

**Space for personal development: an exploration of student
experience involving one professional doctorate programme**

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Space for personal development: an exploration of student experience involving one professional doctorate programme

With regard to the lives of students pursuing a professional doctorate, to date it has been difficult to find studies that have specifically explored the space needed for personal development. This deconstructive study of the space for personal development explores the ways in which the language of doctoral study mediates changes in the personal development of an initial cohort of ten students who are in their first year of a professional doctorate programme. It also asks how space for personal development is lived, represented and perceived by student-professionals. Based on a reading of Henri Lefebvre's, 'The Production of Space', this study makes a distinction between space produced for personal development and the space produced by extant institutional forms of machinery, which creates the grounds for professional work in Higher Education and professions allied to this doctoral programme. The study illuminates a diverse range of personal developments mediated by engagement in the professional doctorate. It also points to a 'need' for theory which takes account of the space demanded by extant institutional machinery and its relationship with space produced for personal development. The paper will highlight an important distinction between official representations of space for personal development, the actuality of lived space in terms of personal development and both students' and officials' perceptions of such space.

Space for personal development: an exploration of student experience, as seen through the NTU Professional Doctorate programme.

The busyness of on-going activity of communal life on the stage set for *the self* by the professional doctorate programme at Nottingham Trent over the past twelve months has been punctuated by a series of concerns from the body of our first ten students regarding how they can meet the deadlines set. Many of their questions and associated issues have arisen within the context of the intense demands that each of them seem to place upon themselves in maintaining and developing their identities as leading professionals.

Given the innovation of a multi-professional structure in which the self has been situated within the professional doctorate programme for research at Nottingham Trent¹, it has been a deliberate policy to record all aspects of student feedback on what is done in the programme from its inception.

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

Of course these opening remarks serve only to unlock further commentary and questions, not least concerning an explanation for such remarks and the language in which the self has been situated. What exactly does the term

1. The professional doctorate at Nottingham Trent University constitutes a single research programme which currently incorporates three degrees entitled Doctor of Education (Ed D), Doctor of Legal Practice (D Legal Prac), and Doctor of Social Practice (D Soc Prac). In 2010 we have plans for the programme to incorporate three further degrees: Doctor of Fine Art (D Fine Art), Doctor of Digital Media (D Digital Media), and Doctor of Fashion (D Fashion).

'space' signify for the self and precisely how does the self relate itself in the context of time for research and more broadly such language? Indeed, to what extent is it meaningful to speak of *the production of space* for personal development through social research structured by the professional doctorate programme? In this paper we seek to explore these questions and some of their implications for the self which we see at the heart of issues concerning personal development planning mediated by doctoral research.

The notion of *The Production of Space* is drawn from the title of Henri Lefebvre's (1991) seminal contribution following its translation by Donald Nicholson-Smith from its original title *La production de l'espace*. David Harvey's (1991) indispensable commentary presented as an 'Afterword' to this book suggests the formative moments in Lefebvre's work derive from his experience of the shattering of social space in the First World War. Also significant was his intellectual engagement with Hegel, Marx and Heidegger during his time at the Sorbonne, his commitment to the philosophical possibilities of the everyday (*la quotidienne*), his opposition to France's colonial war and his uneasy relationship with the Communist Party and his experience of earning a living as a taxi driver around Paris. Lefebvre argued for a vision of 'life lived as a project', flowering concurrently rather than as fragmented pieces. Intellectually, he formed a Lefebvrian project to rescue the pessimistic undercurrent entering French philosophy through its engagement with Heidegger, and the humanism and structuralism of prevailing Marxist discourse. Lefebvre provides a 'moment' (understood as a fleeting but decisive sensation that reveals the totality of possibilities contained within daily existence) as a point of rupture and transformation of Marx and Heidegger.

Lefebvre (1991) invites us to give up the view that 'public space is merely the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds' (Carr et al., 1992: 3); instead his thesis moves us towards an understanding of space for personal development of the self as constituted through, productive of, and

permeated by social relations mediating research, Higher Education and the professions represented by the body of students. Consequently the issue of the body and the identity of the self are central to the analysis of space for personal development mediated by social research at doctoral level in this paper.

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

Not only teach... us to read literature more thoroughly by attending to its *language* ... through a complex play of signifying traces; it also enables us to interrogate the covert philosophical and political presuppositions of the institutionalized critical methods which generally govern our reading of a text. There is in deconstruction something that challenges every teaching institution (Derrida, 2004: 155; Wolfreys, 2007: 10).

The notion of 'play' used here should not be mistaken for a subject manipulating objects; idiomatically in the context of personal development planning it could be understood from the reciprocity of 'give and take' that is already placed in an "I – you" structure in which the self in its relation to the other is already situated in the midst of institutions of Higher Education and research, on which Derrida has written much². From his reading of Heidegger's ontology, Derrida is also continually alert to Being, which leaves

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

only its 'trace' or mark on the page. We see this in the torque of play mediated by 'signifying traces' that might sometimes turn the body.

For the moment we have arrived at that complex 'undecidable'³ juncture in which to position the multiplicity of the self seen in the midst of our doctoral researchers, with it being placed between, on the one hand, discourses of humanism and structuralism grounded in Marx's historical materialism and, on the other, Heidegger's somewhat idealist explorations of the ontology of being, where we, too, are attempting to situate 'the programme'. In developing structures in which to position the self within the programme of doctoral research we are moving in the direction of an optimistic and deconstructive reading of our protagonists, whilst attempting to address the issue of the signification of space⁴ for the self in terms of its personal development through research.

As examples of possible "starting points" for social research in which the self has been already situated or thrown, there are a number of obvious contexts, including discourses taken from the post-modern⁵, post-Fordist⁶, post-industrial⁷ and the globalised world⁸ that some would see as explanatory loci for the gloss of experiences as registered above by our students. To this milieu might be added Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) sociology of *Liquid Modernity*, with its 'extra-territorial' free flow of power, gathering techniques of 'escape, slippage, elision and avoidance' and the work of Anthony Giddens (1991), who, in his thematisation of 'self-identity' within the context of 'late

3. The 'undecidable' is a ghostliness that in Derrida's writings 'render(s) all totalisation, fulfilment, plenitude impossible' (Derrida, 1988: 116).

4. In this paper we will concentrate upon space but, in the spirit of Husserl there is recognition that the deepest level of human experience, which he calls "the primary world," (Cassey, 1997: 217) is as spatial as it is temporal and generally a phenomenological treatment of this phenomenon would treat space and time together. In the constitution of phenomena, for example, retention and protention as horizons of the now are explicitly tied to spatial horizons. (ibid: 217)

5 Cf Jean Francois Lyotard's (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; or Fredric Jameson (1992) *Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London: Verso Books

6 Cf Amy Amin's (1994) *Post-Fordism: A Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell

7 Cf Daniel Bell's (1974) *Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: Venture in Social Forecasting*, London: Heinemann

8 Cf David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt, and Jonathan Perraton (1999) *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press

modernity' also significantly thematises 'time/space' and its principle of 'instantaneity'. But, perhaps we should also not forget the political context in which to situate our deconstruction of the self in the context of the personal development of human beings mediated by the Professional Doctorate programme?

By the end of the 1980s political reason 'aspired to create an enterprise culture' which 'accorded a vital political value to a certain image of the human being' (Rose 1996: 150-151). For Rose the image of an 'enterprising self', 'was so potent because it was not an idiosyncratic obsession of the right of the political spectrum', to the contrary, it resonated with basic presuppositions concerning contemporary human being that remain to this day widely distributed amongst all political persuasions (ibid). Rose (1996: 151) sums up these presuppositions regarding the self as follows:

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

In the context of personal development planning mediated by research, these inventions of the self go to the heart of the governance of that very same invention. But, from a historical perspective we should perhaps be alert to the language in which the self has been thrown⁹. In this technological age, in our language a number of dominant ontological considerations derived from Heidegger's earlier writings about Dasein, human being(s), have been shown to have been already themselves confined and corralled by the

9. Thrownness, *Geworfenheit*, is the language Heidegger (1962) used in *Being and Time* to describe where human being(s), which Heidegger calls *Dasein*, are continually situated; human beings are always already thrown into the midst of things.

political technologies of the academic and social fields in which the discourse was originally situated (Bourdieu, 1996).

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

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

Our question concerning personal development mediated by the programme is therefore ineluctably connected with questions concerning the production of social space for it.

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

suggest that the programme is a source of motivation for the multiplicity of individuals. One of the students sums up the tenor of feelings expressed by many in the first cohort of students, when she remarked that “it’s not often that I leave on Friday (following a day of workshops within the professional doctorate programme) with so much in my head that I actually *want* to think about: now, how do I keep the rest of the world at bay while I do!”

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

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

But, already this language chimes with echoes from *Liquid Modernity*, in which, for Bauman (2000: 61) at least, the question ‘what can I do?’ has come to dominate continually changing patterns of individualized society (ibid: 31). For Bauman (2000) the process of individualization at the heart of personal development planning essentially ‘consists of transforming human identity from a ‘given’ into a ‘task’ and charging the actors with the

responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance' (ibid: 31 -32; emphasis as in the original).

Is it hardly surprising that Edwards' and Usher's (2003) representation of 'self-directed flexible lifelong learners' now appears *de jure* as the 'autonomous' individual in the melt of our 'liquid modern' world? Barnett (2003) has similarly observed the emergence of new technologies of performance, reflecting a shift towards the self-generational capacities of students and away from the presentation of a more hierarchically structured disciplinary culture. Indeed, in the field of social psychology, in their review of 'emotional intelligence' Victor Dulewicz and Malcolm Higgs (2000: 349) cite Goleman (1996) who concludes:

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

In this particular field 'emotional intelligence' along with 'managerial intelligence' and 'intellectual intelligence' provide a number of categories of personal competencies that create the basis for a more analytical approach to self-auditing used in PDP. Social psychology, it would seem, provides the very means not only for grounding a number of key concepts used in the education of individuals in managing their own freedoms in this liquid modern world (including the freedom to engage in doctoral research), but also the intellectual basis for expertise in the domain of the 'subjectivity' of the self (Rose, 1996: 152).

Reflexively, of course, we can recognise that the individual self is, in fact, located within a number of technological discourses derived from education and social psychology, which perhaps deserves a short exegesis on the

historical development of this idea as a background to the work of Michel Foucault which we will draw upon in the remainder of this paper.

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

By historicising questions of ontology Michel Foucault's reading of Heidegger's thesis on technology went on to find expression in his emphasis upon power, from the Latin, *posse*, to be able, as a productive force, and its relationship with particular inventions of the human being, commonly identified as 'the self', which is the particular focus here. As Rose (1996: 152) indicates, 'the autonomous subjectivity of the modern self may seem the antithesis of political power. But Foucault's (1984a,b, 1981 {1976}) argument suggests an exploration of the ways in which this autonomization of the self is itself a central feature of contemporary governmentality' or 'mentalities of government'. Rose's 'portmanteau' notion of governmentality encompasses 'the multiple strategies, tactics, calculations, and reflections that have sought to conduct the conduct of human beings' (Foucault, 1984b; Gordon, 1986; Rose, 1996).

In this paper we will concentrate on two particular dimensions of this relationship between power and the self in this technological world as a way of situating PDP. Both of these centre themselves on the production of space within the professional doctorate programme of research.

The first question concerns the space created for the self within the institution of research, and the second, the space available for the self within the ethical field in which it has been situated. This brings us to the specific question of personal development planning, which Foucault (1984a,b, 1981 {1976}) explored in terms of the technologies of the self, which, of course, demands that we begin by consideration of the self in space.

The self in space

First we must turn to the question of the space available for the self mediated by research within the institutions of doctoral research within Higher Education.

The conception of institution used in this paper draws from the work of Michel Foucault (1977 {1975}) and Jacques Derrida (2004, 1982, 1973). Foucault's (1977 {1975}) idea of 'discipline' places a helpful emphasis on the 'strategies', 'procedures' and ways of 'behaving' which are associated with specific institutional contexts, including schools, universities and the work place which have tended to permeate ways of thinking and behaving more generally. Foucault construes the modern institutions in a technological way, that is to say as human technologies which provide the means to particular ends. In Derrida's writings *institution* refers not only to the manifest materiality of institutions such as universities along with those bodies charged with the governance of Higher Education and the professions, but also to 'the operative and normative discourses, from administrative protocols and procedures', to the forms of dialogue and the 'disciplines', 'to which the various discourses' regarding these agencies 'pertain'¹⁰. With its sustained focus upon the complexities of language, Derrida's discourse enables the reader not just to focus upon attempting to understand how such institutions play out in everyday life, but, significantly, to develop a deconstructive reading of the language of such institutional apparatus. In his

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

reading, Derrida lays emphasis upon the contingent repetition of language and its very 'undecidability'¹¹ which is already reflected in the structure of this paper. Indeed it is this way of thinking and attempting to understand what lies behind institutional language of research that we seek to adopt in opening further discussion regarding space for the self mediated by personal development and its relationship with research within the professional doctorate programme.

Some of the contingent implications for the coded space re-produced as the institutional language of the various disciplines represented within the programme have already been felt by the self as reflected in the multiplicity of our students. One student spoke of the irony of "being given one day per week" in which to complete her studies for the Ed D, only to find that her practice had been expanded by the "powers that be" and she has also been given more work to complete in the remaining four days than she had been doing the previous year working full-time. Another spoke at length about "having to cover for a colleague" over an extended period of time which made it quite impossible to do any of the reading she had planned to support her research. Another had been "so submerged" in preparations for an OfSTED inspection in her school over the summer before the programme began and during the autumn term that it had not been possible "even to start any reading" for the first step in her research until after Christmas in the first year.

In looking at these issues in isolation and centring attention upon the individuals concerned, one possible explanation for them could reflect the personal qualities of the students involved and their particular individual motivations for maintaining the quality of their own professional practices, whatever demands are placed upon them. But, is this perhaps to deny the

11. The 'undecidable' is a ghostliness that in Derrida's writings 'render(s) all totalisation, fulfilment, plenitude impossible' (Derrida, 1988: 116).

decentring of human beings in the technological language of the disciplines that engages particular ‘populations’ of professionals with ‘regimes of truth, explored by Foucault (1984c: 132) in his earlier explorations of the ‘docile body’ (Foucault, 1977{1975}:135-169)? And, are we to deny to the elision of the self in such a body?

From this perspective in part what are reflected in these various comments of the palpably submissive body of students may well be the disciplinary powers at work in each of the professions represented in this modern programme. More broadly a general plan for modernisation is exemplified in Bentham’s diagram of the Panopticon as Foucault describes it - the control and disciplining of human activities through the creation of a regulated ‘space’¹². There is, as Foucault (1977{1975}) recognised in *Discipline and Punish*, within the ‘forces of production – technology, nature, labour, knowledge’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 46), a tendency to produce social space inscribed with a ‘docile useful’ body. The very functionality and efficacy of such disciplinary apparatus is contingent upon ‘a relation of docility-utility’¹³.

‘The disciplinary apparatus constituting the real hub of the university and of the professions is tending to become the very machinery of identity symbolised and somewhat disguised, ironically, by the continual drive towards polysemy in the identity of ‘difference’ (Flint et al., 2009: 12)¹⁴.

So, regarding the *disciplinary space* produced by the institutional machinery of the university, it has been suggested that the preferred form of identity and subjectivity of the body for such production is an ‘intensified and

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

13. Docility here refers to a propensity to be worked upon; utility to the formation of the body (in the sense of both the individual and collective body) to be rendered productive a necessarily double movement was involved: both increasing the body’s ‘aptitude’ and simultaneously increasing its ‘subjection’ (Foucault, 1977{1975}: 137). ‘The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it’ (ibid: 138).

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

instrumental individualism, which must be actively compliant not only to rational self-interest but towards managerial commands and the singular requirements of a system (Johnson 2008: 287).

As Foucault's (1977{1975}) earlier analysis had suggested, in the day to day reproduction of the institutions of Higher Education 'the rule of functional sites' (ibid: 243) or 'coded spaces' has taken over space, time and place in a veritable laboratory of power whose aim is to bring about the constant location of bodies in space' (Casey 1997: 184; Foucault, 1977{1975}: 205).

More recently the same phenomenon of the body in the space inscribed by institutions of Higher Education was also evident from Healey's (2005) paper, 'disciplinary spaces and approaches', edited by Ronald Barnett (2005) on the pretext of 'Reshaping the University', where manifold identities and differences become conspicuous in the primary allegiances of 'academic staff' to 'their subject or profession' in which the body's¹⁵ sense of itself 'in a given institution is secondary (Healey, 2005: 68; Diamond and Adam, 1995; Healey 2003; Jenkins, 1996).

In Lefebvre's (1991) terms it is important to see that such a 'spatial body' does not present itself as a subject or object in the philosophical sense, nor as an internal milieu standing in opposition to an external one, rather a body of students so conceived is 'immediately subject to the determinants' of, in this case, the space inscribed by institutions of Higher Education and the associated professions represented by the programme. Its 'material character derives from space', not from the possible mediating influences of epistemology, ontology or methodology, nor even from specific imperatives regarding practice nor generation of knowledge as a basis for development of practice, but solely 'from the energy that is deployed and put to use there' (ibid: 195).

15. In fact, in Healey's (2005) original text although it is contextualized in terms of 'reconceiving spaces' Healey makes no reference to 'body' preferring instead to refer to 'their sense of themselves as staff at a given institution'

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

More concretely in his later writings Foucault's historicist analysis of power as a productive social force provides a particular focus upon *The Technologies of the Self*¹⁶ suggest a 'heterogeneous range of techniques of subjectification through which human beings are urged to become more ethical beings'¹⁷. Foucault's writings suggest that amongst the professional doctorate students such techniques provide grounds for defining their identities and in regulating themselves in accordance with the moral codes inscribed within the space produced by the institutional apparatus of Higher Education and the professions. One such technique we suggest is that of personal development planning, which brings us back to our second question, posed earlier, concerning the space available for the self in research mediated by personal development planning.

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

17. The phrase is borrowed from Nikolas Rose (1996: 156).

Space for the self

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

Personal development of the self therefore embodies two inter-related dimensions of means-ends structured technologies of the self: the first planning stage is already predicated upon an ordering of human beings involved in accordance with the rationality of its own particular protocols. Secondly in agreement with the ordering of theoretical reason the precise locus for the human being is found to be one of a multiplicity of possible technological "inventions" we call the self mediated by the discourses in which it may have been thrown in practice¹⁸.

As a subject the self is not defined by a series of characteristic attributes or behaviours but is constituted by technology. As an objectivised subject, of course, the self has become dominated by technologies of power to which human beings have already submitted themselves. But, Foucault was not inviting us to accept such technologies of the self as a deterministic process from which we cannot escape, his writings provide testimony to his questioning of the origins of such technologies. Foucault's (2002{1966})

18. This paper has already identified discourses of 'postmodernism', 'post-fordism', and those projected for a 'post-industrial society' by Daniel Bell (1973), along with discourses of *Liquid Modernity* (Bauman, 2000) and of the neoliberal 'enterprise culture' (Rose, 1996).

desire had been already made tangible in his earlier writings in *The Order of Things*¹⁹; namely, to help his readers free themselves from understandings of the self as a subject.

Moreover, as we have seen already in this particular case the self is already constituted not on the basis of epistemology or ontology but on the basis of the space inscribed by the institutions of Higher Education and the associated institutions incorporated into the programme. It is the coded space of Higher Education that constitutes the self even before any development planning has taken place. And in the process of personal development planning human being is rendered as 'standing reserve' of energy that is there and ever open to new possibilities circumscribed and delimited by technologies of the self.

From this perspective it is, perhaps, no surprise that whilst the professional doctorate research programme has the potential to open many possibilities for personal development, in practice the possibilities realised reflect the form of production of social space inscribed by the institutions of Higher Education and the professions and encircling the body of researchers. But, are such possibilities necessarily delimited and circumscribed by the technologies of the self.

In being reflexive and in alerting students to such reflexivity as a way of structuring thinking for *research about the process of personal development planning* through the professional doctorate programme, the foregoing possibilities regarding the self mediated by the language and space of institutions in which their research is situated opens the very process of PDP to a multiplicity of questions concerning the language in which the self is situated.

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

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

In being reflexive this particular standpoint opens the stage set for the practice of the self and its relationship with personal development planning to a range of new research to uncover, to disentangle and unlock the possibilities of the self becoming alert to, and conscious of, the technologies that are shaping its very existence.

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