doing the required reading, writing it up. Collect your data, even that is easy…I mean, here we are…*now*! Here it is…mountains of data… now what?! Every student I've had had come to that point…'now what?', or they've come into my office with red-rimmed eyes saying 'I've read this stuff over and over, there's nothing here. I've wasted my time!' And within 20 minutes I've shown them that there's great wealth on every page, and they just couldn't see it. In a sense they forget what they're looking for, or rather, they never actually know what they're looking for. They think they're looking for answers but in this kind of research there aren't any answers…there are almost more questions. Because they don't see any answers they get terribly worried…So I think when he's past that stage, which I expect will happen, he'll be out in front, and I'll be watching him disappear! So I think the fellow traveler metaphor I like quite a lot…it is a journey…and it's full of hazards, cross-trails and quick side little sorts of….! So if you know the way….'go with me, you better know which are the right paths, and for a while I'd need to show you that'. Because, in fact, after a point, I *won't* know. It's not my research, it's *his*. And that's important for me. It's got to be his all

the way…I think supervisors generally struggle with just how far to go. If a chapter comes in and it's bloody awful and it's all over the place, what do you do? Do you actually strongly suggest this is how it should be restructured? Do you simply give it back and say 'It needs restructuring, go and do it'? Do *you* restructure it…like do a new outline and say 'Write it like that!'? Where do you draw the line? And that's *hard*. It's become harder and harder the more open we've become to registering students who've come from appalling backgrounds, and they really don't know what you're talking about when you say 'there's no structure' or 'there's no argument in *here*'…they don't understand it. So just how strong your guidance is, is always problematic. If you are out in front on this journey all the way then you're in deep trouble, both of you, because in the end it's not going to be the student's work, and you can't then say that the student has learned anything or grown. Got a degree. Great. So what.

So you look for *that*…sometimes it's a moment, sometimes it's happened. It's happened with Ray. The reason why I know that Ray will lead this thing through is because of what happened just a few months ago…because of the breakthrough he had in his thinking…where he came to me and said 'This is what I want to do. This is what the problem is'.

**Q:** …So it seems there's quite an art to finding the balance between how much direction to give and how much the person needs to explore themselves?

I'm also quite interested…maybe you could tell me what you think…in terms of funding and in terms of the type of research that gets done: somebody comes to you, like Ray, and he wants to do *that* particular research. There's a lot of movement now towards group-work…I've heard about some other departments…where students won't come in with self-generated research topics…[and] they are being encouraged to work on topics of the supervisors' choice.

**H:** The science research model is a very successful one from almost every point of view, except the one that matters most, which is 'to what extent does this research mean anything to *you* as a student? Is this *it* for you? Is this where your passion is? Is this where your heart beats?' So, with that as a basic point of departure, *if* that is your point of departure, then

you'd be very reluctant to present ready-made programs of research with neatly defined areas for each student. And apart from that, it's quite difficult actually in the social and human sciences to take a big issue and break it into its parts. It's not easy to do because it's not an exact science. So I think the success of the scientific model in some way links with who they *are*, who they've *chosen* to be…and they're just different people, actually.

I talk a lot to the hard scientists at Rhodes. I tackle a lot of them on things like research, for example, and we start talking about the ethical implications of what they do, and the philosophical underpinnings. They usually don't know what I'm talking about…My point is…I don't think they think enough about what they do and why they do it. And they don't for a moment think that there might be another way of doing it, that another way of research is actually possible, and perhaps valuable and va*lid*.

**Q:** …and then there's publication afterwards as well…

**H:** Absolutely…Well, I think we've got a lot to learn from the model, let's not slam the thing, because actually it works. It works in the sense that it's *productive*. People get through their research, and they publish. And the supervisor gets to publish as second author, and sometimes first, because the postgraduate students are publishing. Also now, there's pressure on us from the NRF to apply for rating. Everybody now needs to be a rated scientist…which also comes from the hard sciences…the idea is that once you've got a rating, even if it's a C, you almost automatically get funding.

…The model is beginning to influence us though. I applied for a research grant this year and I put a lot of effort into it…took me bloody weeks to prepare. It's not a lot of money, nothing like what the scientists ask for. And I deliberately learned from them, I asked them 'How do you do it? Tell me what you do'. And they told me. And I put together my Master's students and one PhD and I looked at their fields of interest…*with* them…I didn't sit in an office and do it. *With* them, as a group. I said 'I'm applying for a grant. To get the grant, we need to kind of *prove*, that we're working on a project and that each of you is looking at one aspect of that project. OK?' 'Yes, yes'. They're happy with that. 'Now let's look at your interests and

see what emerges'. Not the other way around, you know. Rather, 'what are you doing and how does that make a project?' It worked like a bomb…for me. I haven't heard yet whether I've got it, but if I get it, then Ray will probably have his fees paid for him next year. I mean it's not a huge grant in the sense that he can now be a full-time student…anything like that…So it would be great to get it! It'll make a difference to all their lives. So there I was just very deliberately copying a science model.

**Q:** Well…you use it in a very different way to some of the implementations. Some of the departments use it in a way that doesn't actually consult with the students' interest. They're just saying 'This is the supervisor's interest, you have to be supervised and you have to do that [particular topic].' So there's no real consultation that underpins that, for the students to have some expression of who they are and what they want to do.

**H:** Yes, I would struggle with that. I don't think I could do that. *Real*ly. It does happen that students are just lost. They know that they want to do a Master's. There are hundreds of interesting things and they don't know where to focus and they're almost begging for me to give them something. Then we talk. We start exploring things…four, five, six options. Till I see their eyes light up…and 'OK…right! Let's go down that one.'

But, I must also say, against the argument that I've been giving, that there's room…there could be an argument for that kind of approach to research. I say that because of the context we're in. South Africa in 2002 is a country in deep trouble. The education system is a shambles. Schools are dysfunctional. It's worse than it's ever been, actually, to be truthful. There's a teacher shortage of crisis proportions. It's almost on us…well, it is on us…but it's going be just *impossible* actually, in three or four years time. I think the country's producing about a tenth of the teachers that it needs. Nobody wants to go into teaching. Colleges have all closed, there's just a few universities now, training teachers. So virtually everything you can think of is wrong…out there. And because of that context, it might actually be more appropriate for people like myself who have, I think, more of a birds eye view of the entire problem and its implications, to guide students quite strongly and say 'Actually, this needs looking at…this is a real problem'.

**Q:** It's focusing many energies…

**H:** That's right. As it turns out, this group…what they chose…is all stuff that I would have said is of crucial importance. So I didn't have to say, 'Well, you know, we actually don't want blue-sky research at a time like this'. With our country's history we want stuff that can actually kick in there and make a difference. They're all doing stuff that's very, absolutely, top priority…very practical. So fortunately, that happened.

**Q:** So M…he's doing individual research, but also poised on that…

**H:** He is, very much so. The size of the study is not important, although it could be. I'm going to find it hard to talk someone out of doing a small case-study qualitative research, perhaps of one or two or three cases. My view of that kind of research is that it's extremely valuable, and somebody with a positivistic leaning will say, 'But it isn't, it isn't valuable. You're just learning about one person!'

…'I mean what is this? Is this research?' 'No! Rather do a survey. Study a hundred people…then you produce findings that we can use'. Well, the fact is, that sort of research is a lot easier to do, because it's superficial. You're just skipping over the surface. 'Bang, bang, bang. Answer these ten questions, tabulate the answers, present them in percentages, graphs, whatever you want to call it. Absolutely simple stuff. But you don't learn anything…you don't learn anything you didn't know.

**Q:** It returns me to something you mentioned earlier about production of knowledge. I've been reading quite a bit of Foucault, and I'm using his conceptualization of power, which is quite loose really…power being relational. Not judging good or bad…or trying not to…and about power re-producing certain systems, or producing them. And I'm quite interested in how funding from universities…and it is arguably beyond the scope of this thesis, but still I can't help myself…how the whole, almost *bias* against qualitative work and encouragement of surface work re-produces, perhaps, the whole scientific paradigm…and *that* gets the

funding. And what *is* actually getting produced? And that's why I've been asking supervisors about *their* relationship with the university, and how funding works for them, or how publication works for them. You see what I mean?

**H:** …I think there's a cycle of course, going on there and it's changing. In my 10 years at this university, I've noticed a change…very slowly. It's still quite rare to have qualitative research be heard mentioned as highly regarded or as respectable as more positivistic or survey based stuff. I think you're on to something quite interesting there…in terms of the power game is very much there. That the funding goes only for that kind of research so only that kind of research gets produced, which feeds straight back into the cycle. Supervisors want to do that kind of research because it attracts the funding. Which is why I'm very interested to see if I am going to get my funding, because the research is all qualitative. Interestingly, though, politically, the NRF came to visit Rhodes to speak to academics generally and they communicated: 'This is the year of the social scientists, we really want to back you guys. So write your proposals'

**Q:** Well, if they can help with money and the qualitative researchers can help with quality research…it could work out very well….

**H:** The difficulty with qualitative research is that it's got to be read, you know. A rich case study is a marvelous thing, but you've got to read it. There's a commitment there. You can't absorb it and know it and see the implications by looking at a page where there's some neat graphs, and therefore make certain decisions that may influence policy. It's not like that, it's a slow process of reading it, taking it in, *and* it's cumulative, because you have to look at several studies in the same area.

…the other thing, qualitative research is just so hard to do…it's hard…talking about data. My students…said…they haven't got there yet, but they can see it's coming and *please* can they have a workshop on how to handle qualitative data. A workshop please, not a lecture. And don't give us more readings, we want to do it' They're absolutely right you know. I'd never thought of it…it just came from them

The other problem I have, of course…the classic one…is the literature review…that's a really hard thing to do…[Students] find it extremely hard to present it as anything else but a shopping list…names…a paragraph on this one and a paragraph on that one…until you're just tired of names. You think, what are you *saying*, for god sake. That's the most important, difficult things for them to do. For them to be present in it. That's my question always 'Where are *you* in this chapter…what are *you* saying?' [And they say] 'Am I not meant to be telling you what other people say?' 'Well, *no*, actually. I know what they say and your readers will probably know too. Ja, give an idea, but that's not the *point*. The point is, what are they saying about what you're *doing*. What *you're* doing. *You* drive this thing…not them…and you bring them in, simply to illustrate or'…..ahgrrrrr!!!

**Q:** All right…I won't take up too much more of your time. My experience of the interviews is that it's sometimes difficult being in-between the supervisors and their students…

**H:** Oh. OK. Well, I suppose it's personalities. It's also kind of how supervisors see their roles, I suppose. Or how threatened they feel, or how threatened students feel. It's a strange domain…it's public and private. It's got to be both and to the extent to which it's private, does not necessarily mean that it is therefore less public. The public side lies in the accountability and the quality control. Now we have to write reports on our students every year and students have to write reports as well…it's a new expectation. So there's the public side. If I've got a gripe about my supervisor, I can legitimately put it down on paper in a report…bang…there it is…which is good. It wasn't there before, the student can be very powerless in this relationship…as I was saying earlier, the power-distance thing. They can be the victim.

**Q:** …Is there anything else at all that …I'm sure there's loads I haven't covered…but that *you'd* like to cover?

**H:** No, I don't think so. I think what I'd perhaps like to stress is the changing nature of the relationship. And if that doesn't happen, there's trouble. That it's a relationship that is

dynamic…it's a process…not a thing, and it's appropriate in the earlier stages for a supervisor to be quite strongly in control and point the way, and it's equally appropriate to gradually step back. With Ray I expect now not to have too much guidance left. He's written a good proposal and a good proposal, really, it's half the work. I can't tell you how often students of mine have told me 'You know, I didn't know how to start my methodology chapter and then I remembered that I'd written something in my proposal and there it was. Suddenly I was off! I could do it!' And there you go. A good proposal…nothing to beat it. So I expect him to need a little…probably until he hits his data analysis…then he'll need a workshop. And then my role will be smaller after that, more like a reader…read, comment, read, comment. Maybe a final few comments and then a final hard look. I'm a bit of a pain when it comes to that, but my students accept it graciously.

**Q:** And…how have you experienced the interview today?

**H:** …Well, I enjoyed it, but you know, I'm not going to not enjoy it. I love what I do and I like talking about it. In fact, talking about it pushes you on. I said some things today that I couldn't have said a few days ago because I hadn't gone that route, hadn't thought it through. So my own thinking has been pushed ahead…the whole scientific thing you brought up has opened up all kinds of things to me. No, I enjoyed it very much…challenging…I found it challenging. I'm not really thinking consciously of your role, in terms of how intrusive you are, or manipulative. You've introduced three or four things into the interview, ideas, thoughts, notions, which were kind of fresh, different. I don't know whether they came from our first interview or not…I thought they were coming from there. I didn't think they were coming from out the blue. There's no reason why they shouldn't come out of the blue of course. But I didn't feel taken off guard at any point, so I assume actually that they were all coming from what we had said…maybe from what you've been talking about with other people. There are clearly things that are interesting you and you want to hear what I think about them and I was very happy to talk about all of them. I didn't feel uncomfortable. And I thought they were good leads into areas we haven't really discussed but which are pertinent to the question. So…ja…good experience.

**Q:** Thanx very much

**H:** Thank you.

**Written communication**

**Q:** In order to place your student-supervisor relationship in context…there is one area that I should perhaps have asked about more specifically, and that is: How do *you* experience your relationship to the university?

**H:** As a supervisor, I experience the university as co-operative, helpful, supportive. I think this university has tried hard to transform, to accommodate students who come from such impoverished backgrounds (educationally). Still a long way to go of course! But of course the issue is clouded by the fact that [there] is no university – as I said earlier, there is not such thing as an organization. There are only people and the structures they put in place. The powerful structures at this university do not neatly fit into one pattern and so they function differently, have different expectations and affect me differently. The more I write, the more I have to say – I'd rather talk about this if you have the time and need the data?

## 2.2 RAY

### Transcript of first interview

**Q:** Maybe we can just kick off with the first question…what motivates you…what made you study for your Master's?

**R:** My main motivation is work related. My Master's is in education and as an educator I'm trying to improve my own competence within my field of work. I've also been lucky because this is a rarity in education…to be allocated a promotion post at this school…because this is my second year here…which is at a management and leadership level. So part of my Master's is also geared towards that…to equip myself with the theoretical knowledge for management and leadership at school level and my topic is also geared towards that…as to what the role of a manager in a leadership position at this school. I'm also taking cognizance of the fact that the transitional phase that education is in, in South Africa…there's a lot of questions, and many a time there's not so many answers and I hope that through the Master's course which is an in-depth course and, by it's very nature, it also seems to be a very high level of qualification…that I will be able to gather the necessary theoretical knowledge that I can use within my field of work.

**Q:** Being inside the school system as you are, and as you say it generates a lot of questions…so you've been able to see…or know…what isn't working…and look at that.

**R:** I can't agree more…although I know that when trying out something…when you want to do something…that theoretical side of the thing may not be appropriate for the practical side of what you want to do. So I'm aware of that. And the reason why I gear myself towards this research is partially, also, to find out from a research perspective, if the theoretical ideas that will challenge my understanding of leadership and management can be applied to a setting…the setting that I will probably research…and when I gather that experience…will I be able to use it later in my work situation.

**Q:** And so you see how they fit. And the setting you're going to be researching in?

**R:** It's going to be in a school setting. My intention is to get a sample. My initial thinking is that I will do it in one school. It will be a case study that I will do, but to get the case study that I will feel comfortable with, and that maybe will suit my theoretical direction that I want to take…which will also bring up questions and answers…I will first try to get a broad sample and then narrow it down after that, to one specific school, based on the feedback that I might get back from the different schools. My first intention is to send out questionnaires to the different schools and from that I will gather which one will suit my need and the need of my research…and then I will focus on that specific case.

**Q:** Very *thorough*. So, that takes quite a bit of time, I'd imagine, but it's a nice way to do it.

**R:** Luckily for me I don't have to complete it in six months…It's over two years, so I still have time to kill. So I won't have so many time constraints on me…So there's time for me to follow other routes to get to my sample.

**Q:** So you chose your topic as you are already in this field…and the promotion to a management position…that's exciting…and wanting to take it further…that's great…it's a good qualification to have.

**R:** Yes…with the qualification framework it is incentive…only for promotion purposes…it doesn't do anything when it comes to your remuneration. It's not that your salary is increased - it's only a stepping stone. Say for instance, if hypothetically I wanted to be the Minister of Education, I might be able to. Personally, it's for my own enrichment, and because of the challenges in education. One of the principles of the new curriculum is that we should instill in the learners to be life-long learners. It's a principle that I try to instill in myself…to stay on learning. I don't think my intention is consciously, to accumulate paper. I think my intention is really to get the knowledge and see if I can't use that knowledge to the advantage of education…and specifically to school level, and the school where I am at the moment.

**Q:** It's a nice mix of self and community. So that's quite a philosophy…life long learning…Do you think Howard's got more or less the same kind of philosophy? And what is your impression of him in terms of his vision?

**R:** I would think so. Because of my involvement with him…What I don't know…if I can start of from that footing…is if there's any incentives for supervisors…when they actually supervise students doing Master's or PhD's *etc*. So I don't know if there's an incentive for him to be involved with students…but from an interaction with him, and as a person of authority, a person who sits with the knowledge…I would say yes. He sits with a lot of knowledge. He's somebody of authority in the sense that he knows his field, and educational leadership is his field. From that experience…what I can gauge…to have gathered that position of authority he must have some philosophy himself. Because you can only be able to assist somebody else from a position of authority…if you're in that cycle continuously learning and bettering your understanding of your field of expertise. And for me, with our interaction, is that he's knowledgeable about this field of educational leadership and management.

**Q:** OK…and…how did he come to be your supervisor?

**R:** My experience with research is that certain research students will go about and look for supervisor…With us, because we enroll with the department, I think everything is made possible there…So depending on which field of study you're going to follow, if it's Education related, say Howard and his colleague are responsible for educational leadership within the department…so they will automatically become the supervisors for those students that enrolled for that discipline in the department.

**Q:** That's nice. Many have to search…and hope to find someone that's vaguely interested in what they're doing…So how far are you at this stage in your research?

**R:** Ja…we at a stage where we're supposed to finalize our proposals only. So we're still in a very, very early stage. We had interactions with Howard and his colleague as our starting point…as a group…We started meeting as a group…brainstorming…what is it that we want

as students…and they said what are the expectations from the department's side…to fulfill the requirements for the Master's course. And as a group…we started to brainstorm, what is our field of interest that we wanted to research. They didn't plan this course, first, and we approached them and asked them to start a Master's course and they said OK…after consideration, they're prepared to do it…on the understanding that it's going to be a full thesis. Okay, because their normal intake is only next year. So they concede and we concede and we proceed…as a group. And we're at a level now, where we've agreed…and it's based on their suggestion…that it's time now that we work as individuals on a one-on-one basis with one of the two supervisors…that we are comfortable with…it's time now that we move to a more personal type of interaction so that's where we are at the moment.

**Q:** Ja… Proposals are difficult stages…it's taken me 6 months to get mine done…but then conceptualizing the research is quite a big job because one has to think of everything. So now with this more individual interaction, how do you feel…do you feel that you've moved forward? How is it different…the individual interaction to the group?

**R:** There *is* movement. I think in the group environment as supervisors they were not able to guide you on the quality of your work because it's a broad forum and they need to apply their minds to different people at the same time. Maybe at that level they didn't necessarily pick up the shortcomings within my…if I can talk for myself…my proposal. It's only when I have met with Howard on an individual basis that…I was able to rely on his guidance more specifically. There was more a qualitative input into *my* research proposal because he could have…draw my attention to my shortcomings…into my proposal. Also he was able to guide me and say: 'look, your proposal is too broad and the people who are going to finally assess your proposal are going to ask this kind of question, and they want to see that reflected in your proposal'. So yes, I think the movement from the group…although…there were benefits within the group, because we were able to complement each other's thinking…if I had an idea, I could rely on my peers to feed my ideas and even question my ideas and stimulate my thinking…so at that level, it was useful to start generating my own ideas and come up with an initial proposal. But the final product…to get the real niche in it and to get the proper focus area, to narrow it down, the meetings with Howard on the individual basis were, for me, very

beneficial. Especially, when I take my proposal when it started off and where it is now…I know what is it that is expected of me…what should a proposal entail, where do you start from and where do you need to move towards.

**Q:** Ja…it's always a difficult thing… to take it into that narrowed down focus and there are so many interesting things but we have to cut them out. You've mentioned expectations twice…which is one thing I am focusing on. You say that as a group, you were actually told what was expected of you…many of us aren't…excepting for what's in that little book… the higher degrees guide. But…what do you expect from *Howard?*

**R:** Because I have an idea as to what a researcher is supposed to do my expectation is that from my supervisor I will get the necessary guidance…not necessarily to conduct the research…but to make sense of my research. Because ultimately with the research, I will be the one that does the research. So my sole expectation is that he will be able to say: 'OK, what *meaning* can you make out of what you have in front of you?'

**Q:** Meaning for….

**R:** For myself, and for my research study for that matter - to make the links. But ultimately to come up with the questions myself…The expectation, maybe of many students is that you will be fed…someone will feed you the answers and say these are the answers and so on…but his approach, basically, is that he asks you: ' What is it that you're doing?' So he'll tease the thing out of you and write it down for you and as he's getting the ideas he puts the frame up for you…on the board. And it's not a situation where he puts his own ideas forward…it's the other way around…he's taking your own ideas and questioning you…and build on what you say, and then guide you and direct your ideas towards your question.

**Q:** Mmm…that's great...because sometimes it's in front of our eyes but….

**R:** Ja…you can't contextualize it, you can't frame it…you can't put it into a plan. So in that sense I think he's more than useful. And he has the *nature*…I mean you've met him…he's

not somebody who dominates or imposes his ideas on you…he interrogates one's ideas for clarity.

**Q:** So in terms of doing the Master's…what's been smooth and what's been difficult so far?

**R:** I don't think anything's been smooth! Because I'm at the finalizing of the proposal stage, I think the difficult part is to set in place…in a very confined space what your research is going to be about…that 150 pages…try to put that into three or four pages…that's difficult for me. Secondly, to find the appropriate reading material to make that justification for your research topic. That I find very, very challenging.

**Q:** Ja…the reading…have you found he's been able to direct you to reading material?

**R:** Yes…I think that's the usefulness of a supervisor. That actually happened within our group meetings. When they've heard what is it that we want to do…they were able to say to us: 'OK…you need to read on change theory or you need to read on curriculum change or to read on educational leadership…so try this reader, or you can go to the internet and find Emerald there, where you'll be able to find access and download'. From that level it was useful and more specifically, Howard was able to tell me: 'Look, this reading will suit your intentions so go and read up on this person and include it in the proposal'. Also useful suggestions and help was: 'Because you only trying to put forward a proposal, try to narrow down your theoretical reading that you're going to put within your proposal. Because the other readings will come afterward when you do the real research. So, first get your specifics right, then you can start fanning out'.

…We were actually taken through the stages where it was told 'Look, you need to ask your questions…you need to ask yourself questions…what is it? It's not just writing for writing's sake, you need to have an argument. What is it that you are challenging? What is it that you want to unearth? And s*ay* why you want to address these things. And don't just take a quote for a quote's sake or a book for a book's sake. But come up with the reasons why you are

doing these things'. And that for me was insightful and the role of any supervisor is indispensable when it comes to that.

**Q:** Because they challenge us in the sense to criticize ourselves as well…

**R:** Continuously, yes. And reflect on what you are doing…I think I feel comfortable because he's down to earth…there's no airy-fairy stuff with him. And he's very straightforward. I mean I can recall, when we initially started off and we were sharing…in a group situation…what is it that you intend doing…and after I had said what my intentions are he said that normally when students speak like that, he will tell them…my trend was that I'm doing this research because I feel people are looking for answers as to why implementation of curriculum is failing in schools, because schools are trying to implement this new curriculum but it seems not to work…I am asking myself shouldn't we look for solutions within the school…what's the role of leadership? Can't they make it happen and see that it's being implemented successfully…while Howard was suggesting that I already have all the answers so why would I go and do research? What he was saying is that if that's the case he normally tells students: 'You don't need to do *research*…go and write a book'. OK. So, although I…to put it strongly I feel kak at that time, it made sense, afterwards. When I went home and think about it…then…OK…it's *truth* in what he's saying. OK. So I accepted it as valid criticism. Because you can't go and research something…and research is supposed to answer the things for you. You don't have preconceived answers to it. Although…afterwards I went back to him and said: 'Look, you need to have *some* own prejudice that you will take there'. That: 'look…this is my understanding of what needs to happen. So I'm not entirely accepting what you're saying, but I accept the criticism…that I need to have an open mind…but I *can't* say that I'm not coming from somewhere…I have some perspective that I feel I can justify…because I have experience of what is happening in schools'.

**Q:** Ja…It's quite something when you're suddenly faced with having to look at what one's saying from a different perspective…

**R:** I think the criticism was done within the context of the academic question. It was not levelled as a personal thing, so that made it acceptable. You could accept it. This is constructive and you can almost identify…although you feel a little bit embarrassed. But thinking back on it… this is not a personal thing…it's an academic thing. It's something that has to do with learning, and ultimately that's why I was *there*. It was to learn from the situation…to enable me to gather the prior knowledge…which was to enable me to do my task…find new ways…to enable me to set up a research frame in which I will be able to do the research.

**Q:** It's sounds to me that the criticism, in a way, enabled you to take a step back. Mmm…and your style as a student…any thoughts on your style as student? And Howard's style as supervisor…how are you similar and how are you different?

**R:** Style as a student…can you explain

**Q:** Yeah…it's a bit of an iffy term 'style as a student'…For instance, my style is that I can't get down to anything - to any nitty-gritty - until I've read *all* the stuff…all the philosophy, and then it's why *this* and why *that*…it's all happening in my head…so there's a real shortage of written work in the early stages.

**R:** If it's a *style*…and gauging from what you said…I can't be rigid. I don't have a system. As a person I'm very much unorganized. Especially when it comes to study…I can't focus on one thing. That's maybe a drawback. When I do reading I will read different things, and without the necessary, predetermined purpose…I will just go on and on and…Even if…I want for instance something on say, instructional leadership, I will start off with that, but ultimately I will end up doing other stuff. Because, when I read and hear something, I'll *think* this relates to what I want and in the end I'll be far removed from this thing.

…So that is how I am and it's only when the pressure is put on me that I will be able to come back again…and zoom in and say…'but this is where you're supposed to be'. The approach with Howard was that…'look…it's fine…it's natural…it's OK to be like that…you can do it,

but keep in mind that sometime or other you need to come back…don't linger too much on the outside…because that is not what you want, initially…this is what you want'. So he was not putting pressure on me. He doesn't have any hard or fast rule: 'this is what you're supposed to do'…My experience with him, was that he showed me that 'there are three positions in your proposal…and ultimately the people who are going to assess your proposal and give you the green light to proceed, are going to ask those questions. What is it that you want?' And he was able to guide me and say 'You need now to be specific…revisit your thinking'…Our styles, maybe complement each other because I think he understands that students will end up doing the things that they are doing. Maybe he draws on his own experience…that was the route that he probably also followed…so he could identify with it and not see it as a fault.

**Q:** That's great…he doesn't sound very authoritarian…

**R:** Not at all…Maybe it has to do with the field…I know that in educational leadership and management there's…a scientific side…that people believe that relationships are based on behaviour….Now I think Howard falls within the other side…that there are more and other things that you have to consider…than just the right and the wrong of it. There are different other things that you have to take into consideration and that makes him a person that you can work *with*.

**Q:** So…there isn't a right and there isn't a wrong…I think that also gives you a space to have…*your* space…because that's where you're at. That's very nice. The next question …What about support in your role as Master's student from your department?

**R:** From the…department side, initially, they allow us to use the computer lab that's there and they allow us to use the library, but that is during normal hours. We have discussed this and said it's not always practical for us because we are also working…to come to the department at any time and use this stuff…what's the possibility that they provide us with keys that we can come into the department after hours and use the computer lab and use the library facilities. They've said they will look at that and see if it's possible but up to now we

haven't had any feedback. So our support is confined to the supervisors, because we can see them at any time, but we can't go into the department at any time. I think it would be more useful if we could go in to the department at any time.

**Q:** OK…so that's at departmental level. And the postgraduate forum?

**R:** It's the first time that I hear about that.

**Q:** I'll bring some details next time I come.

Just one surprise question…I'm likely to ask this at the end of all the interviews. I'm interested in how you've experienced this interview…

**R:** I think it's insightful, enlightened. Because what it does achieve is to make me think about what I'm doing. In a sense …it assists me to think about my thinking of my research and my relationship with my supervisor…What's it's purpose…What does it feel like…and reflect on it. It's another avenue to make a reflection on a relationship which one would've thought, it's an automatic one…because you are a Master's research student, you need to have a supervisor. It gives you that chance to look back at it. Because, ja, it questions…what is this relationship? what is the purpose of this relationship? It's stimulating because it triggers off a new thinking of a relationship that you thought is totally automatic.

**Q:** Well…thanx very much indeed…Ray…

**R:** Ja. Pleasure.

## Transcript of second interview

**Q:** I haven't done outlines this time, just to see what we get spontaneously. What I'm really interested in hearing about is the last supervision session you had the other day. The feelings…before the session…and the feelings leading up to it…as you're at the door, knocking at the door, going in…what happened in the room. If you could recount the story….

**R:** OK. The last session was based on our first interaction where I was asked to re-look at my proposal and maybe adjust the angle of my argument. Within the last session my feeling was that I had an understanding as to what's being expected of me but as I was now alone, trying to put something together, I realized that I'm not sure. Eventually I had something on paper and I returned to Howard on Monday at 8 o'clock in the morning with the copy, which I actually handed to him the Friday so that he had the opportunity to look at it over the weekend. When we started off, I didn't know what to expect because one never knows if you're heading in the direction that has been suggested to you. This may be the route…because as Howard said, what he can gather, is that this is the route that I wanted to take. Well, his first comment was that it seems that I've hit the road now. He can see a clear direction as to where I'm heading and that was perfect…although…I still don't know *if* I'm heading in the right direction. There's still this uncertainty because although I have a draft proposal I don't think that I have an entirely in-depth understanding as to 'OK, this is it'. Eventually we worked through the proposal looking at nitty-grittys. In our interaction he shed more light on things that are in the proposal and also suggested useful recommendations as to how I should fine-tune it and what's still missing within the proposal…to have a nice smooth link running through the argument and up to my research question. So, yes, one is never certain when you hand in something. It's always trepidation…am I on the right track, what will be the comments. With the last session I think there was more positive feedback than what I've become use to from Howard…the cut and dry criticism, although constructive. It was more 'Look, you are there, it seems that you're almost ready to make a final presentation, just go back and iron these small things out and then we can look at it again'.

**Q:** And so how did you feel when you walked out?

**R:** There was a sense of achievement…that you've almost accomplished your final product. Yes, a sense of accomplishment.

**Q:** That's wonderful. Congrats! And that sense of unsureness…insecurity…can you say a bit more about that?

**R:** …Insecurity for me can come from do I have the epistemological knowledge of what is expected of me? Because when you work and you do reading, you're reading conflicting theories and at times you paint yourself into a position where you think this is the one I want to side with. Then somebody else comes up with another perspective that puts you totally off. So based on that…that's what I can ascribe to raising possible insecurities in me. Knowing, if you adopt a certain position, you need to justify it. You can't beat around the bush, especially when, as I've hinted last time, you're in relationship with a person, not necessarily a power position, but the person is a person of authority because he sits with a broader knowledge of the issues that you want to address for the first time, so based on that, there might…there *is* possibly a sense of insecurity. That I won't be able to justify what I'm doing because I don't have the necessary broader theoretical background to justify the positions that I'm taking. My experience when I read…if I read one writer and I compare it with the other writer, at times it's difficult for me to make up my mind…where does it place *me* now? I think that's also true when it comes to justifying why you're setting up a proposal in the way you do…with someone who's going to tease you and say: 'Look. Why are you saying this? Can you elaborate?' And at times that is fearful…it's a fear…that you will be asked and probed: 'Where are you heading? Why are you saying this? Where does this come from? Can you substantiate?' and so on. So, yes, in that sense, then I get a sense of insecurity. For me it's based on that I might have a superficial, at this stage, grasp of the theoretical issues that at play as far as my research proposal is concerned.

**Q:** OK…so you're going in… to your supervisor…there's a relationship happening. And then the supervisor will generally deal with the topic…and you can either come out of there

…feeling better or worse because of something that's happened in the interaction. How does he sort of…

**R:** You've dealt with Howard and I'm sure from your interaction with him, I think you would have realized that although he has titles behind his name, he is quite a down to earth type of person. So, although my insecurity's at a level of knowledge…in our interaction and in our relationship in addressing the academic work…never was I fearful of him as a person. He was never dominating, never taking a stance where I felt that on a personal level that he will not accept what I'm saying, or try to ridicule me, or make nonsense of my presentation or my contributions…never at all. In all our dealings…if I can classify it as that…it was humane: 'Although I am your supervisor, we're also equal. We're both learners in this process. I'm not here because I know everything'. So, yes…in an environment like that there is a sense of security more than insecurity because it's not a high-handedness that's prevailing…that 'I am the ultimate person in judgment here'. No. We work on an equal footing. His role is there to support, to scaffold what I don't know and it's done on a human relations basis. We are co-learners, co-constructors of your knowledge, not necessarily my knowledge as a supervisor. So I've never felt threatened in the relationship on a person-to-person basis…because of his style. He sets a platform of equality. We are equal when it comes to the learning process. Our contributions may differ, based on our levels of knowledge and experience. So that's my experience of it.

**Q:** That really is something…I'm wondering, when you compare the beginning, working in the group and then going into individual supervision…are you finding that supervision or what you're doing in your Master's work is impacting in any way on your life? Your learning, acting…feeling…

**R:** Let me first clarify your question…

**Q:** OK

**R:** Are you asking how did it influence me…and you're confining it to supervisor student relationship, or are you interested in a broader…

**Q:** Ja…outside's fine…

**R:** If I can first go back to where we started of on a group basis. The approach there was more of a collective basis and things were done on a more impersonal level. There was no one-on-one, things were discussed more on a general basis. When we moved to a one-on-one consultation basis it becomes more specific…more directed and maybe also more personal because you are the sole participant, you have an individual audience with your supervisor making the relationship more intimate…if I can put it that way. It also has instilled in me a direction…it allowed me to become more focused in my development of my own proposal. Whereas when we were ingroup sessions, you were like floating around between your proposal and what you are hearing from other people. Now in second phase it is more like: 'Keep on your toes. You are on your own. You are supposed to do this on your own. You have to become, in a sense, independent Rely on yourself. Put things in place for yourself. Go and do prior research by yourself to develop your own position'. So yes, in that sense it makes you realize that you have to be disciplined, that you have to develop your own set of rules, knowing your deadlines, knowing that for every follow-up appointment this is what you need to achieve, and stay committed to the process. So yes…I would say that it has influenced me…especially when you know that you are accountable. Not only to yourself, but to a person that's making some sacrifices on behalf of you…that's there to support you and to scaffold you in your learning process. You need to be committed to yourself. You need to be committed to what you're doing so as to show that same commitment to the person who's guiding you.

**Q:** And in your everyday life…are you finding that your research is impacting on your everyday life?

**R:** Very much. In our last session, I've told you that I'm part of the so-called management team of the school. The new insights as to how to set up and provide management and

leadership for the school has been very much influenced by this process because I can bring new ideas to my workplace…new ideas that I can share. Likewise from my own experience, in our sessions, I can take my experience to my session and relate it. Because of things that happen in my workplace and other places similar to mine, this is why I'm doing this research. So yes, it's had an influence, not only at the workplace level. I'm a trade union member as well. I'm serving as an office bearer in the trade union movement and on a regular basis we interact with the Department of Education so I feel that in a sense I'm empowered to engage departmental officials and say: 'If we look at educational leadership, these are the kinds of things that we need to do…this is how you need to interact with educators, with schools. If we say that we want to turn education around and address our past …our legacy of problems…this is the way to go'. So yes…for me, the whole process is a process of empowerment because I do gain from the readings and from the insights that my supervisor is sharing with me. I think one advantage is that he's coming from the same place as where I'm at. Because at one time or another he was an educator, moving through the ranks of educator…had the same experiences, probably had the same questions. So yes, the whole experience is one of empowerment for myself…And although I'm preparing myself to do research…it's almost as if I'm on a daily journey of research because the things that I read I can apply to my work experience and educational issues that come up on a daily basis.

**Q:** And so, being on the union and also addressing management and leadership…does that relate to something in your own past education that you may be motivated to change?

**R:** As a student activist…and I'm coming from the era of the 80's…education has been in turmoil. We all know that there have been running battles between state and students at that time. I know that the demand then was that we want a changed system…a totally changed system. And my research now is based on that. The ideal then was that you want total transformation…it seems that the direction that we are taking now is not the direction that was demanded them. So it's also with that in mind…I wanted to do research to see if the demands put forward when it was still during the days of so called struggle are the same. How has it unfolded and has it been addressed with all this educational and societal change that has been

taking place. I sit with that bias…this is the so-called perfect world that we were fighting for. Is it being realized? What are we doing? Are we moving towards that?

**Q:** And in terms of dreams and visions…in the previous interview you were saying that doing a Master's isn't just about getting a piece of paper, and it isn't about getting more money because that may not necessarily be forthcoming...but certainly having a Master's does help in terms of promotion. And you mentioned something about how it may help if one wants to become the minister of education. And now you tell me about being in the union…Is that a dream for you…is that a vision…getting to the ranks of that level of power?

**R:** No…I would rather swim amongst the fish than move upstream and be solo. It's not about taking or fulfilling…my dream is not to be in a power position because ultimately I believe that the power lies in the people that I want to serve. The acquiring of a Master's, personally for me, it's a basis of knowledge upliftment. Knowledge that I feel I need to share with other people who are perhaps not in a position to acquire that knowledge. So in a sense I see myself as trying to disseminate my knowledge and make other people part of the knowledge that I have attained…but *with* them on an equal basis. My personal ideal is I want to be a good teacher…In the end I want to be recognized as being a good educator, without necessarily occupying a power position. The power position that I want to fill is amongst the people that I'm working with and that I'll be involved with in learning and teaching. So my ideal is that what I'm doing should be of use for our common good but not necessarily for personal gain or to see myself having upward mobility.

Earlier on you asked me what in the past made me take the direction I'm taking. My past experience of education was that it was a top-down situation. It was a situation very much of insecurity…of enforced rule, because it was imposed upon you. You have knowledge content that you need to carry over. These are the line functions [reference to traditional top-down hierarchy] of operation within the school…you have a principal who is there to enforce everything within the school. Outside you have the same…your intervention of outside people there to come and see that rules are being followed. So with that experience … knowing the policy statements and literature forwarded to schools…suggests that you need a

system which accepts everyone's contribution within a system. It doesn't matter what position that person occupies. This for me creates an ideal opportunity to go an look for literature that lends itself precisely to a situation where you can make use of a shared type of management and leadership. Leadership shouldn't just be confined to somebody who has a title behind them…it should involve everybody that makes up your environment or your organization. You need to work out for yourselves a system of what the input is, the role of each and every individual within your environment. Self and group management.

I can link this to my last session with Howard, which opened up a window…a new insight into my research. In my draft proposal I've mentioned the evolvement of management theory over the years and one aspect that he brought up…that seems to be something that people want to address now…in the past people were confined to a systems world…that you need to put procedures, structures and systems in place and then everything runs on those systems and procedures. But because organizations don't have to do with machines and commodities…it involves actual people…there's a new call for recognition of the lives…of lived systems…meaning that you need to take cognizance of the people…what they feel, what's their expectations, their need, the relationships. And for me that was insightful. Here is something that I need to go and look at because maybe that's what organizations need. Maybe that's what education needs…that we should put more emphasis on the role of people than on the role of structures within the system. Allow people the opportunity to take risks so that they themselves can become empowered, can be capacitated and ultimately make the systems and procedures work for them.

**Q:** So is it about structures coming out of needs and wants of people…and those structures will change depending on new needs that evolve…so evolving structures?

**R:** Precisely…and not the other way around…where there's the structure and you need to work within that structure and it's confined and it's rigid. It's about turning the thing around and saying: 'You're the people, you're in the situation, what do you think your own procedures be…work them out for yourselves and even if you do have structures, don't feel confined to the structure. If you need to work outside the perimeter of the structure, surely

feel free…if, *if* it stays within the vision and the direction of the organization. As long as you can *account* for what you are doing.'

**Q:** What's running through my head is…I'm thinking of the degree to which this may be reflected and echoed in the actual supervisory relationship. In terms of your relationship with structure…and the thesis…having the autonomy to be able to relate with the supervisor in a way that your needs almost form the structure. Ummm…there seems to be a connection between the content of your thesis and the structure of your relationship.

**R:** Precisely…you couldn't have put it better.

…Look, we all know that there is a prescribed structure of how you need to go about setting up a research design which must comply with X, Y and Z. There is this booklet of the University...the Higher Degrees Guide and that also sets out all the things that you need to think about. With my interaction with Howard, although these things are there, you're still and individual, you can still determine your own pathway, the direction you want to take. You still have a voice, you still autonomous…as long as you can justify what you are doing and say 'because of X, Y and Z, this is the approach that I'm taking and the reason why I'm taking it. So irrespective of the prescribed paradigm that's there in terms of an academic situation…we all know that this University has it's own traditions and it's not keen on shedding its roots easily. And I think this university is making a great fuss about it's standards *etc. etc.* and it's own level as a research institution. As an institution it does have it's own expectations as to what will make a good research proposal. Will it sell as a required research proposal? But with my interaction with Howard: 'even if that's the case…put your own thing together and we'll see what comes of it'. This department was…given their own Higher Degree [committee]. So I can say…there's a hell of a lot of autonomy…you've got your own voice, you can do things the way you want to do it. But just keep in mind you are doing research and based on the qualification you're going to acquire, there needs to be a standard that you need to accomplish. But there is room in which you can move. So it's not a very rigid type of process and situation.

**Q:** How do you feel about the standard that Rhodes has got…allowing other voices?

**R:** They're not *keen*…there are people here with grey beards and grey hair that have their own perceptions and positions about what research is. And you first need to convince yourself what it is that you want to research and why you want to research it and ultimately you need to sell that to other people who have their own position…which is entrenched in tradition.

**Q:** Whether it's saleable in terms of?

**R:** In terms of publication or putting the university on the map…the way they can use your research maybe…to inflate their own image.

**Q:** I guess I'm looking at this because I am interested in the commercialization of education at university level…and I'm looking at funding…and getting something that's saleable.

**R:** Well…you only have to open up a newspaper and see how the acquiring of a certificate is attached to material gain…how it can open up doors for you…it can improve your life…so it's very much commercial. It's about making money. Many institutions, when they advertise a Master's degree…in the end it's attached to how many fees they can extract from that student and how much funding they can get, and that's not directed towards the student… it's more for the well-being of the institution.

**Q:** Gee…there's a lot of stuff…all these questions. Maybe we should wind up now…so my last question…how have you experienced this interview today…and the experience in between interviews…can you comment on that?

**R:** A conversation is always insightful. Although this may be a forced situation, in the way it's been conducted I think it's very much informal…almost personal. It makes it more of a conversation type of experience…an exchange, for you of something that's based on building your knowledge, and for me on reflecting on the knowledge that I'm developing…and

making sense of my experience. It gives me an opportunity to reflect back on what I have done, why I am doing it, what my experience of it is…to gain a better insight into why I am engaging in this process. So, yes, it's useful conversations that we have.

**Q:** OK. Good. Many thanx.

**Written communication**

**Q:** I really enjoyed this session…I guess I'm like you, I enjoy sharing thoughts and experiences. I'm just a bit worried about some of my sharing. It could be construed, in terms of research interview technique…á lá Kvale and Saidman and similar instruction literature…as leading the conversation to where I need it to go…particularly the section I've marked [those relating to the questions: What do you think of the university's standards? What do you think the university stands for?]. Maybe we should strike it off the transcript…what do you think? Please feel free to delete anything you think may fallen foul of this trap. Giving you the transcript to edit helps to keep me on the straight and narrow!

[Ray declined to remove anything on the transcript. See his reply on page 478]

## Transcript of the third interview

**Q:** Thanx very much as always, for this…our last interview. So, how did you find thinking up the metaphors?

**R:** Difficult. But I will try to give some structure and perception to it as best as I can…if at all possible. Let's just see what will come out…

…If I have to reflect on my interaction with Howard, I would describe the process…although we must accept that it's only in it's initial stages - you come at a stage where it's the start-up phase of the research, I'm sure if it was at the stage where you are at, I'm sure I would probably put another picture together of the situation - so, at this stage, how I see the process, is as a process of crystallization, because as a novice researcher, Howard has…crystallized a lot of things: starting with how I think about my hypothesis…the initial stages of setting up my research question. He was able to…I don't want to say assist…but rather clarify my thinking without influencing it…even with getting the final focus of the proposal…challenging my thinking…saying 'What is it that you're saying here? Don't you think that you're covering too much ground, that it's too broad? Don't you think you need to narrow it down?' So for me, in our interaction the main thrust was to continuously clarify my own thinking and to assess where I am positioned at the moment.

**Q:** That's a great metaphor. When I think of crystallizing, I think of something which is first in a kind of suspension almost…and then becoming smaller and more condensed until you have a crystal…literally. And a crystal is clear…

**R:** Precisely. I think this is what is significant about the interviews too…in a sense it allows me to look back again and see where I'm coming from. I would've liked it if you'd have come a year later, because it possibly would have assisted me in a lot of ways because I would have been into it in great depth…I'm nowhere, as yet…but if you were coming a year later then surely this would have been something that I could have used to stimulate my research. Because with somebody coming to you and asking you pertinent questions as to what it is you're doing, and why are you doing it, and how is the relationship working for you? I think it's insightful.

**Q:** …I also find it insightful how very often the relationship echoes something in the content of the thesis. Crystallization really is a super metaphor…it's both an end product and a process…

**R:** Yes. And it allows for further exploration, because it doesn't matter how small the crystal is, if you expose it to light it sheds out different light again, because it will reflect that light, so it may lead you into another direction. And I expect, if I get into the real research that it might just be the case, knowing the person who is my supervisor…it might take other directions.

**Q:** It might dissolve and reform…

**R:** Yeah…OK, the second metaphor, concerning my topic… the topic is a relevant one because it's one that everyone is grappling with…looking at the curriculum and finding ***** workable solutions to make it's implementation as smooth as possible. Because I'm dealing with something that everybody wants answers to, but not really keen on addressing questions to…I see it as trying to…in my proposal I'm looking at an educational iceberg. Now, we all know an iceberg…it's deceptive, because you might only see the top part of it while the *real* thing is hidden…it's submerged and you might not have a sense of it's magnitude. For me, because the topic is so wide and all of us are seeking workable answers to this topic or question…I don't know what it is that I'm going to discover because I know that education, especially at school level is in disarray. Especially as far as disadvantaged schools are concerned…although, even if I had to go and research this with an ideal school…say an ex-model C school…I don't think the findings would be much different. Although model C schools are perceived to be good schools…looking at what I've read about what the Department of Education is saying and the type of leadership that they want to promote at schools…of those that I know, I don't think that they reflect the type of leadership that's being promoted through departmental documentation and policy. That's why I say I'm seeing my whole topic as an iceberg. I need to be aware that what I see may not be the whole thing…I will have to go deep and have a thorough investigation and be as open as possible to whatever is out there…to know the magnitude of the question I am going to research.

**Q:** Gee…powerful metaphor

**R:** OK…the research process for me personally, I see it as the starting face, if you can call it that, or the beginning of the end of a journey that I've set myself out on…a journey of life long learning. From my experience of what's happened thus far, there's a lot that I've discovered about myself, about other people, who are in the same boat as I am. If you go on a journey, it's not always smooth sailing. There's ups and downs…there were times initially that I wondered whether I am at the right place…should I continue with this research? Am I ready for this? Am I equipped for this? And it's only when I allowed myself to continue going on this journey that I realized that challenges are going to be there, but with Howard as my fellow traveler it seems that we were able to negotiate an understanding that we are there to assist one another…I must re-iterate that I think the hard days still lie ahead…when I need to go and do my own data gathering, try to make sense of it, start writing up…that is when I will be able to see whether this route I am taking, this journey, is for me…is it working? Gauging from the initial stages, if things unfold as they are now…then hopefully yes…I'll get through.

**Q:** It's like a never-ending journey…in terms of life long learning…and the mass of the iceberg.

**R:** The last metaphor I had some difficulty with…trying to formulate something about my relationship with the department and the university. At this stage…my only interaction with the department and the university is Howard. After this stage I should be more at the department making use of the facilities. So for that one I had difficulty coming up with anything tangible…I can only talk about my interaction with Howard.

Although I've tried to separate according to the categories of your outline…it's all happened within one whole…so…it should be linked…one happened as a result of the other…

**Q:** I wonder…your metaphors make me think of the sea in a way…and fellow travellers…almost like crew…how do you see them linking?

**R:** If I look back, my whole mindset and thinking when I entered as a Master's student…I knew what I wanted to look at although I didn't have it as a question…but I knew the direction that I wanted to take. For me the role of the supervisor I would have thought was to navigate the direction but also to allow you to move on your own…to stay out there as a lighthouse. Although you're out there, they are always there to indicate that they are watching so that you don't veer off too far. All along things were made clear for me, allowing me autonomy, allowing me to set my own goals and to formulate my own questions, but to navigate me in the direction that Howard as my supervisor imagines and perceives that I am heading. That's why I say its interrelated…it forms a tapestry that you can't draw apart because the one strand is always influencing the other one.

Although I had difficulty, those were the things that I came up with. On my research question, because it's something that I have been involved in from it's inception, which is now five or six years…I was always intrigued by the implementation of the new curriculum and its problems. I think that I "know"…if I can put it in inverted commas, why the problems are there although I was warned not to have preconceived ideas if I want to do research. I've accepted that but I still feel that I'm entitled to my position…to have some bias. We are dealing with something of great magnitude, because it's a national issue…it's in the interests of the country…of everybody…because it's something that relates to everybody irrespective of who you are. I can only describe it as that…as an iceberg…because you only see what you see and then you think you see everything.

**Q:** Well…that's what finished off the Titanic!!

**R:** Yes…I wanted to raise that, because I saw the film…and thinking about the Titanic…at the start of the interview I wanted to raise that!! I mean, they saw the iceberg and they thought that what they saw was insignificant…

**Q:** In this helluva boat…so-called perfect boat…

**R:** …that would be able to withstand whatever comes it's way! So it was only when they came in contact with the iceberg that they experienced its devastation.

…I think it's the same with the curriculum…when people designed it and tried to implement it they thought it would be easy…it's something everybody would buy into and just do. But, it's only when they started with implementation that they saw that it's not going to be an easy ride or overnight thing. It's something that we'll be struggling with for time to come. Even with this research of mine, I don't foresee a situation when I will understand this issue, because schooled researchers are still trying to understand this process.

**Q:** Fresh looks are very important…Is there anything you'd like to add…anything at all?

**R:** Maybe I can just go back to the last interview…because you suggested that you might want something to be removed because you thought you may be using leading questions, phrases, or putting words in my mouth. And the area, where I think you are concerned, how I read it, is the question of autonomy. Just to clarify…although I sit with a supervisor, and the role of the supervisor is there to assist you, in my interaction with Howard it was always the case that I have autonomy and am allowed to do what I want to do and that he will give me advice as far as academic requirements are. I am free to do the research the way I want to do it…so as a student my autonomy is guaranteed and safeguarded. The university does not have power over you…it has power as far as its own academic standards are concerned but your own ideas and thinking is entirely up to you. You have your own voice, if you have a story to tell, tell it, go about it the way you want to, as long as you can justify what you are doing.

**Q:** OK…so did you take anything out of the transcript?

**R:** No…nothing.

**Q:** I've really enjoyed the interviews…they've sparked so much for me…thanx a lot

**R:** And same for me, I think it's a learning curve!

## 2.3 LUNA

### Transcript of first interview

**Q:** Can we start off with the first question on the outline: What motivates you to supervise?

**L:** I love doing research. You can only do so much research yourself because it takes a long time and a lot of effort to do your own research, so in fact by supervising students you are doing more research than what you would be able to do yourself. I'm not a person who is into a particular theory necessarily, I'm a methodologist, so it brings me into contact with lots of other areas that I would not get involved in and I like that wide spread…and I can bring my methodological ideas on different areas. So in fact I'm getting quite a lot out of it because they're bringing in an area and I'm bringing the methodology to it. I also quite like the process …it doesn't happen with all students…. in which you can see certain students grow…Lots of students seem to understand analyzing as summarizing…these people say this about something, these people say that, lets put it all together, this is my analysis. They don't go to that deeper level. I mean data collection has it's better and worse things about it, but it's not about theory, where analyzing is about theory and about thinking and about finding categories of underlying things. And lots of students haven't got that. If you can get that with them, then it's very exciting.

**Q:** So it's also about connecting with the data on a conceptual level.

**L:** There's quite a level of…having to do that is part of your job as well. I don't think I would take as many as I do. I have about seven. I would prefer to just do the ones that I like to do. I don't think I'd choose to supervise as many students as I do. I'm supervising projects because I'm a nice person…I'm doing it because they've asked me to…but one, I'm not really their choice and two, it's not my area…they're just stuck…So those things are not very enjoyable. But having one or two good students with whom I can work is very nice. Even with students who I think are performing very poorly…they always still bring something. Whereas in a teaching environment it is often not like that…where you sit in a class. You have lots of seminars where you don't get that much back. I think in a supervision session you always get things back. And there are always new

challenges…like, whew, this looks like a really poor data collection, what are we going to do with this? How are we going to turn it into something that is still worthwhile…because I don't think you need much data. With a little data you can do some really exciting things. I'm very excited about research.

**Q:** Ja it is exciting!

Mmm in terms of the interviews…I'm not sure how we're going to handle this because there are two different students [Nadia and student X]…maybe you can talk about the motivation for supervising the one and then talk a little about the other one?

**L:** OK. The one student was because there was nobody else to supervise. Maybe there would have been but there was a shortage of supervisors or at least people who have got a good grasp of methodology and developing the proposal and things like that…that's Nadia…

[Talks about student X and his topic]

[Nadia's topic] is about sexual educational perceptions that [a racial group] have about sexual education and sexual experiences…relating to the whole HIV issue…because if one wants to develop strategies to prevent or deal with HIV one has to understand what the notion of sexuality is.

**Q:** OK…so she sort of came because she might have been searching around for someone to….

**L:** I think that if Peter would have been there [in the beginning] then she would have gone with him…Now she is with Peter and with me. Basically that's for totally egotistic reasons because I so often help people out and then when it [the thesis] comes out it's supervised by this one, meantime I've helped them half way and my name is not there. And this is the game in the academic world, so I said 'That's fine, you can work with Peter now, but I helped you through your proposal which is quite a big one and I would also like to have a look at the methodological thing'. But she's using a specific critical methodology. There are some other reasons as well but I don't think I can get into those.

**Q:** OK…whatever…no problem. So, in terms of your expectations…lets just speak about your expectations of yourself as supervisor…

**L:** You mean what do I expect to get out of it …or what so I think I need to do?

**Q:** Ja…both…what do you feel is your task…there's often quite a dichotomy between how much academic help to give and how much pastoral help…

**L:** That pastoral help comes up all the time and I'm afraid I don't think I'm patient… I think students really are not very strong, personally, they can't make an effort, they can't just push when they need to, they just whine, you know? They just whine, and I just haven't the time for this. When I think of what I have to do in one day and the responsibilities that I have to juggle…and they always expect me to be there. I mean I worked over Christmas…over New Year…because they don't pull their weight and then they come over Christmas and they expect me to be there…Christmas day or Boxing day. So…ja…I'm disappointed in students in general. There are some…and then I love working with those few…but in general I find that students don't pull their weight. I know you can have boyfriend troubles and you can have this and that but life is still there and they are 24 and 25 and what are they going to do the next year when they're in the real world…[talks about student X]. Nadia will come and she will cry, and cry again, and not come and see me for three days…trying to avoid me or being sick and not telling me that she is sick. She's terrified of me. Apparently they all are in the department. I don't know why but anyway…

My Master's students are afraid, they say I'm very strict…although I think I'm bad in that I don't really set deadlines for them. I might sit with them and say: 'Lets make a year plan', but then I don't enforce it, because I'm so busy I don't think of it. And then I happen to look and see that she hasn't come with her thing or he hasn't come with his thing, and I think: 'Let me just find out what's happening'. But of myself…internally I get very frustrated with them…but I think I'm very lenient. If they don't hand in I say: 'Well, it's up to you, if you don't finish it's not my problem'. But this year I have said I'm not working over Christmas because I've done that year after year…every time people

come…weekends…anytime, and I help them. And I think this is not really good. Anyway, I'm not really answering your question…

**Q:** No...no…that's wonderful in terms of expectations. Because you know, they've got in this higher degrees booklet a whole list of things…what should be expected of the supervisor, what should be expected from the students.

**L:** I have read it but I don't know anything about it…You see, I'm like one of those old fashioned academics…I'm the supervisor and then there's the student that wants to work with me and then everybody must just work hard and get there. I don't look at any of those…I don't talk about expectations…about any of the things in the book [the Higher Degrees Guide]…I'm coming from this old fashioned school that an academic place is a place where adults come together and they want to learn. I'm not particularly proud of it. I'm not saying it has to be like that, I'm just saying that this is how I am. And I've tried in certain situations to put rules down, but it's not me. I just work with them and I'll sit with them and we'll talk and we'll debate and we'll go through.

[Speaks about student X]

…So all the rules and regulations…I've had lots of problems with failed expectations because they have never been…And we should have sat together and gone into those things. I think I'm too busy or I'm doing too many things to do any of them like…really punctually, according to the rules and the regulations. So the intellectual pursuit for me is everything and just being with the people and just working around it. Ja, and then everybody must just work hard and get there.

**Q:** To me it doesn't seem so much that it's such an old fashioned template of the academic and the students in terms of work or authority…to me it's quite collaborative. It's asking both parties to take responsibility…

**L:** Ja, I think I see students as more mature than they are. I think I don't give enough credit for their youth or their inexperience. And I also think that they think of me as being much more the expert than I think of myself. They think I can just do it, I know every single thing. And then sometimes I say to them: 'You can do it this way or that way, lets

*try* one of the two and see if it works out'. And they look at me like 'No we are not just trying the things out, you have to tell me what the right way is', and I don't know either because something may be right according to the whole context….

…But then on the other hand they sometimes say…I mean you hear what they say about you…that I impose too much my way of doing things on them…that I say that is has to be like *this* or like *that*. Maybe at a certain point I do. Some people like it and others don't like it. I think Nadia doesn't like it when I say this doesn't fit and that doesn't fit and you have to rearrange it. She thinks I'm wrong. So some people ask too much direction and others don't want to take the kind of things you say. I don't usually make comments about the content because that's what the student wants to say and you have to respect that but I do make very strong comments about structure and logic and how you build up your argument because I don't think there's a wrong and a right way. These days it's a big thing, because there's a change in paradigm again…it was from positivism to postmodernism and now there's this whole narrative approach coming up. I am not in that narrative approach…I'm in an approach where you look for categories and underlying structures…and that comes back to the way that I structure my research. And then they say I'm old fashioned…now we do the narrative approach. And if you're not in that paradigm you can't tell us what to do because you don't know about these things…it's quite interesting actually, I quite like the challenge, because to what extent is there an underlying logic that all research needs to have…which I tend to think. And that's why they say I'm old fashioned. They don't say it like that to me but that's what's happening, because ninety percent of the students do postmodern methods…it's a kind of different thing.

**L:** And I think [student X] and I are in very much the same paradigm, where Nadia is in a different critical paradigm and she thinks I don't know what her methodology is about, so any comment I make…well…'It's because she doesn't know about my methodology'. And it's very difficult to give feedback to somebody [in that situation].

…It's actually a mistake to supervise a student because they can't find another person. …Because some of the theses, for instance [student X] the way of thinking is in my mind so it takes one tenth of the time.

…I don't know if there are other people like me who have to do or who are doing those types of supervision.

**Q:** I dunno…there generally seems to be more choice involved…which brings me to this question about support…what sort of professional support does one get in a situation like this?

**L:** You see if you do it by thesis…I mean we could just refuse and say we don't have anybody who wants to do that topic. But when we take them in a coursework Master's it's more difficult. I mean you can push them into a research that you say you want to do, but if they're not happy about it they can't just leave, so then they do a thesis that they don't like doing, which is not very nice…You have to be passionate about your research. I don't think you can do research for the sake of finishing a report…I'm doing that right now and it's awful…you have to enjoy it…for the method or the content…but something enjoyable has to be there. Because you do have those things that go 'Wow'…things that jump out at you as you analyze and it's just so wonderful.

**Q:** Ja…I had that in my previous research…I was beside myself with excitement…So it's quite loose…it requires them to take some initiative as well in terms of making appointments and bringing you written work and that kind of thing…

**L:** Ja…they basically…it's very bad, actually talking about it now…they actually come to me…when it comes to handing in the proposal there's usually quite a few steps because there's that deadline, but then after that they just work and I wait until they come to me with something. If I haven't seen them for three months….I'll just say 'So, how's it going? Have you got something already?', and then they say yes or no and then I say 'Would you like to come and show something to me soon?' It's basically that ad hoc.

**Q:** And…time and university expectations?

**L:** I don't believe in the kind of university-institutional structure. My students get opportunity to be involved in research. If a really exciting research comes up…why not leave your thesis and wait and get going on that. Unless maybe…people have to go back to their homes…and even back to their country. But the other people who have the

opportunity to be around, to me, a university is about opportunities to learn, it's not about marks and handing in essays. It drives me nuts. 'When do we have to have it ready? How many pages does it have to be? Give me the structure'. I get so fed up. It's just a place to be and if you only have two months to finish off your thesis and you get seventy percent rather than seventy five percent, I don't think that makes the slightest difference. You've had opportunities to do things that you write in your CV. They're not going to ask did you get seventy or seventy-four…they're going to say: 'Oh this person has been involved in this project and that one and isn't that interesting'. I continuously convey that message…that 'Look, there's opportunities here, grab it, let's do things together'. Like I love the apprenticeship kind of situation when we go out in the field and we sit together and we talk and we analyze the stuff…it's just wonderful.

So I think I'm not containing enough on the one hand and on the other hand not structuring enough …the kind of process…and maybe I'm a bit too forceful with how I see the research and maybe I take over a bit and push their work into how I've seen it.

**Q:** Structurally?

**L:** Ja…if they come in with all the data maybe they want to write it up in a certain way…but then I think it would be much nicer to write it up in another way. I don't particularly want to but I think that's what I do. I have heard a lot of comments that I'm very forceful, that I push things in certain directions, that I want things to be done in a certain way. Like for instance we have meetings…people want to sit and say for a whole hour how they feel about things…and that's fine, that's another research approach. And I say 'OK, what kind of data did we find here? How can we catagorize it? Shall we talk about this one or that one'

**Q:** It also strikes me…it must be quite difficult for a supervisor because in fact you are in the middle of the student and the system…

**L:** And you see, I don't protect them from that enough. I just work with them and then it's up to them to fit in with the system. And in fact I don't put myself there, I put myself out here. I'm a resource for them and I'm willing to work with them…and if they want to come on a weekend, then I'm there on a weekend and if they're sick…well then they're

sick…and so I'm there for them. Sometimes they'll come and talk to me and I have a kind of counselling session with them as well. But sometimes they come and ask me 'Does this form have to be filled in' and I've usually forgotten and I'll say 'OK, I'll find out for you'. So I don't do that thing of the system. As I say I put a lot of responsibility on them…I am quite tough on 'well, this is *life* guys.'

[Speaks at length about student X]

**Q:** Well thanks so much for your time, I really appreciate.

**L:** Sure.

**Transcript of the second interview**

**Q:** I haven't constructed outlines for this interview…I really wanted to follow up on some things from the last interview…about balancing time and expectations and the expectations of the university system…

…what I'm doing with the research is I'm looking at the interpersonal and institutional power…and I'm interested in grounding the experiences in both the personal and the institutional. I don't have terribly much idea actually, how the university works. University for me is my studies, my supervisor, the department to a certain extent…when I'm there, but that's as much as I know about how the institutional structures might shape us…or what happens for a supervisor…for you, for instance…

**L:** Well, I don't know anything about it either, because one of the other things I do, even when I supervise students in thesis…is I always want to make the link with the outside world…. and tell them that the university system is there but it's not really that important…it's much more important to think about things in a way that they'll be able to use it when they go out in the world…and do research in that way. Like when they collect data…and all the dynamics of collecting data and meeting with people, and who are you as a woman, as a white person...that's the kind of things I talk about. I don't know what the university as a structure is there for…it basically is just there to put limitations us…I mean, they're not very flexible.

**Q:** aren't they?

**L:** Basically what does it do…it just gives you certain rules and actually not much work needs to happen to have your proposal accepted…And so after that there's a certain set of rules of when you submit your thesis and that's all I know. I mean, if I would have a problem about something…Then I will go to my head of department and say what I think this is worth…and he's always very supportive…I would ask him 'Can you look through this, do you think we can let this pass?'. Or any kind of issue, like 'This person wants to write up in a very different way…I think we can find some externals who would go with that way…are you happy with that?'…He's a very good administrator and he knows all those little rules and so I just go to him and I say 'I don't know about this'. I help him in

many ways and he helps me. It's just one of those things I don't like doing and I think there's some kind of understanding that this is the kind of support he will give me...

**Q:** It's just been striking me …about the university…I'm finding…that academics are astoundingly free.

**L:** They are extremely free…I can basically do whatever I like…almost. That's one of the nice things of being there.

**Q:** Ja…so that's really challenged my perception…

**L:** It depends what kind of person you are…if you want to make it in the university you have to play the game…if you play the game you will get promotion, you will get money…all those sorts of things. I you don't want to play the game…you're never going to go 'up there'…

**Q:** What is the game?

**L:** Ah, it's an old-man game….that's about all I can say about it ! But nobody really stands in my way…not at the university. If I want to go out and do some consulting…I'll go and do some consulting…if I want to change my course, I can. And I must say that in all of those, it's basically your head of department and he's very supportive. If you come up with ideas he won't block them; if you ask for resources he might not give them but if you do them all on your own, he's fine. And if he can't decide on something, then I can go straight to the Vice-Chancellor…and you just talk to him as a person. Some people are afraid of the hierarchy…I'm not really afraid of anybody, I just say 'Well, I'll go and see the Vice-Chancellor and I'll just tell him that I'm wanting to do this or if it's something that I know my head of department can't decide upon…that's what I would do. But it's not like working in a business…you just do your own thing. I mean now and then something really bad happens…And then you're in trouble. If something goes wrong, your organization doesn't stand behind you maybe, in the same way as a business would...I don't know…There are some rules and regulations…otherwise people would complain…the procedures of handing in your thesis and having it evaluated has to have some procedures.

**Q:** Interesting…OK…so perhaps we can move to a bit more detail about the actual students. One of the questions I've got here relates to how the supervision process has been for you so far?'…I'm just wondering about the less smooth parts. It doesn't have to be real *problems*…perhaps some difficulties encountered?

**L:** Again…I don't think I do anything 'properly' because I've got too much work…or I take on too much work. But I start off with just glancing over things and making a few comments and say: 'Go back with this'. And I do this a few times and I see actually the problem is not really addressed, then I realize I have to put more effort into this…because some students are really very bright and they just writing the thing out, they just need a little bit here and there. Other students need much more…[speaks about student X].

…I don't like people to start writing…because then they just write…each paragraph has to have concepts…so I need to see that whole structure. Otherwise they end up just having one reference after another and it's not an argument that they're making…they're just throwing things in. They've read the literature and then they present it as: this one says *this*, the next one says *that.* You can't do it like that…I want them to say 'What is it that you want to say? What do you want to talk about?'. I need to see a content table, and then within the content table I want to see within each paragraph, what it is that they're going to talk about. And then I need to see how they are going to link those different paragraphs… so I can see already that the discussion is going to link back to the literature.

…Usually it doesn't happen like that…they write. Then I say, 'Well, what is this about?' and then when they put these things next to…they start to see that they are talking about the same things…*here* and *here* and *there.* And then I say 'OK, you put those things together'. That's basically how I work…is this what you want me to talk about?

**Q:** …whatever you bring is good…

**L:** …It's also often difficult for students…they write about something and then they write about something else, but they don't say why they go from one thing to another. So I say 'You must link this'. So that's my first thing, the conceptual thing and then after that I go to grammar and phrasing and words…certain things you don't say. I'm extremely

weak when it comes to referencing format, I just leave it to them. I mean, you can just look in your book and just do it…and if they can't do it then I think it's just their fault.

**Q:** That's true enough! [I ask about student X]

**L:** [Speaks at length about student X]

**Q:** And what about Nadia in terms of difficulties? With X it seems to go quite smoothly…it seems that the relationship works well.

H Ja…I didn't have problems with the relationship with [Student X}. That's another thing, I don't think that you should supervise people with whom you don't really get on. I mean I had another student, she was so sweet…she kept on giving me chocolates and things, but I just thought that she was so irritating. And it's so difficult, you know. So I get a bit frustrated with people who I don't get on with, but sometimes you don't know that from the beginning.

[Speaks about student X}.

**Q:** And what is Nadia's style as a student ?

**L:** (Sigh) In a way I'm quite fond of her…I think of *all* my students as my children…which is very bad!…She's so tense. I mean everything around her is tense, she does not relax and when she gets tense then she can't think clearly, so that any comment you make is this huge thing and then it's all going to collapse. So, it's very difficult to critique in a situation where, for instance, you make a few comments about the literature review, and she's thinking, you can just *see* it happening…'This is going to take another two months…I'm not going to be ready' and then she gets sick. She's sick all the time. So I don't know. And then she gets defensive and then it's like: 'Ja, but it's because this is how people in my methodology do it'. And I said: 'It doesn't work like this'…so I thought, the last thing I want to do is to impose on students to do things they don't like. So when Peter came I said: 'Let's show it to Peter' and in fact he had quite similar comments to me about the whole thing. And then I heard via-via, that she actually would like him to be her supervisor…So eventually I went to her and I said: 'Nadia, would you

like Peter to be your supervisor as he's doing so much work with you?' I mean, *I* had to go and say it. Why did *she* not come to me and say: 'I'd like Peter to be my supervisor'…because she's afraid of me. And it doesn't work…if people are afraid of you. And then she said 'Yes', so I went to the Dean and I had the things changed…now there's co-supervision. And I said to her 'Fine, you work with Peter, but I'd like to see each part when it's done so that I can see that I'm happy with it, because I'm still a supervisor. But whenever Peter and I have looked at something, we usually come up with the same comments…so I don't have a worry…So from that point of view, I feel quite secure, because I'm still a supervisor…I still have responsibility over it… but I don't think I'll have much input anymore. I think if you feel that, you must just let go. I don't think you must get into acrimonious situations, wanting to impose your power or your structure…I feel I'm like a resource…I can offer people to come to me, but if they don't want it then that's fine as well. As I say my only thing was that I thought I had put a lot of effort in, I also want to be acknowledged.

**Q:** Fair enough…We've spoken a lot about supervision style and that kind of thing…is there anything that you think we could add…

**L:** How I would like to be as a supervisor, is when I feedback to them I would rather do it in the form of asking them questions…problem posing…What is it that you want to say? What do you want to talk about?' So that they can do it. But again I feel that it will take too much of my time so I actually tell them how I think it should be, which I don't think is right. I think, rather than sitting with them for three hours, I should sit with them for *six hours*! and pose questions. They'll eventually come to the realization of doing the structure. I think technical things like how you write about a sample…that needs to be told…but to come up with the structure or the logical argument…I think I should sit more and discuss more with them, rather than just giving them what I think is right…They would probably learn more if you do the problem posing than if you do it the way I do.

[Speaks about student X]

**Q:** …if they're going to take a long time to learn critical thought….

**L:** They come for the degree…they don't necessarily come for…To me it's all about the conquest of the learning…If a student has never been trained in thinking analytically…and they then learn to do it, that gives me a lot of satisfaction. And in fact it's OK for them to be there to do just well enough to get their diploma. When I was a student I didn't do this thing, so I think I'm expecting too much from them. On the one hand in their maturity, and I maybe don't give them enough space to do it in their own way. I'm working very hard on those new paradigms and those new ways of writing-up. For instance some people write up in the form of a play. And also there's this thing… in the report: '*it is* described'… rather than saying '*I* have described' That '*I*' has not been acceptable for a long time and it is getting acceptable…And then there's the whole thing about gender. I write 'she'…but I write a note in the beginning: 'I will be saying *she'*. But there are all these little things…do I accept them or not? I also think that when I submit the thesis for examining I want that person to pass. So if I know that it's going to cause a problem, I'd rather they'd change it.

**Q:** Ja…it's quite something with changing paradigms…people doing different things…

**L:** Also, some topics…I don't find them interesting and then I sometimes say: 'So what?' I mean it's a bit cruel to say, but like…we've got that information. And so much is also about…and it's not necessarily bad, but sometimes it can become a little bit wallowing…it's obviously *their* issue…it's their problem…so they're researching their own problem. And I think up to a certain point we all do things that relate to ourselves but sometimes it can get a little bit too much. And as I say…I'm an organizational development person…a person who wants to make a difference, to analyze things and get it into action. Some of those [other research areas] are very self-referent…like virginity, and this and that, and how do I *feel* about it…and then they want to talk about it…there's the whole narrative thing. It's a completely different style…so it's people and their styles of research…and in fact, they go together…certain types of people do certain types of research. And although I feel I could still make that look like a good piece of research, I won't enjoy it and the student probably won't enjoy it either.

**Q:** Ja…enjoyment's a big part of it…

**L:** I find all the theses I have, in a way, a schlepp because it's a huge commitment…but when I come out of a session I can sometimes feel very happy and say: 'That was nice, that was good'. Or when I get the next version, and I think 'Yes!!'

Another thing is a thesis as such, I much prefer supervising when we do consulting work, because that leads to something.

…But, you don't get much back from students…except for that intellectual stimulus. They don't really thank you. I haven't had students who have been grateful. I mean we never get a thank you or anything much…We put in a lot of effort and they just go. And I suppose it is my task, but I do think I go beyond the call of duty, often.

**Q:** Yeah…by the sounds of it. OK…well I think that's it for now…I usually like to ask at the end of an interview, how you've experienced this…being interviewed?

**L:** No..it was a nice vibe…drinking a cup of 'tea'…a glass of wine ! It was fine. It's quite nice to talk about it because sometimes you actually realize certain things that you don't realize until you talk about it…because you start talking about it and you think 'actually, it's true, you know'. Ja…you should ask my students how they actually experience…if they're in the position of being your student they won't tell you…the last thing they want is that you're badly disposed towards them…I really appreciate criticism…but I hate whining. I don't know if you can see the difference…

**Q:** sure…

**L:** I like critique in a positive way, like 'Could we possibly do it in this way?' rather than 'I don't like'…because if you don't like, well I'm sorry if you don't like. But if you say: 'I think it might be better this way'…then it immediately goes into 'OK, let's try it' or 'I think it might be difficult because of *this*, but try *that*'. But it is very difficult to work with a student who is afraid of me and I think 'Why?' Because I'm straightforward. I just tell them.

…It's difficult to work with someone who's afraid of you…But if I say 'I'm not so keen on that', Nadia takes it as a veto…'OK, we're not going to do that'. If I say 'I don't think that's such a good idea' well, that's it! Finished!

**Q:** Well…thanx a lot…really

**L:** Sure… it's a pleasure.

## Transcript of the third interview

**L:** You asked me about a metaphor for my relationship with student X and Nadia and also about the content of the project. Now the thing is, it's all the same, it's all part of the same thing…I cannot separate it. I wanted to find a nice word, but it's something to do with multi-faceted…it's like a ball of colours, but all the different colours don't stay in the same place…they're all different facets of the same thing.

[Speaks about student X].

…So it's like that…there's lots of different things and I think that when we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe…that's how it is for me.

…If you supervise a student [referring to Nadia] that one, you don't have that much…not even in common with…rather that much to talk about, plus the topic is not really in your field, then you kind of get into your role as academic supervisor and you do the things that you have to do…

Also what I thought of…being able to see the yin and the yang in all of the things…We are the same, we are both in the academic sphere and both working but we are different as well. So it wasn't a clear task…this is the supervisor and this is the student and this is the task that has to be done. Ultimately what you are doing supersedes all of those things.

**Q:** Absolutely. By what I've seen, none of the tasks are that clear…I don't think there is such a thing as a purely academic relationship. I think that's what can make it difficult…

**L:** It can go badly wrong. And how do you stop that because of all those things. I basically just think that you hand over to someone else when you come to that point.

**Q:** Ja. And did you think of a metaphor for Nadia?

**L:** Yes. It's not a metaphor, it's basically a feeling and that feeling is frustration. That's how the whole experience has been for me. Like right now, I don't know what she's doing. I don't know where she is. Basically she's down the corridor but she avoids me. She hasn't talked to me for two or three weeks. So what do I do? Do I let go, because I don't want to impose? Do I go and ask, because I don't want to show that I'm not interested? I don't know where I stand. At this stage I would quite like to say, I'm handing over. I want to be there if I need to be there but I don't *know* if I need to be there. Students probably think that they are the ones that are completely in the dark and not knowing what they should do and are all kind of anxious. Not that I'm anxious, because I can do whatever I want to do at this time. I can say: 'Look, Nadia by tomorrow, I need to see what you've got'. I can actually do that, or I could say: 'Look, you haven't come for a long time, I think maybe you should go to someone else'. So from an authority point of view I can do that but I can't do that…it's not me…I can't do that.

**Q:** ...it's a dilemma

**L:** …the uncertainty and insecurity. I haven't got a clue. And I know that if I would have been the more kind of administratively sound supervisor, I would have made all those plans and I would have been able to say 'We made these arrangements, what about this and that'. But you know, the kind of excitement about doing the research and the doing of it together is not working out if the other person does not feel the same way as you. So that has really shown that there is a need for that administrative aspect of being a supervisor as well, which I haven't done and I can't start doing it now, because that's not the relationship we had so far…I mean I've always done my supervision the way I've done them.

**Q:** I remember, when we stopped taping the last time…and you mentioned something that I wouldn't mind getting on tape…it relates to what you said now about students thinking that, as you have the authority you may know everything, meanwhile you may also feel in the dark. It was a comment about when the theses go off to be marked…you as a supervisor being just as nervous about the outcome…

**L:** Even now, with [student X], now I have to decide who's going to mark it. And you have all the options…Theses are written from an ideological background. Do you find a person with the same ideological background? Otherwise they go for it. Same approach, things like that, so actually a supervisor has a lot of power there as well. You can to a certain degree decide how much chance a person has of getting higher marks. You can be wrong but it does play a role…it is anxiety provoking. If the thesis comes back with not very good marks, you may have sent it to the wrong person, you know. And yes, I'm anxious, because I'm rated as well, but I'm also anxious for the students because they put a lot of effort in.

**Q:** OK…I see. And did you think of a metaphor for Nadia's topic or methodology?

**L:** No, I didn't. But [Student X's] is not about his topic only…it's about how it's connected to me. With Nadia, she doesn't actually allow me access into what she's doing and to the whole thing…she doesn't let me in. She kind of keeps me there, as the administrative supervisor who she has to have. So that sharing is not there. So I'm not actually 'in' her info…I read it to see that it hangs together logically and all of those things but I'm not in her data…I'm not connected. It was always like that because there was no discussion. I would say I didn't like this or that and then she'd say: 'Well, if you don't like that, then I'll do something else'. It's not connected…because the relationship and the content all needs to be connected for that exciting research endeavour to happen.

**Q:** Mmm…for two minds to engage on it.

**L:** Yes. You see, I'm like the police…that kind of thing…so I don't know. The proposal's approved but as I said, right now I don't know what is happening. I don't know where I stand…when I think it's time I must check and see what's happening. And then I'll just take it from there and I think I'm going to get a wad of text and then read it?

I hope she gets there because I do still feel responsible, especially as her lecturer and her supervisor for her internship. Also at some stage…she also came in here one time and got very upset and told me personal things and ever since that time I have not seen her either so I

think she thought that maybe she overstepped something and now I know something about her. I didn't ask for it, it just came. And it came at a bad time, because I was not feeling great either, I was feeling quite sick and tired, but I listened. And now she probably thinks that that stands between us as well. Maybe I need to do a little bit of…not counselling…but personal interaction as well, but I don't know. Where does it stop being a supervisor? And with some people you just connect and it's easier…with other people it becomes a task…that's why I call it 'counselling', otherwise I would just say 'be friendly'…just sit together or go and have a drink together. But if that thing has built up and you actually don't feel an affinity with the person, then you have to go in and smoothly say 'So how *are* you?' You understand the difference? Instead of ordinary human interaction, everything has become a task. That kind of distance has been created and then I get frustrated as well, I must say. I don't know, you'll have to ask her what's next…maybe she knows better than I do?

I can't just let go…it's a decision and it needs to happen.

**Q:** I hear you. Whew…difficult…

**L:** So it's almost like the opposite, when the one [student X] is all connected and all human interaction, with the other one [Nadia] is all tasks and tasks that are kind of awkward. Fulfilling tasks is onerous, but doing things is fun. Her potential topic I'm sure I could be very interested in. It's not that I'm not interested in that kind of area, I'm doing other things with other students who are in similar areas and I'm actually like her methodology. But students can actually keep you away. Through the personal interaction they don't allow you into the data…you also have to talk about how you collected the data, how participants interacted with you, what you found out…the contextualisation of the data gives you so much *more*. You have to have a *feel* of the research…not just what's written there, because that's cold and that doesn't always give you a full picture…and then I can't help with the interpretation of the data, and *feeling* if it gels. Student sometimes do that and I think…they may do that when they're immature…when they feel they can't do that, or it scares them…they think they must have nicely written out things and then show that to me but that's

not what it's about. The sharing of the data is important…you can show the data or you can share it.

…there's different ways of supervising. I think you start to see, I'm a very chaotic, holistic type of person…although everybody here in the department thinks I'm very organized and organizational. Everybody thinks so…it's the way I walk! In my thinking everything is very connected but people are terrified of me…

**Q:** Oi! …coming back to the thesis…the examination…changing things maybe…

**L:** Ja…it's a huge thing. One of those things why we insist as supervisors is because we are also on the line and if we think it doesn't look right, then we think the examiner may also think it's not right. And what happens in the end if it's not passed? What would you do if you didn't pass…if your supervisor gave you reasonable marks but your outside examiner said: 'This is not good enough.' Would you not blame your supervisor for not telling you?

**Q:** I think I would understand that in research different people have different ways of looking at things…but yes, there would be a certain amount of resentment.

**L:** So I think, maybe students see it as us just wanting it our way, but it's not just us. You see if I would be the only marker, I probably would accept some things more easily than when I know somebody else will be marking it.

**Q:** Which brings me to your relationship with the university…and not only the university, but also the assessment from the outside …the balancing act…

**L:** I feel that I identify with the students. It's me and the students against the rest! That's how I would feel…I mean if I have got that relationship with the student, that's OK. I don't feel like I'm part of the system. It's not fighting the system but I'm also out of it…the student and I have to somehow get through the system. Like the two of us holding hands and there's

this jungle gym…you have to go up and down and round about and then at the end is where the thesis is waiting…and you've gone through the system!

…If something goes wrong I'll be reprimanded by the system…I don't think I will be helped by the system. I told you last time, I think.

**Q:** Ja…I ask 'cause I'm using Foucault's very loosely defined concept of power being relational and productive or reproductive…I'm quite interested in whether funding may impact or pressurize the supervisor…Have you found that at all…I mean you've gone out and got your own…

**L:** For my students…I got money for my students. So they can't complain there. I pay those students to be here…both of them.

**R:** OK. I'm with you…

**L:** Did you talk to the university as well?

**R:** Well. I've been to a seminar…at the beginning of the year on supervision…but it was really more a sort of re-reading of the rule-book…I'm interested in how the relationship of prestige or salary or promotion may be related to publication…to a kind of sanctioned production…and how that relates to funding.

L: Yes, you haven't asked me about that…about how it would work if we would publish. I'm an organizational animal but not an institutional animal…institutions kind of drive me a bit nuts…especially if there are certain powers there and if it's kind of conservative and things like that. And I don't usually know the rules of those things…I've got my own values and norms and things. When I finished my PhD, I didn't actually know that one is supposed to write together with one's supervisor so I just published on my own and never asked my supervisor to be part of it. And he never said anything. With hindsight…I think he was probably very upset, but he's never told me. And it wasn't because of wanting to cut him out,

I just thought 'Great! PhD's finished, now I'm going to write' and I just wrote…on my own. So having done that I could never presume that any students should ask me to be their second author. I know that this is how it's done. Having not done it myself, I would feel very much of a fraud at asking anybody else to do this with me. If they offer…nice…Basically, people must just do what they want to do.

**Q:** There are some supervisors that slap a contract down before you've even started with the process!

**L:** I think also, doing it right at the beginning…you don't know who will put in what amount of effort…some theses one puts in a hell of a lot of effort into it and others not and I think that also makes a difference. I might feel a little…not upset…but rather that it would have been nice if this person would have asked me, but that's just how it is.

**Q:** In terms of funding and promotion and that kind of thing…they do look at publication?

**L:** …it's all a whole lot of rubbish. All these games…they just take so much of one's time…it's about doing research and doing exciting things, to me…there's so much repetition. I could also write five papers that would just say one or another thing differently. But…not all of my papers…but I like most of my papers to be completely new and it takes me months. I write maybe two or three at the most. But why would I write more? For what and for whom?

…It depends on whether you're part of the club or not…so however hard you work…there's always another criteria…It's very much like that. I mean even if I published like mad, I'm just not the right person so it tells you, don't even try. Then you start doing what you like doing…I've just always done my own thing and not played the part…But you have to do what you like to do…some people just try all the time and it takes a hell of a lot of effort…filling in forms, doing this, doing that. But what I wanted to ask you…do the students see us supervisors as part of the system?

**Q:** No…not as far as I can make out *so* far, anyway.

**L:** I don't think so either

**Q:** Most of the students seem to see the system as kind of 'way out *there'* …removed…with the supervisor half way in-between. And it seems most supervisors work around it in all sorts of ways to get on…

**L:** I think the system does not understand that it involves personal relationships…they just think it's forms and rules and regulations, but it doesn't work like that.

**Q:** I think funding's a big one…quantitative and the sciences are very heavily funded compared to the humanities…evidently. I believe that a Master's student in science gets bigger funding than a humanities student…

**L:** But you see, I never think of those things. If a student comes to me I don't see the dollars on their face…'Oh that one's a heavily funded one let me put more effort into them'. Do you have somebody in the sciences taking part?

**Q:** No, I've used only education and humanities…but in the first four or so months while I was reading, I spoke to so many people to hear what's happening here and there…

**L:** Yeah…but it's interesting to reflect on it.

…I'm kind of a bit tired of students, but then I think of lecturing…and this is not lecturing…and I think of having somebody to mentor. I like the idea of mentoring and when I see some students…there are two or three in the Master's… they are blossoming now. They can do a whole lot of things…they've grown. It's like bringing up a child in a way…when you see your own children growing it's exciting…so that makes one feel a bit worthwhile. When I lecture I don't feel worthwhile at all I just think I'm wasting my time and they're wasting their time. There's no sharing, whereas with this kind of thing there is a sharing.

Contrary to what people think, I really don't think that you can keep the professional part separate [from the personal]. I'm not saying that you have to cry on one another's shoulders the whole time, but things are contextualized. I want to prepare them for life and life is not separate. When I go out and consult it's not about my CV. It's about how they look at me…how I move my hands and my feet and when and how I say things…that's what research is about.

[Speaks at length about student X]

…so one I'm excited about and one is a bit of a disaster. Why is the one a disaster and the other one not…it's not about the topic. It's basically about the relationship and how does that relationship come about? I don't know…I've got some point that I think may be…I think Nadia's particularly afraid of me, I don't know why? And then how it's going to work out…I don't know.

…I think she really wanted to change supervisors and just didn't say. I don't know. Maybe she thinks I just didn't want to put effort in…There is that thing that students think you've always got things under control. They don't realize a lecturer's insecurities especially if most of the time you come over as being confident. But we are also very insecure about lots of things…and the insecurity might not be about how to do research. There might be other insecurities…personal insecurities. And you have your stereotypes…like if you're not a woman you can't do your research on women, if you're not black you don't understand black people…and if I think that the student may have that perception, it influences me, and then I go very much like: 'Don't you want to do this? Are you sure about that?' and then they get confused…what is she saying…does she not want me? You see, they see you in a particular light, which is very different from how I see myself. And the combination of being quite confident about certain things and being insecure about other things is very confusing for the student.

**Q:** Very interesting dynamic.

**L:** …I would love students to be confrontational…not whining. As I say, I hate whining…the kind of 'I'm suffering' business…because that's also a strategy. It's a strategy to get what people want. I think strategies must be like this (*a straightforward gesture*), not like this (*a roundabout gesture).*..because I'm not going to say 'Ok come on…' You've got to actually *tell* me.

**Q:** Is there anything else that you think I should have covered or that you'd like to mention?

**L:** What is your thesis question again?

**Q:** How do postgraduate supervisors and their students experience their supervision relationships and how are the dynamics of interpersonal and institutional power implicated in these relationships?

**L:** I think one has got a lot of power as a supervisor, in a way, over a student…not in relation to the institution.

**Q:** Is there anything else you want to mention?

**L:** No, I think if I've answered the kinds of things that you want me to answer then I'm happy. And I think it must be quite nice for you to have the two very different situations.

**Q:** Ja…very, because it opens a whole comparative thing…
And then, the usual question…how have you experienced the interview?

**L:** Ah…and so now we have to say nice things! I found it very interesting. I wasn't very happy speaking about Nadia because it's not nice to me and I actually feel insecure about what she told about me, to you.

**Q:** …of course

**L:** So, I didn't really like that particular one. But then I thought one has to be a bit grown up about things and you can't just talk about one that you feel happy with because the aim is not about me, the aim is about doing research that may be useful and hopefully what we have said about it is going to help you towards your research. I'm very interested in this topic. I think it's a great thing to do research on, that's why I wanted to be involved.

…I think it has helped me to reflect…like the thing of not being a good administrator…I somehow knew that but it helped me to reflect on it…and for future purposes…some things I could maybe do better. And also, I've been quite down about being here…it actually made me a bit excited about some of the things I have done…not just with [student X]…but extrapolated to other things that I have done. So it was nice on the one hand. I would have preferred it if I didn't have to talk about the one, but I did say yes, so…I said yes.

**Q:** Thanx *very* much. It's been interesting and I've enjoyed them. It's very exploratory at this stage…quite loose…there's almost no work done in South Africa on it and hopefully it will be useful. Thanx you so much for contributing to it…

## 2.4 NADIA

### Transcript of the first interview

**Q:** Thank you very much for partaking in the research. So perhaps we can kick off with the first question…what motivates you to study for Master's?

**N:** Do you mean in general? At the beginning or….

**Q:** Whatever…what made you decide…what's in the Master's for you?

**N:** Initially…I thought, let me try research and it sounded like something that would interest me because I'm very interested in academic and theoretical things. It didn't strike me at first that it would be *applied* research and that would be so different from theoretical stuff…pure theory. So that was the initial interest.

…Subconsciously there was also the security…which I realized a year later…that being in an academic environment is secure as opposed to going out in the working world and being on your own.

**Q:** Do you see yourself working as an academic?

**N:** Preferably. I'm not sure… where I'm going to end up. But I realized that commercial research is not for me…unless there's some sort of developmental thing at the end of the day…that it acts in some sort of way…socially…to the benefit of other people. I realize that that's not quite what applied research is about, even though it's assumed.

…I got very angry at one stage. When I initially signed up for this I thought this is going to be humanitarian…helping communities and it's activist kind of work, which is what I'm interested in. And yet I didn't see it happening…it seemed all about money, and I couldn't handle that. I need to find a place where it's not all about money…there was a lot of money

coming into the organization and it was about how much money we can get…that people will put into these projects. All organizational issues. Quite a different agenda.

…I'm quite interested eventually, possibly just writing around particular issues and publishing…but not particularly working in any organization. And that's what the internship is about…it's about students bridging the gap between the workplace and the academic environment. In some sense, you're getting experience, but you do feel *used*…I think it's also about the way the organization has been set up…with that mission…to bridge the gap between the academic environment and the workplace, and to use our expertise to fuel work and get money into the academic environment…

**Q:** And then how did you come to choose your topic?

**N:** That's a good question. I'm not quite sure. I think initially, by the end of last year, beginning of this year, I knew I was interested in something socio-cultural…postmodern critical perspectives. I was interested in the mediation of knowledge in particular, but I was also interested in health research, so I found a way of bringing them together…which is looking at sexual knowledge and how socio-cultural practices come into play with that. What frightened me at first was the fact that I was interested in a particular socio-cultural group… and I knew it was going to be very difficult…but when I did my first interview it was not so bad. So I thought 'OK, I'm going to go ahead with this'. And that's how it started…and I'm still working on it.

**Q:** And then…how did Luna come to be your supervisor?

**N:** Another good question. There was no choice really. All of us were being supervised by Luna initially…all of us are being supervised by Luna…there really was no one else. So Luna has been the main supervisor for everybody. And she kind of asked 'is that fine?' but there wasn't any one else you *could've* asked…you just said 'yes' and that was that This was sometime last year at the beginning…with the proposals. And her expertise is with a particular methodological approach and everyone was doing that approach excepting for me.

And she kept on asking me if I didn't want to use it too. I think she felt safer with that as well but I couldn't agree to it. I am very interested in my methodology, very passionate about that area. It was a bit difficult, but we settled on working together…

…And now Peter has agreed to be co-supervisor. Initially I would have preferred him to be main supervisor but it gets very complicated with one person saying 'do this' and the other person saying 'do that'. And interesting…before he actually became co-supervisor…because that only happened about a month ago, around end of May…he sat in on a meeting and he agreed with everything Luna had said. And I went away and I thought about what they had discussed…and I didn't agree with them…and I e-mailed him later and said: 'This doesn't make sense to me, this is what I think'. And he said: 'No, you're right'…I felt very disturbed by that. I think changing supervisors was more of a personal matter. I would've liked to just change supervisor altogether. But Luna sat down with me…it was sort of vague…we didn't talk about the real *why* or anything…she brought it up and said: 'Well if you want to change your supervisor you can, but I would prefer if I stay as your co-supervisor because I have worked on your project'. And at that point in time I thought I better settle with it because I'm in the department, I have to see Luna every day, I can't be nasty about anything. So we settled on that, but she still wants to be brought in on supervision, which is difficult for me because conceptually, for my methodology, I think, she doesn't know much of that area.

At the end of the day what I've resolved is that she can have her say…I don't have to agree with it. If it means a last-minute changing everything then…No…I'll stick with one person's advice. I'm not saying her advice is not good, she does know a lot, but when it comes to conceptual things about my methodology, that's where it's problematic. I think she tried to read and do some extra…

**Q:** And your topic?

**N:** Well my project is a critical perspective which is not her field anyway…she doesn't agree with the ideas…Luna's not interested in HIV/Aids research…I think she felt that I was being very ethnocentric or culturally biased by bringing in culture. But at the same time from the

perspective of my paradigm…culture's there. We had problems at proposal stage when she made me take it out and I thought: 'She's avoiding the issue, put it back in'. So it was those kind of things that got frustrating. I managed to work with it for a while and I thought: 'just be happy…no one else is complaining'.

**Q:** And what are your expectations of your supervisor…and yourself…and of course, you're free to talk about either of the supervisors…obviously I am particularly interested in the supervision with Luna but it's going to cross lines…and that's just fine…

**N:** I think for me…the main thing that I expect of myself…to work hard and I think also to pay attention to the criticism or critique as well…because I think it's useful…it is valuable. And to try and stay motivated…it's very difficult to stay motivated. From the supervisor, I think support. Support is a big thing. More than anything, more even than expertise. I think support comes first…which I felt a big lack of this year. Motivation-wise, I don't think I was motivated at all. And next…I think expertise. It helps if your supervisor has an interest in your topic. I think first support and then second I think expertise in the methodology and then third, an interest in your topic.

**Q:** It interests me that you put support first. In what ways do you feel you weren't getting the support

**N:** One, I think lack of supervision. It was very rarely that you'd have supervision. It would be like 'Oh, we haven't seen you for a while, I think we should have a supervision meeting'. I realize that Luna is very busy, she's supervising a lot of students…I think there was also an ambiguity of roles. And there was this 'colleague' thing that started last year, where she made it very participatory with us. And this year she realized that she had to change that…so there was not only the lack of support in that sense but there was no motivation…not interested in my topic. Very conflictual views. I felt constantly undermined. I mean how do you write about something when someone is saying: 'Culture is everywhere…it doesn't exist in the same sense that you're talking about' or 'don't bring in [a particular racial group] because then it sets up this ------- thing'. Yet…the result is that it's fixed now, with Peter.

**Q:** Perhaps you weren't given enough space?

**N:** Ja. I think ideas were imposed *on*…it's almost as if, while you feel like you're being given a choice, but you're actually not being given a choice. And at Master's level…you are clear about your ideas…you may not have the expertise and you may not know a lot…but you are clear about what you want to say. And I think all of us have done a lot of reading on our topic and we do know the basics of our topic and our concepts…and yes, there can be debates as well, but it becomes frustrating when that's constantly an issue. So, ja, I've been unsupported that way. For a long time I thought I was just imagining it. I thought 'Why am I feeling like this?' I know that the other students had small little gripes, but their supervision with Luna was very different to mine.

…I can *see* Luna's perspective on things, but she'd always put *down* my mthodology in supervision, which upset me a lot because I suppose, I try to maintain a passion and she's not helping me…Obviously there are valid limitations of every methodology but I've chosen mine. I've got to live with it.

…It came through very slowly. And it wasn't direct…little things coming through. So that didn't help.

**Q:** difficult…

**N:** Ja. I mean Luna is a likeable person and she's fairly easy to work with although I have worked with her in another capacity…as a boss rather than supervisor…so I know that she can be quite a slave driver. I don't know if that helped or made it worse. But for a long time I thought there's something wrong with *me*. And it took me a long time to pinpoint what was going on and then I thought I'm either going to sit with this and be frustrated and not finish my thesis or do something about it. So I spoke to someone with similar problems to mine. That helped.

**Q:** So the criticism came from a different paradigm…so *that* was seen, but I'm wondering…what about *you.*..on a personal level…how did *you* experience being 'seen'? The personal connection…was it almost entirely tied up with the thesis?

**N:** As I was saying, last year we were almost like her colleagues and she would ask us 'what to do about the course? How would we like the structure?' We grew very used to that collaborative approach and this year it became very different. It became very different…top-down…told to do *this*, do *that*…which is very different. And all of us had a problem with that. We had huge issues with it…there's still that problem where you just get told things and it's like you're not allowed to question it…just 'do it!' And with Luna…she takes things personally. And she's very tied in with the Master's course…she's given a lot to the course and I think she feels very unappreciated a lot of the time. But so do the students, because we are working as interns and at the end of the day, we're not getting paid much and we're not getting a thank you or anything like that. So in that sense, anything we criticize about the Master's course gets taken very personally. And I think the same with some of her views on things…like race…she feels very strongly about race…which is where my project sort of made her feel uneasy as well, because it has to do with this thing called culture and race and ethnic groups and all these sorts of things that she doesn't like. At the same time, I think in a professional role as a supervisor, you shouldn't take things personally, especially coming from an interpretive paradigm. But having agreed to work with her, I respect her for that and I expected some sort of mutual respect for my views. Which wasn't felt much…there were always these little passive-aggressive comments about my methodology. But I sort of just kept quiet and let them ride. I'm very much…within a lecturer-student capacity…I feel respect for my elders and for supervisors and that's how I treated our meetings. With regard to my views within the thesis, of course, I expressed *that.* But at the end of the day I would always come out of a supervision session feeling: 'What have I gained from this meeting? Nothing'. And I think she gathered that because nothing stays quiet in our department. Yes…that personal thing…does tie in with assumptions and I think, me being much younger, I haven't yet formulated such strong views about any particular paradigm. Yes, I love this paradigm, but I'm willing…and fairly open to other paradigms as well. So that was where I think the personal stuff came in…and that role conflict…in terms of her being

unappreciated…she put in a lot of work, and I'm not sure if we're supposed to say 'thank you' at the end of every day. But we have said 'We know you don't feel appreciated, but we do, we do appreciate you'. We have to constantly keep saying that to her. I'm sure there's also been personal stuff for her, in terms of her health. And emotionally. I mean last year we experienced it. She would get very upset if you said anything slightly negative about the Master's course…or this year about the internships. Because it was unstructured. We felt very much like 'What are we supposed to do?' We're not told. 'You've given us this, but the rules change all the time'. For us as well, the conflicting roles…between being a Master's student and an intern and Luna's role as our intern supervisor as well as our Master's supervisor…that comes into play as well. At the beginning of the year we had this cold shoulder for a week…with Luna walking around very angry and stroppy. And eventually we had to do something about it. Ja, it felt very much like a mother…a parent-child relationship that we were having with her. And we'd sit there, all of us, like: 'Where do we start ?' I suppose there's always that parent-child thing going on. I've only just realized it now, actually, it's been like a mother thing…which is why she probably gets very upset about any sort of negative thing said about her or about the Master's course.

**Q:** Whew…difficult. About structure…what about negotiation around how often you would have supervision sessions?

**N:** Initially it was assumed once a week…the internship one week and then the other week the thesis. It never did happen and also she was very busy…you had to make an appointment. Whereas it used to be open-door policy…which is fair enough, you've got to set your boundaries as well. But in terms of the process…of encouragement…I never had that 'I'm interested in this' or 'How about finding out about that…it might be useful for your project' whereas with Peter I find it's been so different. I found it odd. Just last week…he was so excited about it and I found it really odd. I had to tell him. I said ' I'm finding this difficult because you're motivated and it's something strange for me to experience'. He was saying 'Can I look at your data and maybe go and get this or that and look at this reading on risk culture. Maybe it won't be relevant but maybe you could bring it in at some point, or it can feed into your ideas'. It was like Wow! I found it such a different experience. I mean we

haven't worked much together but there's *support*. It's just so strange…you actually want to have a supervision meeting.

But at the same time Luna has also toned down a lot…But it was quite strange when she said to *me*, because I was having this whole emotional breakdown…I wanted to change supervisors…I was thinking 'I don't like Luna any more'…it was an emotional time for me. And eventually a friend brought me back to stability and said 'Look, this is what you can do…speak to this other student because she had the same problems as you'…which is what I did. So Luna said 'Lets have a supervision meeting', which I found very strange as well, and she brought it up. 'If you want Peter to be your supervisor that's fine'. And then I asked Peter …because I had asked him before [about supervising me. So he said 'fine, OK, whatever'. So I didn't know how she found out. Anyway, she brought it up and said 'I would like to be your co-supervisor because I have worked on your project'. But she was very upset as well.

…and I thought 'I don't think she's being professional at all'. Before we had had an encounter when she just burst out at me. I couldn't make it for a seminar…I was sick. And so she went into this whole thing…got me into tears…about her own issues. Like…'here I am confiding in you, wanting support' and I realize 'OK, yes, maybe you can't give me the support'…And she was so harsh, so dismissive, as if she couldn't care less…And I thought, OK, I can deal with this but I was very upset that I had been treated so abruptly. Then she went into this whole thing…divulged a whole lot of her own personal stuff…I just didn't know *what* to do. Then she wasn't talking to me. I know there are privileged relationships in the department and there are others who are obviously not within that circle, but I still don't deserve to be treated in that way…So it's been quite a frustrating process. Emotional. But I think I've reached a place of reason, now, where I'm civil and I do my work.

**Q:** Luckily…in terms of support...you've managed to find the support in other people…

**N:** …I think if it hadn't been for that I would have been very like…I wanna quit! Because in the middle of the year…I had wanted to quit, for health reasons and Luna said 'No…just carry

on with it' …By then I hadn't told her anything because I didn't want anyone knowing my personal business…So it was only later on this year that I told her and she was just…like in a different place to me. And I accept that she has difficulties as well…and she's in a difficult place as well…but I think that was the downfall of our relationship. It became very personal. At one stage I treated her as a person I respect, someone I revere and have a great deal of respect for…and then I thought I've had enough now…this is not professional at all.

**Q:** The thing is …I guess…the relationship can get complicated…

**N:** The problem is when it becomes personal. There were a lot of people this year who said 'Oh, we're in the dog box'. And you shouldn't have to feel that way.

…And I can honestly say, I'm not highly passionate about my topic…but I am about my methodology and yes…if I can respect your ideas, then you can respect my ideas as well and tell me where I'm going wrong…that kind of thing. A lot of people gripe, because it's just so miserable being there. Are all departments like this or is it just our department? And what can you do about it? Nothing. There should be some formal mechanism for watching that relationship and evaluating the course. But there isn't a forum for critique, so lecturers don't get evaluated...You may be good at one thing, but not everything. And I think that hopefully, evaluation will be put in place.

**Q:** And the university? What about the institutional support?

**Written communication**

**Q:** Oh boy …I changed tapes here and this part did not come out…Sorry! Issues covered were… relationship with head of department; the issue of the distribution of work; Post grad forum; How you experienced the interview.

Perhaps we can re-interview this?

## Transcript of second interview

**Q:** If we can just go back to the last interview…you were speaking about your relationship with the department…and the university…

**N:** Our head of department…his relationship with the students is very different…we know he's there…And I guess that's fine in a sense of, he's not our supervisor…he's role is not as a support…I'm not sure if support is the right word…he's a support in other ways.

**Q:** And the university itself….

**N:** I'm not sure if you can call it a relationship. I was saying that I think it's very important that we have a forum of some kind for supervision where we can discuss problems. That there is some monitoring of supervision…not just 'Oh well, you're welcome to come and talk to us' but an active, ongoing monitoring and evaluation system. I think we could learn a lot and the supervisors can too.

**Q:** Have you come in contact with the postgraduate forum?

**N:** I've read stuff…most of it has been about labs. I e-mailed the guy to ask if there's a forum to discuss these sorts of things and he never ever responded…so I thought 'Ok, obviously these things are not important'.

**Q:** And the distribution of work issue?

**N:** There's also no sense of support or evaluation of how we're doing…they don't come and check up on you and see how you're doing. I have to do a certain amount of hours of work for the department…there's no monitoring of that. I'd like to feel that my contribution to the university is going somewhere…some worthwhile work, not just for commercial ventures.

**Q:** And how do you find the supervisory relationship may have impacted on the broader context of your life?

**N:** I've put two things down here, my relationships and my own personal growth and creativity. In terms of relationship, I think of my boyfriend. I was very depressed…I would come home a frustrated, complaining, whining person…just horrible to be around and fortunately he's supported me to deal with that. But you know, it's horrible being like that. I felt like a horrible person. I had to dump all this load somewhere…and because there was nowhere else to put it…it upset *that* as well. I felt like I wasn't being as supportive as I could be in my role in our relationship…it was unfair, unbalanced. I was coming home with stuff I had to get off my chest and I wasn't playing my role as supportive person as well…because he also sometimes has a fair amount of stuff to deal with.

In terms of relationship…support…people that have had similar experiences have bonded on that level. You go to each other and talk to each other…our relationships are like that…that's our bond. It's not the best way to form a relationship but then you don't trust other people because they're close to Luna and yet they're such lovely people. And Luna too…she's got a good side and a bad side of course…but in my experience, I feel more negative than positive.

I really didn't want that to affect my relations…. at home. I'm not the kind of person who complains a lot. I tend to keep things in until they build up and then I can't handle it any more. Another thing that happened as well… when I spoke to my mom, she could see I was just like…upset. At one stage I told her I was stuck and feeling really not well. Then I told her I'd changed my supervisor…not that my supervisor had gone, but that I'd made a plan. She said that I sounded a lot better and 'I think you were sick because of Luna'. Quite strange that she said that because my mom's not the type that would say something like that…and when I thought about it…I thought, maybe she's right. I was like…I don't know…very depressed…the stage at where I would be emotional about anything. And that was quite odd. And that escalated. I don't like discussing my university problems with my parents at all. I don't do that at all…they don't know much about it…what I'm doing for my thesis or things like that…and it was quite strange having to get their support, in a way. I was

surprised that it actually escalated to the point where I need support from my parents, because I've never been the type to go to them for emotional support…especially about relationships.

**Q:** And you were saying…in terms of your self-growth?

**N:** Yes, I felt very *stuck*…my creativity wasn't at its normal peak, I think…And now I've had *images* just *coming* to me, and I don't know what to *do* with them, there are so many. Where did that go for the whole year? I used to love painting and creative writing and I haven't done that the whole [year] and now the experience of creating again…obviously there are a lot factors other than my relationship with Luna…but now I feel a lot more open.

**Q:** open and…it sounds like…receiving. Well…I guess it's safe to receive now?

**N:** Ja, like I'd read…about a book a week, or month…but now I just can't stop myself. Since I've had Peter I'm feeling very creative and motivated. I woke up the other day and thought: 'I *am* going to finish my thesis this year…I don't know *how*, but I'm going to do it'. And it was quite a strange thought to wake up with. Quite a change. I feel like my self again, in a way.

**Q:** Shall we go to the metaphors now?

**N:** I thought of something I said last week, about the parent-child relationship. And when I think about it now I think about my teenage years with my mother. A very difficult time. And I just thought that's just what my relationship with Luna felt like. I felt the same sort of feelings of guilt for speaking my mind or expressing myself. And the same sort of: 'Now you're making me feel guilty'…'But no *you're* making *me* feel guilty' sort of relationship. Ja…that's very much how it felt.

…Whereas *now*…you asked about my new supervisor relationship. I don't feel that as much. At first I felt a bit intimidated…like here's a person who really knows his stuff…but he doesn't use it to manipulate me…or try and make me do what he wants. He's very much like

'it's your work, it's your writing style, I'm not going to interfere with grammatical stuff or things like that. I'll guide you, facilitate your progress'. The two are quite different.

**Q:** And in your metaphor with mother-child…and it being different with Peter…you mention him not being manipulative…do you experience Luna being quite manipulative?

**N:** Yes…in a very sort of covert way…not openly. A sort of 'I should be very grateful for having a supervisor at all…I should be grateful for all these things…I shouldn't complain…say anything or express my views'. I'd go away and look at these things and I thought: 'No'. I think that's why it was a very emotional time, when I think of mother-child. My relationship with my mother is not like that *now*. But that teenage stage, just before coming to university, it was a very emotional period. Sort of like being in protest all the time. And that's how it felt, like I'm in protest…but silent protest.

I kept feeling it's my fault…I felt very guilty. I thought what do I do? I felt like a child almost again. And I think about it now and I displayed a lot of regressive coping mechanisms…like needing to let off steam by crying…which was unhealthy, really unhealthy…because I feel out of control…I could just burst into tears at any moment. Quite strange that it had the same effect on me…when I think about mother-child, it makes sense to me now.

**Q:** And I suppose, you can get on with the work now…your new supervisor understands your paradigm…he supports you academically…

**N:** Yes….although I still sit with an amount of fear that someone's going to take that supervision away from me…so I have to get as much out of it as possible. In a way I think Luna is still my co-supervisor…and I'm afraid she's going to take that other supervision away from me…going to destroy everything that's been said…like 'Do *this*' or 'Do *that'* and undermine all of it and it's just going to be gone.

**Q:** Like undoing the success…I'm just thinking, if one's personhood is assailed we have to resort to all sorts of things that we don't normally do.

**N:** It's the same with the painting. I would paint, but not for relaxation, as a coping mechanism and during the period with Luna as supervisor I would draw. And I remember the one picture I drew…of a girl covering her face. And I think I felt like that [*Nadia spreads her hands across her face*]. I had my hands over my face. Yeah, I needed to put something down…to put out there. And even now…painting has become…it isn't only about relaxation but it's also about…I know when I was growing up I used it a lot as a sort of coping mechanism. And I do that now as well…although it doesn't sound good…

**Q:** It's good…a good way of expressing anger. Perhaps we should break now…carry on with the metaphors tomorrow? Thank you so much for sharing…it's…difficult.

**N:** Thanks for listening.

## Transcript of the third interview

**Q:** And so, do you have a metaphor for your topic or methodology?

**N:** …I remember how in the beginning of this year, I was thinking about why I'm doing this project. And I'm not quite sure. I'm sort of baffled that I'm actually doing it and quite surprised at myself…that I could go out and do this…because it's quite confrontational in a way…And it made me think about my identity…I look at my own identity a lot and that's quite confrontational as well. It's quite scary sometimes, especially as I'm doing it [the thesis] on sexuality and I'm constantly confronted by it. It's actually quite scary saying that as well. So I'm confronted all the time by my own identity, by my own sexuality and by issues like HIV/Aids. It's like deconstructing who I am as a person…not just in a broad social macro-identity but….just traits, or things I do. It's quite interesting…you asked about my relationship to my methodology…I think I've always been the type of person who looks for the underlying levels…not just the surface of the things. There's always more to something…always layers and that's me in a way. That's why I find my methodology very…I'm trying to find the right word…tolerant… in way and in that sense it really draws me in. It makes a lot of sense to me. I find it very spiritual in a way…that's the word I want to use…In a way it's representative of my spirituality…not religion…my personal spirituality.

**Q:** can you say more about that…I find it fascinating?

[A long interchange about religion and spirituality edited out here]

**N:** …for a moment I thought…because I separate spirituality from religion…this is contradicting, confronting my religion in a way and *that* was scary. I thought am I shattering my own beliefs?…and so then 'Who am I?' And yet it made my religious beliefs clearer in a sense of the way I *practice* my religion…which is quite inspiring actually. For me my religion is more about tolerance and compassion…for me it just made my religion clearer…who I am and spiritually what I want to practice…compassion…and to ask 'How do I see the world?'

Ja…it was something I resonated with…in a way it's who I am as a person. It comes intuitively to me which is why I stuck to it. And I was very scared because I thought I don't want to latch onto something…I can see that happening in the department…like post-modernism…people latch on to that or latch onto 'I'm a social constructionist' or 'I'm a social worker'. I'm definitely anti latching on and I think my methodology has helped me see that you cannot latch onto things like that….in a way that's not…genuine.

…the other thing that also resonated with me that I've always been interested in the anthropological perspectives and context based things…and socio-cultural approaches to things. And that's where it spoke to me as well…that for once something is being acknowledged that often isn't…we know that the biological and the social frames us but we don't always apply that in terms of how we can help people or intervene. This position takes into account the historical, the social and how that constructs something.

**Q:** So your research process you've spoken about very eloquently…anything else?

**N:** I can't think of a metaphor that constructs my new supervisory relationship…I haven't had many supervisions…and I don't feel as if I've had to step back. Whereas with Luna I had to step back and I have been reflecting on that, so it was easier to think of something.

**Q:** I think it's well captured in the new rush of energy…

**N:** I think that's what got me sick as well. I had this rush of energy and I was out and about and doing all sorts of things and just a crazy…just gleaming…like a child almost…and then just collapsing.

**Q:** a *different* child…or the same one?

**N:** I'm wondering …I think the same child…just feeling different…When I think about the whole research process and I think back to what I said about being a child and protest. It's

been a process of protest in a way. Even for my topic…in a way it's confrontational and it's protest against 'Why is this ethnic group being left out?' I'm talking about HIV/Aids…it's talked about mainly as a black thing or a white thing…but what about the in-between groups. We talk about intervention but what about cultural intervention…what about the lack of education…and what is education…and what is reliable information…are parents reliable? Those kinds of things. So in a way it has been about protest.

In a way it's allowing me to step back and look at my own ethnicity and culture. So it's been a very interesting process.

**Q:** …academically and self discovery…

**N:** Ja. I think we do choose things that are reflective of who we are… I didn't think of it at the time but now when I think about it…it's been quite challenging. And often I don't want to look at it…and that can also be part of the hiding girl I drew…covering her eyes…something I don't want to think about it. Because then I *have* to stop and think, about myself.

**Q:** It's a strong image, that…

**N:** Ja…these metaphors. It's actually quite an interesting way to talk about relationships. And it's quite strange that the mother-child relationship and my mother being the support figure, because I've never seen her as a support figure in my life…and *now*, that my real mother should be a support. That's quite strange…I think I'll have to tell her…because I've never seen her like that before.

**Q:** Gee…lots of healing, hey? Times of tribulation…it's hell…but sometimes we learn so much. In retrospect! Anything else you'd like to add at all?

**N:** No. I don't think so…Well, just that I completed my supervision report the other day and I went into some detail. Maybe something will happen.

**Q:** Perhaps you'd like to comment on how you've experienced being interviewed?

**N:** OK. It's been great… really nice using the idea of metaphor. At first I looked at it and I struggled with metaphor…as in what's that again? It's been quite difficult having to think about the process…because I think I've just been trying to get back to a nice place…not so much dealing with all this…in an analytical sort of way. It's been good…and nice questions as well

**Q:** OK…thanx

**N:** I should ask…and how has *your* experience been?

**Q:** I've enjoyed it…I'm inexperienced at interviews, so I'm always a bit nervous about it…have I posed things correctly…am I going in the right direction? So I've tried to leave it quite open and then I worry about how much control I'm supposed to have. It's been interesting. I've actually enjoyed the interviewing much more than I thought I would. I was very nervous at first and it's been easier than I thought it would be.

**N:** I think using the metaphor…almost memory work helps a lot. Because when I think of my interviews…you're sort of thinking of the next step. 'Should I ask about that?' and 'the other thing was also interesting' and thinking what you can ask or not, and whether you're allowed to say something or not…about yourself or…and when you transcribe…it's like 'what was I thinking about then?'

**Q:** In the end I relented on the shoulds and should nots. Maybe I just prefer to have a bit of a conversation. I'm sure there's a 'right way' but I've had enough of trying to think about that! Should I switch off?

**N:** OK!!

## 2.5 ANDY

### Transcript of first interview

**Q:** So ….the first question…What motivates you to supervise?

**A:** Partly it's just professional, of course…we're expected to. But obviously one gets approached by people to supervise you, especially if you've enthused them at an early level about something or other. And, obviously, we encourage that, as a department. *I* encourage it in the sense that I love doing it…not that I'm hugely experienced yet…I've only had three or four supervisions so far…at Master's level. I've got one PhD student working with me now. He was my first MA student, and we carried on. So, yeah, I haven't much of a sample to draw on yet but what I've done so far has been really, really so enjoyable. I've really liked it. So when people have approached me, I've been very open to taking them on. A couple have come straight out of the teaching we've given…or that *I've* given…including Molly

…it's partly if the subject matter interests me. I'm getting heavily into the ecological stuff…so partly it's me wanting to promote that field of study. It's very embryonic in South African literature…it's hardly taken off…it's a *huge* industry elsewhere…so there's this massive open field and I'm doing various things to try and encourage people to get into it…so this is one way of doing it.

**Q:** And so M came to you…you had worked together before?

**A:** She did Honours with us…and 2 of the group have come through to do a Master's with *me*…which I take as a real accolade…wonderful to have attracted them both. In the meanwhile, Molly and I have made…we've been very, very good friends…she's been a very stabilizing influence in my own slightly turbulent last couple of years. Ja…so there's a curious mix there, of professional interest and just friendship and getting interested in stuff that we're both interested in…together.

**Q:** Gee…nice…sometimes the supervisory relationship is only professional…do you anticipate or have you found that friendship gets in the way at all…when there's dispute or anything?

**A:** No, no. I'd imagine it could, with some people. All the students I've had so far…I regard them all as friends…you just get so involved with the person and go through all their turbulence and turmoil…So we end up kind of leaning on each other in many ways. I think that's happened with all my students so far…partly maybe…it's just *me* and…I like having friends, I guess. In terms of interfering with the process, no, not really, I mean I don't feel hesitancy in therefore being critical of the work. People appreciate that. You know, I have another very, very good friend who's doing a PhD elsewhere and I have no professional relationship with him at all, but he's giving me his stuff to read because he says 'I don't actually trust my supervisor to really give me the goods here…and I *know*…that you'll be blunt and tell me if this is crap'. And I don't have a problem doing that. It's almost part of the friendship…that one is very rigorous about that. So it doesn't interfere, for me.

**Q:** Yeah…it makes me wonder how people may gravitate towards one another. Some gravitate towards relationships that really work well and others…I understand that some of the supervisor-student relationships are very difficult…

**A:** Yes, I think the personality issue is so important. One almost wants to advise students to get together with supervisors they *know* they're going to get on with, on a personal level. Because otherwise it must be…it can be horrendous.

…partly it's choice of subject too…in our field, it's almost incumbent for the supervisor to choose to supervise something that he or she is really interested in and passionate about and can see that the student is, also. It's a good foundation.

**Q:** So you derive, it seems to me, a lot of personal enjoyment….

**A:** Huge. Huge. It's the best.

**Q:** Can you talk a little more about that…the quality of personal enjoyment that you derive from the work? What it is…

**A:** Ja…partly it's just engaging with an engaging personality on some level and working with that personality and being worked *on* by that personality. I mean, a lot of it is quite revealing for me…a lot of it is me being taught…about stuff…I don't claim to be an expert in many of the fields that we're delving into. Sometimes I say: 'You teach me and I'll help you get a decent piece of writing out in the end'. I can see a bad argument when it bites me in the ankle. It's *that.* A lot of the personal satisfaction for me is being taught about these things. I wasn't *that* familiar with the thinker Molly is studying and by just by chewing her way steadily through the thinker's work and giving me analyses every so often, she's teaching me a huge amount about him, which is wonderful, because it's obviously one of my interests. So, that's hugely satisfying for me. And then to reciprocate by saying: 'Hmmmm, ja, *this* is great, but *that* isn't…how about pushing in this direction? or that direction?'….and seeing it come together for the student…that's great.

**Q:** Yeah…a lot of growth…

**A:** …in both directions. Yeah.

**Q:** And, because Molly works in the department…you have quite constant contact….how do you balance the work and the supervision sessions? I mean, do you set sessions up?

**A:** We did at first. Normally I've tried to set aside a spot a week, which will be the student's spot…whether it's taken up or not…every week…it's their spot. But it's kind of fallen away with Molly. I think because we see a lot of each other anyway…either in the department or inter-visiting, you know. If anything comes up, it'll come up and we can sit down and chat about it…it's been very informal with us. Molly has been very *clear*…that I only have a quarter of her time this year. There's a quarter teaching, there's a quarter family, a quarter

quilting and a quarter for the thesis, so she's taking it fairly slowly. There isn't that much pressure really. I don't think she really minds how long it takes…

**Q:** …and you?

**A:** I'm fine with that. I'm not pushing her too hard. She's coming up with work on a fairly regular basis…I'm not particularly worried about that. Molly…she's so kind of…goes *on*, does things…nothing seems to faze the process. Really, it's quite extraordinary. Compared to some of the others. Like…illness and crises… you know, these things just arise…and you have to cope with them. Molly doesn't seem to have any of that, somehow or she hasn't *yet*. Obviously something might happen…a family member gets hurt or something…but she's doing fine and I don't have to cope with crises on her part.

…I think she *does* suffer from an ongoing…*crisis* would be the wrong word…an ongoing sense that she might not be up to this. It's misplaced, I think. She's not someone that generates ideas…very readily… on her own. She doesn't operate readily at the conceptual level. So she kind of *works up* from the *bottom*, and she has to work really *hard* at *getting* to the ideas…getting to the conceptual level. And that's my job, to keep pushing her to start arguing and start coming up with patterns. In that sense I think she worries that she's not going to make the grade. She has an enormous capacity for puzzlement…has Molly…this puzzled expression. But she asks all the right questions…she's asking questions all the time and that's what one *wants*. That's just great. Some students don't even know how to ask the questions and *that's* really hard to work with…She suffers these quivers of …unconfidence…pretty regularly. But they're not critical. So, I've just had to keep supporting and pushing and say: 'What you're doing, it's fine'. What will happen when we get to the next stage…at the moment she's just offering me very detailed analyses of pieces of the thinker's works that she's working with, so a lot of that's fairly basic kind of ground-up stuff that's she has to do. Once we get into a level of having to weld her analyses into some sort of ecological argument…a critical argument…then I suspect I'll run into more…unconfidence. She might need more guidance and help at that stage to begin to

formulate that. She's well capable of doing it…coming back into Honours, after many years…she *pulled* it together…and *cracked* it. So, I'm confident that she can do this.

**Q:** I'm wondering, in what way are you managing to encourage her towards the conceptualizing…or the theoretical side of it?

**A:** It's been fairly tentative so far…because I haven't wanted to push her too hard. But she has read a fair bit of the basic ecological criticism…the academic theory of which there's not a huge amount fortunately. Some of it's a bit dense and arcane so…she's just been working her way through fairly basic…ground-up stuff …and we've been talking about difficulties she's run into. We haven't really gone further than that at this stage. It'll evolve. And she's kind of playing around with the ideas and trying to get her head around it, as she's going through the works…but still in a fairly tentative sort of way…a fairly unformed sort of way. We'll get to there. Once she's gone through this she'll have to back-track into some sort of critical overview or formulation…an eco-critical stance for *herself*…and then we'll try and get her reading together and formulate that a bit more clearly. That's still to come.

**Q:** It must be quite difficult to sort of…I mean, how many of your own ideas? What I'm trying to ask is…to encourage the student at that point, once the groundwork is done, *you* may be able to see…but for *them* to be able to come to their own….

**A:** Ja…obviously it's a delicate balance between putting your own ideas into the mix, and allowing her ideas to emerge organically from what she's seeing. I haven't encountered a problem with it yet…mostly because I've been dealing with difficulties that she's *had*, so I've been able to say: 'Well, this is the way I see it' and explain that, so it's obviously my ideas but hopefully she'll take those critically as well and work it through in her own way. So I haven't encountered any difficulties with that yet…might do in the future. But in a way I suppose that's OK. In a sense it's my ideas but it's also something that I'm trying to draw out of the work itself so that Molly *does* feel that it's *her* idea…you know…that I'm not writing the thesis *for* her…so it's a bit of a delicate balance.

**Q:** And when it comes to criticism…How do you think you give criticism? How is it taken? …the feelings…

**A:** Fine...ja. M always seems to be very grateful for any criticism that I give. Obviously I try to deliver it in as constructive a manner as possible not in a dismissive manner. But most of her stuff has been fairly solid at the moment. Where I've disagreed or remained unconvinced by what she said, then I say so and she accepts that with great humility and grace. It's not like we've had any huge differences of point of view. Most of her stuff has been good…there's only the one poem I thought she really hadn't got her head around…'You haven't got it together on this one yet' and she said 'Ja, no, I can see that'. She recognizes the justice of that…and that's as far as the disagreement has gone. It's amazing.

**Q:** Her field…I don't think is easy…

**A:** No it isn't and I think it's subject to a wide range of interpretation. So my criticism has been fairly light at the moment partially because I know that the stuff she's doing at the moment is going to go through huge renovations. We're going to have to dump a lot of it because it's just groundwork…it's not all directly relevant to the ecological questions. It's just her, sorting out the poems for herself in all this detail, so a lot of this is going to get shed. So there's no point doing any detailed analysis of style or whatever at this stage. So I'm just tackling the ideas, picking up where she's hesitant or lost…trying to help her through that…make sense of the works with her. And that's as far as it's going at the moment. It'll be much, much more rigorous when she gets round to forging an argument and then I start nit picking…both in terms of coherence in argument and style.

**Q:** There must've been quite a bit of chucking out at the proposal stage…if my experience is anything to go by? How did that go?

**A:** Ja…that went well. The proposal is approved, now it'll evolve from there. She was still pretty hesitant at that stage…still quite unsure about what she was going to do. And I've tended to guide the proposal stage pretty tightly…just because I think it's a good thing to get

out of the way…we go through four or five drafts of it before I'm satisfied. And that seems to work because I haven't had any rejections yet. It's just nice to get that out of the way. So even if I feel I'm a little bit overbearing at times…with rewriting the odd bits, just to get it sounding right…I think it's OK for the proposal stage.

**Q:** And she handled that….?

**A:** She handled that fine.

**Q:** …because that's often a very difficult stage…at the proposal stage it seems to be that some students think: 'I'm unable to do this…ah no…'

**A:** Yes…it is. But I think she was grateful for the supportiveness that that entailed for her, at that point, you know. I try to offer the perspective that this is only an *initial* stage. In some ways it's thinking your way through to a clarity about the subject, but in other ways it's the game you play. And you're not going to be forced to stick with what we've got here. If you change your style in some ways…as long as you don't hurtle off and do a different topic altogether…they're not going to worry about it…no one's going to look at it again. So you kind of relax a little bit about it…take it quite seriously in terms of clarifying their thinking, but otherwise…make a bit of a team effort in playing the game…for the formality of it and get it out of the way. Because it can be quite inhibiting, I think…stuck on the proposal and not the real work…even though it is part of the real work, really. I suppose I do get quite…maybe too much…I don't know…too rigorous towards the end. I'm a bit of a compulsive proofreader, I think. I've had to learn, not to be quite so rigorous at the early stages…because I'm learning how much change goes through these drafts…pulling them to bits at too early a stage. One kind of judges where one is in terms of the draft and only in the very final stage do we start getting into the finesse of the style and polishing up…picking out the commas and all that.

**Q:** …the detail…that part of academic discourse…And speaking about discourse…and supervision…I'm curious to hear…in terms of supervising…have you taken quite a lot of your own style from your own supervision processes?

**A:** Ja…my own supervisor was *so* relaxed and *so* supportive that it was useless…or next to useless. He'd sort of 'Jolly good old chap…watch your split infinitives on page seven'. So I ended up giving my stuff to somebody else in an informal capacity who just *shredded* me. I'd come out just [holding head] 'You don't understand anything that's going on here!' That kind of comment…almost vicious at times. But I'd come out with my brain just buzzing. Wonderful. So I try to be a bit more friendly about it. I think that detailed, vigorous pushing…I'd get comments like: 'You need a whole chapter on *this*'. *One sentence*!' That kind of thing. Just sparking ideas all the time. I try to get some of that into it…but I'm a different personality to that particular person. But I really think that way…of detailed, sparky stuff…and not pulling my punches too much on what I think is inadequate…because although it might shake up the student a bit, it's also the stimulus that's needed…rather than being too gentle.

**Q:** That's quite a tension….

**A:** It *is* quite a tension. I guess I try to hit a little bit of a middle ground between the two extremes that *I* encountered.

**Q:** Because there seems not too be too much sharing…at a university level…of supervisory experience. There doesn't appear to be a forum or anything…where ideas could be thrown around: 'How do you do this? How do you do that?'

**A:** There was a workshop of some sort early in the year that I didn't go to. Something the Academic Development Centre did? But that's the only thing I've ever come across in terms of university support for the staff. I've really had to feel my own way. I've been so lucky…I haven't personally felt the need for much support…because I haven't encountered any major problem. Unlike some of my colleagues…I suppose it happens in every

department…where…jeez, there's a major fallout or personality clash or the student goes off the rails for some reason…there's a suicidal crisis…that kind of stuff happening. *There* I think, some sort of better support mechanism will be very necessary and I don't think the university has any remotely like that.

**Q:** And in terms of other institutional support…

**A:** In terms of departmental support it's a bit better. We've recently reformulated our methods of calculating workloads. For the first time, postgraduate supervision is actually counted into one's workload so you get some tutoring at the undergraduate level taken off depending on how much postgrad stuff you're doing. So that's quite lekker…because some of these things take a huge amount of time, depending on the student. Molly doesn't take much time because she's quite independent. And when I get her stuff, it's quite dense but at the moment anyway, I can deal with it fairly quickly, so it doesn't take up too much time there...We do get at least some time calculated into the workloads now so that's support of a kind.

**Q:** So it seems to have gone very smoothly…have there been no major differences…difficulties?

**A:** Not really…I suppose the only difficulty has been persuading her that she's good enough to do it. She keeps saying things like 'I don't know if I can really do this' or 'I'm not really totally sold on this thing' and comments like that. But when she's doing it she has a hell of a lot of fun. So she's carrying on with it at that basis. I think there might be more difficulty, as I say, when we get into the welding it together into an argument…in a properly academic fashion…and then she might baulk at the jumps a little bit more and need a bit more support. So that difficultly has not been a particularly difficult one at the moment. I'm accepting also that this is not vital to her career in any way…to her life… in the same way that it might be for a younger student who's really thinking quite keenly of going into academia as a career. She's approaching it from a very different life point and it's mostly…not *just* for fun…but not for professional reasons really.

**Q:** She is teaching now, though….

**A:** She *is* teaching…I mean, she's kind of getting into it despite herself and I think she's quite a good teacher. So, ja, one doesn't know where it will carry her…actually…in the end. But there's a certain relaxation about it, which is not the case with a younger, hot-blooded student, who really wants to get it done in two years and get on with their career…or get out of here…whereas Molly, I think…if she wants to do anything with her life, it's actually *sew*. She just *loves* that. That's what *really* sets her alight. She loves sewing and quilting…That's exactly the way I encourage her to think of her Master's thesis, as an analogous process…[*to quilting …putting all these different pieces of the thinker's work into an overall design*]. So, ja, there have been points where I've wondered if she'll actually really *finish* it…I wonder if she'll pursue it to the end. I think she does have a lot of staying power. I mean, that's clear. But I also wouldn't resent it or feel bad in any way if she bombed. And when it gets to the later stages of finessing the argument…and just feels she actually doesn't want to *do* that. There's part of her that you feel, you know, kind of doesn't want to get too embedded in that. And if she did, I think that would be fine.

**Q:** …because I understand that sometimes if someone drops out or doesn't do well with the mark of their thesis…do you not feel that in a sense that reflects on you?

**A:** It obviously can do…With Molly I don't think it would really, she's far too independent and doing her own thing and she'll make her own decision as to how far she pushes it. I hope she'll finish…obviously I do…even though she is a pretty self-contained, mature person…whose self esteem is not going to take a huge whack if she doesn't finish…I think she *is* capable of producing a really quite interesting piece of work. It's a *new* field. It's a novel field…it's *still* going to be contributing quite a lot to the field in South Africa, because nobody's done this work before. So it doesn't matter if it's ground level…that's what's *required*, in a way.

**Q:** It strikes me that you're almost… *there*, more for your students than you are for yourself, in this process…in terms of achievement or accolades…

**A:** In a way, ja…I think this has been pointed out to me before. I almost have a slightly self-sacrificial aspect to it…and I have to watch that…I have to be careful…not give *too* much…or spend more time than is necessary. I found this in the first few theses I supervised. I was really spending too much time on it…being too close, too finicky. I've got to step back a bit…both for the student's sake, and for mine. Time and commitment do have to be balanced against all the other stuff in one's life, other demands. I suppose there's a selfish aspect to it…if only to see the lights coming on, in *any* student. See things happen. It's one of the ways I've found of affirming my presence in the world…teaching and seeing students…at *whatever* level…wake up to their potential and to themselves.

**Q:** Mmmm…that's *nice*. Well…is there anything else you'd like to add at this point?

**A:** Nope

**Q:** Ok then…just one last question…I haven't put it on the outline, but I tend to ask it at the end of each interview. I'm wondering how *you've* experienced this interview today?

**A:** Ja…great…I've enjoyed it. It's quite useful, in the sense that I'm thinking about this a bit more…I *might*…I mean, I think about it, but I don't necessarily formulate it in any compact way to myself. And just to think about commonalities between the various students that I've had is quite useful. So, thanks.

**Q:** Thank *you*. Really

**A:** OK. It's been very relaxed…nice.

**Transcript of the second interview**

**Q:** The reason why I asked for metaphors is because, I *think* anyway, that they can sometimes capture more easily for the reader something of the essence of the relationship… the emotive sense…I think in that way metaphors may speak louder?

**A:** I did think about it a little bit in the car this morning…it's about the only free time I've had. And the one's that come up are very reductive…you talk about capturing essences…I thought, no…it's not right. So I don't know what to do about that…it's a complex thing.

**Q:** OhK

**A:** But I don't know, maybe you can guide somehow.

**Q:** Well…we can play…put it that way. We can look at the metaphors that you think are quite reductive and maybe something comes out of that and we can play with it?

**A:** Hmmm. So, are you determined that I come up with something!?

**Q:** It would be nice …it can be something that comes up immediately, you know…

**A:** Well, ja, I suppose. The image that might come to mind or did come to mind was of two planets revolving around each other. OK. And they're not really planets of equal size or weight in some ways, but they are in other ways…this is why I begin to have problems with it. I think, well, I don't want to envisage two planets of equal size revolving around one another because that doesn't capture *imbalances* in the relationship. If you have a little planet revolving around a bigger planet, that also diminishes one part of the equation in a way that doesn't do justice to other parts of the relationship. Any one of those images

*kind* of capture something of the interdependence of the relationship, but it's not very satisfactory for me.

**Q:** I hear you

**A:** If one could combine a metaphor of planets revolving and a spider web and dogs playing in a field and people climbing a ladder…and you put all those together somehow, maybe you'd start capturing something of the relationship…but to put it in one metaphor doesn't feel right for me.

**Q:** Not holistic enough?

**A:** Not holistic enough, ja, it's reductive.

**Q:** Well…you went through those quite speedily…it would be nice to unpack…the spider web?

**A:** I suppose it's just that we are both connected to each other in different ways but also to the outside world where we operate in innumerable ways…we're both kind of channeling energies, if you like, along strands, into this project from various perspectives…with our differing agendas. Supervision is also a hugely complex thing. Always shifting as well…a spider web is too static in a way…

**Q:** A spider keeps making its web…

**A:** …and it keeps getting blown down and rebuilt. And as we read more literature, she teaches me more and vice versa…the web changes and different relationships become evident.

**Q:** And the ladder?

**A:** I suppose we're climbing towards something, I mean we do have a goal of a sort, perhaps it's not always totally clearly defined, but in a practical sense, you get a piece of writing of about a hundred pages out…say something useful about the thinker as an ecologist. I think we're both climbing along that particular path…again in somewhat different ways…we're both part of each other's climb. My climb is a lot bigger or far reaching than Molly's at this stage, because I've got a huge eco-project developing which I've got a bit of funding for. A lot of it's about being taught by Molly and helping her to find a way through a segment of work which is a part of a mosaic for me that Molly does not see herself as part of in quite the same way. It's a whole kind of career thing for me as well, I guess.

**Q:** …And the dogs?

**A:** Oh, the dogs playing in the field…Ja, we're having a certain amount of fun too…

**Q:** …quite carefree in a way…

**A:** Ja, carefree in a way. Part of Molly just stubbornly refuses to take this thing seriously, so I just say: 'Well OK, just go with that, have fun with it'. It's great. She hasn't written anything terribly coherent yet in terms of a thesis structure, but I think 'Ag well, it's Molly's pace and she can go with it'…she's having fun and I don't want to pressure her out of having fun at this stage. Yeah…we're feeling quite puppyish about it at this stage.

…People take academia too seriously…take *themselves* too seriously. The students slot into it immediately…when I give them a fun book to read then they're suspicious and actually back off it: 'What? Fun? So you're supposed to laugh at this? I don't know about *that*!' They get very uncomfortable, which is something that I think is so unfortunate…Maybe part of our assessment system…It's so normative. It's a problem. For anybody at any level…from Molly's level down…the end product, the exam or whatever is only one bump on the road. The road is much bigger than that…just

understand the thinking…*that's* what it's about. What's it doing to the constitution of your brain cells? That's what we're really interested in, but of course it's hard to convince them…to get them to see that broader perspective. Exams are looming now…this horrible sort of abyss…

…We've just managed to…*I've* just managed to…like this is my baby…I've managed to push the department and to my surprise, the faculty and senate to allow us to experiment with our exam system at Honours level. You have open book or take-home exams. In fact people have been doing it all the time and just haven't been saying anything. All this came out of the woodwork in the process of debating this ridiculous issue which hundreds of universities all over the planet do…and they treat it here as if you're trying to rebuild the Titanic from the bottom up! Remarkable reaction. None of my colleagues seem to want to experiment in the same way but blow me down I'm going to experiment with *my* courses. Ja…you can build assessment in a different way and it's really part of the learning experience instead of this boring, frightening, summative rush at the end.

Anyway…we're way off the topic

**Q:** OK…so I understand that you don't feel that one metaphor captures the relationship…but the web…the interconnectedness…

**A:** …and there has to be a sense of the independence of these two beings in the relationship as well…and there's obviously a certain amount of pull one way or another, within the constraints of the set up, I suppose. But my aim is less to constrain than to liberate Molly's views into their fullness. A certain amount of resistance…I think Molly is healthily suspicious of academic pretension and I go with that.

**Q:** …sometimes perhaps some resistance to her own ability?

**A:** Ja…indeed.

**R:** Aw jeez…I'm trying on the one hand to hear *your* resistance and respect that and on the other hand…

**A:** Well…as long as you build in my resistance...that's fine…my misgivings about metaphoric narrowness…

**Q:** OK…Have you spoken at all about publication?

**A:** Not really. It's a bit early for that. I imagine…I'm sure she'll be able to produce something publishable in due course…she's not ready for that yet. I would hope so…I would like to see all our Master's students publish something of their theses…

**Q:** And your broader project…

**A:** Well, it's just this interest in…ecological issues, which in my view are the crises of our times. Ecological crisis is the great crisis of our time, which subsumes and outreaches any other crisis we can think of. So I'm kind of catching a wave here in terms of ecological criticism, which has taken off in a big way elsewhere, but hasn't really taken hold here yet. And yet the material is holistic…unbelievably rich…and so much of our culture embodies certain views of the landscape, of the ecology, of animal life, of the land issues and so on. So it's a huge field. On the one hand I've got a project going which I've got a bit of funding for…Ecological studies are a huge silence…people just haven't looked at it…so there's little bits building up over time and there's huge scope and lots of fun things to do so I can see myself pretty much doing that for the rest of my days. And get other people to get involved in the field and catch the wave…contribute to it. That's also part of my agenda…the challenges…One always has to overcome all sorts of narrow points of view… blindnesses and ignorances.

**Q:** OK…to be quite honest with you…I thought to myself…because sometimes I can't help anticipating what someone's metaphor may be…which is fun for me because I start thinking around the data in a different way and start engaging from a sort of intuitive

level…and oi!…I'm not supposed to lead at all in interviews…in terms of a metaphor of how the research process has been for you so far and between you and M…

**A:** …you have more metaphors?!

**Q:** Ok I'm going to do this anyway…I thought that you may use a climbing metaphor…well the ladder's there…but more a rock climbing one, because you've quite often spoken of your passion for rock climbing…all the pictures on your walls too…and I thought it may come up.

**A:** Really? No it hadn't occurred to me…Ja, well, I wouldn't discount it. One can maybe suck just about anything out of any metaphor one chooses if one tries hard enough. Ummm. Personally…I find climbing a pretty holistic kind of activity. It's a very absorbing activity because even if you're on an easy climb you don't think about anything else other than where you're going to put your hand next. So it's very cleansing in that way, almost meditative in a way.

**Q:** Private?

**A:** Private, ja, but generally climbing is a partnership too…there's always somebody on the other end of your rope…so it's a very two-way thing happening all the time…the give and take. The kind of climbing I do is very non-competitive so it's very much a partnership…and accepting what you do and what you don't do. And if you don't feel like doing a particular climb, that's cool. And if you fall off something it's no great shakes…nobody's going to sneer at that. It's all a matter of encouraging one to do better or get up the thing, but if you fall off, there's no judgment involved…that's just the way it is. You have your good days and your bad days. And I love that atmosphere, you know. At the same time there's a certain drive to achieve…if not to get to the top of something that you haven't got to the top of before, it's to get to the top of something you have got to the top of before, but a bit better…you know…more smoothly, more efficiently, more beautifully, more gracefully.

**Q:** I won't use this…but it's been nice to play with.

**A:** No, no…you're welcome to use it! So, in a sense that it embodies some of who I am and perhaps something of the kind of philosophies and attitudes that I bring to the rest of life, or try to, and not always successfully…it's not a bad metaphor actually. In a sense the climbing one is better than the ladder because it doesn't have that sense of hierarchical progress so much as…there's a sense of a kind of personal achievement but within a helpmeet, common goal sort of situation. You lead I'll follow…ja, you lead it and maybe I'll lead it too. You can do that…I'm there anyway…and we're both there to keep each other safe. And just being together in beautiful places…that's also the attraction of climbing for me…and it's holistic in the sense of it being both a mental and a physical thing. It's a great workout bodily, because you're always in different positions and there are different kinds of climbs when you bring different muscles into play. And as it gets harder it gets quite mental too…because you have to start working out sequences and balance and what's going to go where, because if you don't get the sequence right you're out of there. So it's quite strategic in that way. And I like that balance of head and body and activity. Ja…and it's a matter of overcoming fears…sometimes you lose and sometimes you don't. I've been injured so I'm pretty unfit at the moment…took a couple of people out to a crag in a moment of hubris, I suppose. I thought I'd just get a shot at this climb, which has always spaced me out. I've fallen off it a couple of times. It's just quite a foxy series of moves…like my psychological little *bete noir*. I've climbed it many times. I can never remember quite how I've done it the last time. So I though I'd give this thing a go, and jeez…I floundered up and down and eventually I gave up…my head wasn't there, didn't feel I could sustain the stamina. I felt miffed, but that just becomes your next project as they call it. Sometime you're going to get back on that thing and do it, you know…so…it's always the matter of setting little goals and sometimes you have to re-set a goal that you achieved *long* ago. It's an interesting business…just overcoming that fear…knowing that you may peel off but you've just got to trust it and trust the gear and trust your mate and hope you'll be allright.

**Q:** Fascinating.

**A:** Ja…it's OK to be like that…I don't mind a directed metaphor…it's nice…

**Q:** …you don't mind?

**A:** No…you have my permission to use it…

**Q:** Ah thanx…you know what it's like with a project…I'm playing with it all the time and thinking about it and I get my own imagery going. I'm finding with all my participants that the projects are interfacing with the relationships…similar head doing similar projects and problems happening where the people have very different heads…to put it rather vaguely…where someone is on a different planet…paradigmatically, and not only in the academic sense…the whole personal dimension…values. So matching, I think will be one of the things I'll be talking about. It's very difficult to match a supervisor to a student…unless they find one another…which in the case of a problematical relationship, leads me to think about why they end up together…but that's another thesis! There seems to be a lot more personality involved than one would perhaps like to believe.

**A:** Ja, I think that's essential. I think you get a supervisor with particular ego-demands. If a supervisor is unable to shelve their ego and allow a student to achieve what they want or need to achieve…it's a disaster…and very demoralizing for the student.

**Q:** Ja…very. Which leads me to another strand of it…I think perhaps supervisors who are *not* prepared to shelve their egos, perhaps do so because to some extent education is commercialized? Academics are under pressure to publish or perish.

**A:** They're under pressure to do that, they're under pressure to involve students in their projects. Funding is now becoming dependent on staff getting students on board with group projects…it hasn't really hit [our department] yet but certainly in other subjects. And staff are under pressure to turn out postgraduate students per se…you want to have, 'I

have supervised X, Y and Z' under the belt…and that's all part of one's career ladder in some way. If you've got a particular goal in mind for your own career…an ego-driven investment in that…then the impulse is to compel the student to do what you want done. And that's terribly dangerous. I am quite aware of that. Fortunately this ecological thing is big enough and loose enough…I'm quite happy to see anything happening in the field from any quarter, because it's all grist for the mill at this stage. Hopefully it will continue in that way…big enough to avoid any sense of competition…But that ego comes into play and you have to guard against it and keep the field open…and if you don't…you actually scotch students' opportunities.

…The whole organization of it induces a certain competitiveness…It's tricky. And on a broader sphere, publish or perish means that people are competing ever more fiercely for space in a limited number of journals…it's pernicious. It's either that or you produce acres of crap because you've got to have the title on your CV…never mind whether it's any good or not.

…I just don't do anything that I don't want to do. I'm getting into the position now where I'm being solicited for stuff and a couple of things I've said 'No…it's just not central to what I want to do'. I won't write anything that I think is not integral to who I am, and that I feel I can do with real integrity and spirit and fun. I just won't do it…never mind what the system says. As it happens what I do is going to benefit the system anyway…but that's more luck than anything. But for other people who don't feel that way or don't write as easily, or who don't enjoy doing research…they just want to be teachers…it's pernicious. One has to try and find ways so that competitiveness does not poison the student-supervisor relationship.

**Q:** I'm looking at these kinds of things because I'm using Foucault, you know, and his concept of power being productive or reproductive…and knowledge being productive of itself…

**A:** Ja…there's definitely something in that.

**Q:** OK…is there anything else that you'd like to add?

**A:** Mmmm. Not that I can think of. Lets look at your questions. I guess we haven't talked about the department much. My relationship is good, partly because I just don't get involved in personal politics. I don't socialize with my colleagues, not because I don't like them but just because I just…basically don't! Occasional dinner at somebody's house is about as far as it goes. I kind of miss out on a lot of the lower level politicking and work on a professional level quite happily.

…And the dynamic is shifting all the time…I've been shunting ideas around for years and most of them get lost in the administrative mud, you know. But a couple of more ideas being picked up…like the ones on assessment…so it's exciting. I suppose it rubs off on the postgraduate thing. I think that if we can generate that sort of excitement at the lower levels, we can keep the postgraduates coming through and look forward to more supervisions in the future.

**Q:** Perhaps just a comment on the interview experience…the time between interviews…

**A:** …I've enjoyed this one as much as the last one…it's fine. It's not something that I've found a need to think about in the intervening period. It went well so I didn't feel 'I should have said that' and you gave me the transcript anyway…with a few comments I had on that…which was fine. So I haven't thought about it much really. I've felt totally relaxed about what you're doing and I think I've said all I need to.

**Q:** OK…thanx…As usual I'll give you the transcript to edit.

**Written communication**

**Q:** Here's the transcript of the interview. I felt that at times I was a bit pushy here…I hope I didn't offend?

**A:** Yes, I actually think you were offensively, aggressively, matriarchially, fascistically, domineeringly, pushingly…*fine,* actually. Just kidding!

## 2.6 MOLLY

### Transcript of the first interview

**Q:** OK…the first question I'd like to put to you is: 'What motivates you to do your Master's?'

**M:** It's probably the most difficult one to answer, I don't really know…my immediate reaction is madness! It's certainly not been a lifelong ambition…I'm doing a Master's because I got involved in the academic field…not to become an academic...it sort of just happened along the way. I came back after many years to do an Honours degree…so quite a lot of it was circumstantial. It was possible for me to do the Honours course part time. I'm also very lucky…I had met some of the people in the department before I came here, and I thought, well, let met give it a bash. I've actually just remembered…I must confess…that to do Honours *was* a lingering unfinished business from after I graduated. I did actually *think* about doing Honours then, but it wasn't practically possible. So years moved on.…somehow, by luck or circumstance…it's possible to do the Honours…so I do it. And the Master's kind of led on from that. I didn't come straight into it…I was working at the time I did my Honours, so when I finished it I carried on working…and I suppose my old normal life wasn't quite the same anymore…the Master's probably came also with prodding from my friends. I must pay tribute to one of my lecturers from my undergraduate years. He gave me the push I needed to enroll for the Honours course. He also became my mentor during the Honours course. Gave me a lot of his time, helped me get up to speed, encouraged me. And then, after that was finished, he was one of the people who prodded me to tackle a Master's.

**Q:** …they obviously thought you'd do well in the field…

**M:** Well…I don't know if that's entirely true. I wasn't a hot-shot student…I was pretty mediocre…ja. I'm really not sure why, *why* they were prodding *me*, but they did.

…Well, After I finished my Honours Andy was the one who was prodding…not really prodding, just gently niggling. In the back of my mind I thought…that seeing as I am a South African and as I live here, if I do try and do Master's it should be 'close to home'…So that was *there* all along even though I vehemently said I will never do a Master's…and then I read a very, very inspiring book by Jonathan Bate…called '*The Song of the Earth*' and that was a starting point...it was about…ecology and art and how they come together. It was a very, very inspiring book. I read that and it gave me a kind of theoretical basis. And then…I started reading…a contemporary South African thinker…and went to see an exhibition of his works, and again, it was a bit like Jonathan Bate's book…something clicked. And there was a quote there, something to do with a single cell and the universe…and the tension between science and art. And I thought I saw a way where I could combine his works and Jonathan Bate's ecocriticism. And all the time I'm getting little prods from Andy and chatting about it over coffee. Ja, I decided to take the plunge…Look, I was obviously looking for something and the thought of spending the next twenty years in a bookshop…becoming increasingly grumpy…wasn't that exciting.

**Q:** So, *that* and interest…

**M:** I suppose, ja…putting things together…almost like collecting pieces of a jigsaw puzzle…it'd probably been stirring around for a long time. And, I heard a sermon in church about the light and the universe and…there's a line in one good old Anglican prayerbook…which is also in the Bible, I think: '…and I shall give you dominion over the earth'. And the person who was preaching…I am wary of these words, because they're very loaded: church, preaching …says he has a problem with that word 'dominion'…that we shouldn't even begin to think that we have dominion over the earth…that it's *ours*…and that he prefers to use the word 'stewardship'…so that was another little…spark along the way.

**Q:** It seems to me… the thesis and the topic…it's almost like a…world vision.

**M:** Ja, well I think …I have a feeling…and I say this extremely hesitantly and in a very small voice...the ecological has to be there if there's going to be any kind of…hope…unless we realize what we're doing, we're just going to annihilate ourselves. So that's our choice.

**Q:** And how does Andy come to be your supervisor?

**M:** Ja…I think I've answered that one already. I'm just trying to think of the right word. He nurtured me into it…I don't want to say solicited, because that's a bit strong…but it's that kind of meaning as well. And, partly because he had taken such an interest in me…he taught me as in Honours. He is actually responsible for my staying the course…because I actually wanted…I was going to…leave because I realized that I was *completely* out of my depth…and he just gently prodded me on.

…I almost owe him a debt…but it's not that…I don't feel as if I must pay him back or anything. I just like him very much…he's an inspiring teacher.

**Q:** And in terms of your expectations of yourself for this…

**M:** I…don't know. If I have any expectations, other that just getting it finished…it's proving to myself that I can *do* it…and that I'm improving myself. I mean…I don't expect the world to open up to me because I've got a little Master's from the bottom corner of Africa.

**Q:** But in terms of the bottom corner of yourself….

**M:** Ja, I'm sure it has a personal basis. You know, I hate to use words like personal development…but I suppose that's what it is.

**Q:** And…are you planning on any kind of timing for this?

**M:** Well, the university limit for a full thesis is two years, but …I'm not putting any pressure on myself. If it takes me two years, great…

**Q:** And Andy's OK with that?

**M:** I haven't actually asked him. We have a sort of joke. I tell him that he can only have a quarter of me because one part of me is the mother of three children…that takes up at least half of me. And one quarter is…I'm a tutor. I have to earn some money, so that's the way I'm doing it. So *that* takes up…probably more than a quarter…so if you balance that out…he knows he only has a quarter of me. I'm actually registered full-time…which is a bit of a silly thing to do, I think…but I am in fact doing it part time.

**Q:** And your expectations of him? I mean have you ever thought of negotiating deadlines, or that you undertake to do *this*…and he, *that*?

**M:** We don't have a structure like that. I'm not sure how it works with other students. He has a very…eclectic way…even when he's teaching…it's difficult to describe. He's certainly not a person who draws up deadlines and timetables: 'You *will* produce this by *then*'. So he doesn't constrain you in *that* way, but he does …I don't want to use the word control, because it's too strong…

**Q:** contain?

**M:** Ja…he certainly has got it. I suppose it's easy to work for him because I want to…I usually hand in something every week, but it's not a chapter…it's more a piece of rough work…What I'm doing is analyzing separate pieces of the thinker's works at the moment, so I will hand in my analysis, which is still very rough. And I generally do that once a week…and if I skip a week he will casually ask me: 'Hey, what's going on?' And I say: 'Sorry, I've had a whole bunch of essays to mark.' So he *does* keep tabs on me but there are no schedules or deadlines.

**Q:** And feedback…he gives you feedback….

**M:** Ja, immediately almost.

**Q:** and…what does the feedback feel like…

**M:** Well…I check for the ticks, I must confess. So that's nice… and when it's negative, well, it's always well considered, so I have to take it…you know…like a man. But he's very gentle, if he is negative, very gentle. He doesn't say: 'rewrite this!' for instance, he will say: 'I think you need to give this another go'.

…His criticism is very useful, very valid. And it pushes me further…to consider different aspects. He's very sharp. I have a great respect for him. And he knows his subject much better than I do. So he fills gaps.

**Q:** In terms of him…knowing his subject much better that you do…how does that make you feel? Does it make you feel a bit insecure sometimes?

**M:** No…no, it encourages me. I mean…I don't take everything he says lying down, I don't think. We've got a little tussle on the concept of the balance of nature. I haven't really locked horns with him about that. He seems to think there's no such thing, which perplexes me a little, but I haven't done enough reading or thinking about it to take him up on it, but I'm sure that I will. So he certainly is pushing me …to question.

…It's something that we all sort of assume…that nature is balanced…that there's a pattern out there...the seasons come and the seasons go. As I say, I haven't pushed him on this one but he does always back up his statements. He said: 'You can't assume that nature is always balanced because of things like cataclysms…the ice age, volcanoes'. I'm very conscious that nature's not a fixed concept…in fact I was depicting nature as a kind of benign steady influence out there, and he was saying that I can't look at it like

that…it's more than that. I think that's where the debate is going…which is obvious really.

**Q:** So you get good feedback…good stimulus. And in terms of the process…I'm coming in here, not at the beginning, not at the end…kind of in the middle. What's it been like from the outset…until now…the supervision process itself?

**M:** It started almost towards the end of last year, before I registered…when I got my vague topic. I first wrote a draft proposal at the end of last year. This was at Andy's advice. He said the proposal is hell and if you can get it out of the way then you can start the year working, otherwise you can waste up to six moths sitting with your proposal. So he knows the process. So I did that at the end of last year, and I think it was probably complete twaddle. But he was very gentle…he didn't say…this is crap. He just gave it back to me with a few comments and a *pile* of books…and said: 'Read these'. So I tried to do that…it was quite a pile…and I didn't actually get through to the end of all of them. But he gave me the right books and it helped with my conceptualization…which isn't very strong actually…it's a skill I need to learn.

And then, I finally got the proposal together at the beginning of this year and it *was* hell, actually. He drilled me. He really drilled me. He made me rewrite it …I don't know…I lost count after draft number five. And that was when he did very close commentary. It was difficult for me. A lot of it was mostly theory, which goes with conceptualization and…it doesn't really excite me that much. But he pointed out that it's part of the process, that you have to do it and if you want to get it through the higher degrees committee, this is the way you *do* it. So we did it! Back to the drawing board again and again and again…and the proposal went through without even having to be defended. So that was not a pleasant part of the process but a necessary part. Since then I've been playing and doing my little weekly offerings.

**Q:** …and what have you found…in terms of the difficulties up until now…

**M:** Self-discipline. To have set times when I work, because it's the only way I can fit it into my life. I need to work here in my office. I can try and work at home but I've realized that it's impossible because my children keep distracting me. So ja, I discipline myself. Other difficulties? Well, you know it how it goes…not knowing where to go next…which I'm sure is pretty common. And also, because I'm working with separate pieces of the thinker's works, I get into one bit, go along, sail along… and then finally the thing's finished…and then I have to start all over again on the next one. Dealing with these separate pieces, although that's not entirely true, because they *are* all done by the same person, and the thinker actually says they really are one long work. So there are things that connect them. But every time I hit a new piece it feels like starting all over again…a new journey…another road. Because I'm working with a collection of works I am struggling to find a thread that runs through.

**Q:** And a thread that matches…

**M:** Ja…that's also something that worries me…finding the ecological when it's not there. You know…a danger…

**Q:** With Andy so far, how has the relationship gone?

**M:** Very smoothly. I'm fond of Andy. I mean, we're friends. For instance, he will pop in and have a meal with us, or pop in and end up staying for a meal…so it's a nice sort of relationship. I suppose…sort of family. There's no tension. But I can get a bit uppity… for example, when he gave me that big pile of books to read. I asked: 'What do you expect of me? Aw man!' But that's not his fault. That's fine.

**Q:** Mmm so it's quite a close relationship already …could be tricky maybe. If there is dispute?

**M:** They say you shouldn't mix business with pleasure. We haven't had a dispute, so I can't really imagine …

**Q:** And his style is…?

**M:** Mmm. It's quite casual…but controlled. He's efficient. He doesn't sit on my stuff for weeks…he gives me feedback almost immediately….obviously if I had to put in a hundred pages it would take him longer. We chat quite a lot. Not formally…we don't have formal meetings…we'll go and have coffee and talk about it…He does pull me up when he needs to. For instance I remember a month or two ago, he said: 'Don't you think you need to concentrate more on theory?' and I asked him: 'Why?'. Anyway, he pointed that out that it was necessary to get more into the theory. Maybe in a different situation a supervisor will come to you and say: 'I want more theory from you and then you'd try to squeeze it out, whereas he came at it much more gently and encouraged me to try and get my head around it.

**Q:** Then it's got to come from yourself…you have to get quite creative. Have you looked at that aspect of it ...the creativity? Because when one goes to theory, you'd usually be looking for other people's ideas.

**M:** Well…that's what seems strange, because I'm already dealing with a highly creative piece of work. I actually believe…there are many ways of doing things. It's almost as if the thinker is sitting on my shoulder and laughing in my ear. I'm a little afraid of being *too* creative because it really is possible to see things that are not *there* sometimes…I certainly am looking for the ecological in his work…sometimes I think I might be looking too hard. But I'm sure that Andy will pick up any flights of fancy on my part. It also works the other way. When I first started doing Master's…very ordinary, practical, critical reading…after a while Andy would say: 'umm…try to see the ecological'. I mean…seeing as that's my theses…I *have* to see it.

**Q:** So in all this exploring, it seems you have the support of the department?

**M:** Yes. It's wonderful, really. *That* is also part of why I'm here. After my last Honours exam…we came here for tea…and the head of department said to me: 'You know, if you want to come back and do a Master's, just let me know, I'm sure we can organize things'. So if he hadn't said that, I would probably never have…because I didn't get any bursaries so…he offered this tutoring job to me. That way I can earn some money and stay solvent.

**Q:** So the department is really supportive…and the university?

**M:** Well the university's a bit kind of …*out there*…But they were very kind, for example when I was applying for bursaries and my undergraduate results weren't on the computer…and they were very good then about fishing them out of the archives. Things like that. Ja, as supporting as a bureaucratic system can be.

**Q:** And did you perhaps get an e-mail about the postgraduate forum?

**M:** No…maybe I missed the e-mail…usually I get all my mail…and our secretary is very good …usually she forwards all the general mail…I think maybe because I don't use my student e-mail address anymore…because I'm a staff member…Just to get back to the question on Departmental support. Part of why I'm here is because of support from the department. I have a tutoring job and without it I would probably never have started the Master's. And if I've got a question, I throw it out in the tearoom and everybody is so kind…they really do go out of their way. And there are some good people here with good knowledge.

**Q:** That's good...ja… Well…I guess that's it for today. Thanx a lot for doing this…

**M:** OK…good…

## Transcript of the second interview

**Q:** So, I haven't done written outlines…I wanted to see what comes up spontaneously. After we switched off the tape the other day, you were talking about sideroads, tangents…that I wouldn't mind getting on tape…the mediaeval mystic…she seems to have grabbed you…you have a picture of her on your wall…

**M:** It's not actually a picture, it's an illumination done by her…the blue one you're pointing to is a depiction of the soul…She's done lots. Absolutely amazing. I could've got completely lost on her and done a whole thesis on her…it was one of the side-roads….

…Andy reckons there are no sideroads. And I have this sense and I think that I've said this before…what I'm doing in analyzing the thinker's works, is ineptly trying to follow his thought processes. That's all really. Which is very arrogant and very difficult to do because I don't know what he thought or where he went…I've got to take the clues from the works….

[*Molly shows me a particular piece of work and elaborates on its connection with the mediaeval mystic*]. So I look at this and think 'What the hell is going on!' Then I'm sitting in the tearoom and I ask 'Does anyone know who this woman is?' 'Oh yes' say quite a few people: 'She was a mediaeval mystic'. So I go off to the library, to the theology section, find a few books…and start reading…The most interesting thing about her for my purposes was her idea of *veriditas*…a Latin word which has been translated as moisture in greenness. So there's the ecology. The importance of greenness and obviously the moisture as life. Ja, so that was the mystic…I went on a trip with her. I was just absolutely fascinated by her.

**Q:** Ja…the images! And when you went on your tangent, you were saying Andy says: 'There's no such thing as a tangent'…how did he react to your connection with the work?

**M:** Ummm. I can't really remember. He certainly didn't enthuse…I do remember him writing 'Wow' in the margin when I quoted a piece from her which was about *veriditas*…and he was very taken with that concept…I don't think I made a very good job of interpreting it really…I'll probably have to go back to it.

**Q:** So a lot still to do…

**M:** Yes…Sometimes I get quite tired but mostly I'm having fun. Starting to be afraid that I might just burn my braincells out completely…but that's what academia's like, I think. I have a casual, coffee relationship with a fellow ex-Honours student who is now doing her Master's in another discipline and the same thing is happening to her…going on all these amazing…as she calls them…'mindgasms' and afterwards you just hit slumps where you can't sift through all this data and you don't know where to go next. Conversations with her and her support have been invaluable. I think the whole process is quite an up-down thing.

**Q:** And Andy…when it's up-down, up-down…how do you find him?

**M:** He's great I think. He's very encouraging. And kind of solid…practical: 'Just leave it then and come back to it later…don't worry about it'. That kind of attitude…pragmatic.

**Q:** I'm wondering about…in terms of 'how does it fit into your 'greater' life'

**M:** Has it changed my view of the world?

**Q:** Ja…what…kind of ongoing influences?

**M:** I don't know if this is an apposite example…when you buy rooibos tea. I usually buy the no-name brand and you open the outside covering and there are eighty teabags…and you put it in a tin and it's fine. But once I bought a fancy brand and I opened the box and I was horrified because it was packaged inside in tin foil. Separate packages, four of

them, and I stood there looking and thinking: 'Look at all this packaging…there's cellophane around the box, there's the box, and inside the box there are four separate tin foil containers' And I thought: ' Why are they doing this?' If somebody only drinks twenty bags of rooibos tea and they're scared it's going to go vrot [rotten] …then they must buy a packet that's only got twenty bags in it. I don't know if this is clear at all but it's made me aware of the wastage. You can ignore all the rest…summarize it as 'the wastage in packaging'. Whereas two years ago I wouldn't have thought anything about it, now I find I'm getting quite irate…imagining where all this tin-foil comes from, where it's going to go to. It's not going to decompose because it's obviously highly processed…it's that very flimsy stuff. And it's unnecessary. And then I thought: 'But you shouldn't be getting cross, you should just not buy this product. In fact what I *should* be buying is loose rooibos tea…getting rid of the little bags around the tea as well. I don't know if that answers your question?

Ja…and at home we sort out the paper. And I've finally got the family trained to use the different bins. And then all these big bags of paper collect and I've got to go and post it! …because there's just a little slit…I think they're designed for A4 office paper…not for your oats boxes and potato bags. And there I am thinking: 'I've got to go and post all the paper again…is this worth it?' And then I stop myself and say: 'No, I *must* do it'. If everybody did it, it would make such a huge difference to the dump tips.

**Q:** Ja…gee…so that's actually quite a big difference…changing perceptions

**M:** It's very difficult to measure, but I'm sure my perceptions have changed. I can't go back to where I was four years ago before I started postgrad, so I don't know where I would be now if I hadn't done this route…it's difficult to say.

**Q:** OK. Perhaps we should wind up for today? I'm wondering how you experienced the interview?

**M:** I feel slightly uncomfortable because I'm aware that it's an artificial situation…but it's fine. It's fun as well because you've been asking me these questions that make me think.

## Transcript of the third interview

**Q:** So how did you find doing the metaphors?

**M:** It's been quite fun thinking about it…the topic one is the trickiest, I think. The metaphors give a different view on the whole thing…

**Q:** And what did you come up with for [I go blank here]…well, you just tell me in your own words and order

M Well…one for the process, which is quilting…so that one was in the bag. And the other ones you asked for was my relationship with my supervisor, the topic and the university…so I, in true fashion, started at the beginning, you know…go logically, go carefully…one step at a time. And I thought I can't possibly think of metaphors. And then the one for my supervisor came to me almost immediately… and that's jungle gyms.

**Q:** OK…that's interesting…

**M:** Do I need to say more?

**Q:** Ja!

**M:** Brightly painted ones, complicated ones…lots of different obstacle courses if you like, but fun. All bright and challenging

…I don't really know what more to say…it's very difficult to unpack metaphors…So…just imagine a really bright playground, as it were, with a long complicated jungle gym…I don't know if you've seen the modern jungle gyms? You probably have an image of the square…just one structure with probably three tiers up and three tiers across, divided into squares.

**Q:** Ja

**M:** …those are the old fashioned ones. Jungle gyms now are quite different. You must go to the local primary school and you'll see what I mean. They're constructed out of wood with tyres and netting-rope things and different levels. Almost like an army training…

**Q:** …like an obstacle course?

**M:** Ja. So it's not a square, set, contained jungle gym…it's with all sorts of hidden things to discover along the way. It's the element of play and surprise and challenge…and I suppose the element of childishness, as well…I don't mean that in the…

**Q:** child*like*ness?

**M:** Yeah…that's what I mean…Andy's not standing there saying: 'You better climb up that one'…he's there with me. He's obviously the more experienced jungle gym climber!…And there's lots of bright colours.

**Q:** What so bright colours mean for you?

**M:** Well, I think happiness and fun. It's not peeling…not green old peeling paint

**Q:** It's quite exploratory as well hey?

**M:** Ja, I suppose, but it is contained as well. And manageable as well, depending on how big or small you are…And also in terms of the way it's constructed…it's wood and tyres and ropes…and…it's actually quite an organic jungle gym, I've just realized. There's not much metal in it, or any metal that I can think of in the picture that I have in my head. You really will just have to go to the local primary school and have a look so you can get a picture…

…You do realize…there's a problem with metaphors, cause it's very difficult to explain them. I sense that you're wanting me to say more, but I don't really have any more to say. I've got the picture in my head and I don't know if I've conveyed it to you, but that's about as far as I can go…

**Q:** …that's fine…that allows me some play as well and obviously you'll look at the synopsis…if I play too much…well then you can yank me off the jungle gym! Shall we talk about the next one…which would you like to do next?

**M:** Well, let's just go sequentially. So then that's the process, isn't it?

**Q:** Is it?

**M:** That's what you asked for isn't it?

**Q:** Oh…so that's the next one? I'm not very sequential

**M:** Yes.

**Q:** Right

**Q:** OK. A bit of technical explanation for those who've never made a quilt. There's at least two processes to making a quilt. The first process is called piecing. That's when you take big pieces of material, I'm talking very literally now…and you cut them up, and then you sew them back together again. So, it's really very strange, to take a big piece, make it into small pieces and make it back into a big piece again, but that's what you do. And the reason why you do it is because you end up with a different piece of fabric, a different pattern, a different design and effect from when you just had one plain piece of material. OK…that's called the piecing part and that would be your quilt top. You then have to sandwich it onto a backing with a layer of batting, or filling in between and then

you quilt it. So even though it's called quilting, a lot goes in before you do the quilting, which is the finishing touch, I suppose. So when I say quilting, I actually mean piecing at this point, so that's the metaphor for the process I'm going through. I start of with the thinker's work, which is one complete piece, and at the moment I'm busy cutting that up. I'm doing that by analyzing the separate elements and so I'm ending up with these separate analyses. The point I'm at now is that I've just cut up my big piece of fabric and ooo *** I've got a long way to go…

**Q:** So…it's very detailed attention to each piece.

**M:** Ja…when you're quilting you do that…you make quite elaborate blocks, or you can. So I've got all these blocks of analysis, which are my lappies and then I'm going to have to sew them together and I think that's about as far as I'm going to go…I don't actually think I'm going to get to quilting this thesis. Maybe that will just be the prettying up of it…the binding and the dedications and checking that there are no spelling mistakes. The quilting part will be a breeze…well I hope it will. And actually, when you're making a quilt, the quilting part is the easiest part. It's sort of the unthinking part…you just sit there and you stitch, and stitch…because all the designing has already been done. I suppose there's a certain amount of designing in a quilt…because you've got to decide how to quilt your lines. You can get quite elaborate, but you can also be quite plain…you can just do what's called 'in the ditch', where you just quilt along the lines that you've sewn…instead of making another pattern on top of it. But this is getting very technical…

**Q:** That's fine…It's a good metaphor…

**M:** And again, I'm seeing bright colours in my head. Shoo…I'm not looking forward to sewing all these pieces together! I'm talking literally now, about all those pieces of paper…I don't know how I'm going to do that. When you're working with a real quilt, with fabric, you can lay it out on the floor and you can look at it…you know…like squint at it? And you can ask somebody their advice and you play and then it comes together, because it's visual, but what I'm going to do with these pieces of paper, I don't know,

because I'm going to have to do this whole process in my head and I don't know if my head is big enough…I just wish I had a sewing machine, instead of a computer to make my thesis.

…OK, the third one, which is the most difficult one I think, was my topic…the ecological has to be there if there's going to be any kind of hope…unless we learn to live in symbiosis with the earth, we are going to die…become extinct. So that's our choice. We've either got to change the way we relate with our environment, or become extinct. I mean, it's pretty obvious…So what am I looking for, I'm looking for harmony…and what metaphor do you use for that? At first I thought of an egg, but that's the wrong shape…it's got to be round…and just a circle isn't enough…so I finally came up with a yin-yang symbol. I haven't looked it up…I know it's the masculine and the feminine, but that's not what I mean. I think I'm just talking about reconciling tensions. And knowing that it's actually an impossible task, but doing it anyway. That's what the thinker does, and I'm just inadequately trying to follow his footsteps.

**Q:** Mmm…great

**M:** And then the final one, [*Molly's relationship with the university*] which I don't know quite why you asked and I don't know why this picture came into my head, but I think of stone buildings. And I think that probably represents solidity, and a sense of…not shutteredness…distance? Not inhospitability, but…man there's a word and I just can't get it. The university is a solid structure and it's quite comforting there in the background, but it's not cozy or warm or inviting…it's a solid, stone building. It's been there for a long time, it has traditions, but it's not really where you'd like to go and live…it's a bit cold. Distancing is maybe the word I was looking for. As a structure it's a lot less fun and organic than the jungle gym.

It's interesting, the first two are processes…the jungle gym and the quilting…and the other two are static. I don't know if the yin-yang is so much static as….they're both contained…my thesis topic and the university…those metaphors are both contained.

**Q:** That's interesting….

**M:** But I suppose, that's just by the nature of how you phrased the questions…Yeah…I don't really have a relationship with the university…my relationship is my pay cheque at the end of each month really, and whether my proposal went through the higher degrees committee or not. It's 'out there'…It's just about following the steps, abiding by the rules, what's expected…The university needs us as much as we need them. There has to be a structure. You work out what the structure requires, and you produce it, but that's not all you're doing…the rest they couldn't care…what Andy and I are doing…playing on the jungle gyms. I'm having fun while I'm doing this…they don't really care about that…they just want the finished product. And yes, I will produce that because it's what's required of me and also because it'll be quite nice to say, 'I've got a Master's '. But more important is the personal thing of wanting to do it. And so, I need them and that's why I see them as a stone building because they're solid, they've worked out the process, they know what's required, and so I don't see them as Big Brother or some kind of malign force. I don't see them as warm cuddly teddy-bears…more like a clinical relationship.

**Q:** Gee…alright…Well thanx for the metaphors. Just the usual last question…how have you experienced this interview…or the series?

**M:** I think this interview is quite different from the others. I would never have thought about what I'm doing in these terms so it's been digging around a little and then getting insights…otherwise I don't think that I'd ever have imagined Andy and I playing around on the organic jungle gym. It's been fun, thanks. And the series…I think it's got easier as it's gone along…at first it was a bit intimidating…not because of you, but because I didn't know what to expect…or was I going to make a fool of myself…and all those things. And that little tape winding away…it makes it very solid. And I think the middle interview…the second one went better than the first one…the typescript. I felt that I was more coherent than on the first one.

**Q:** Ja, the second one was much more unstructured. The last one was pretty structured…with more play…in a sense…

**M:** Shoo…I think I might miss them.

**Q:** We can always do more! Anything you want to add?

M It's been good for me…it's been worthwhile for me as well. I'm pleased I've done it. Thanx.

**Q:** Me too…thanks a lot to *you*…