



## **Anarchic Educational Leadership: An Alternative Approach to Postgraduate Supervision**

by Asta Rau

### Abstract

*Supervision is widely acknowledged as influencing the quality of postgraduate theses, and thus, by implication, of postgraduates. Despite this, the literature on conducting research offers little guidance in respect of managing the supervision relationship. This paper opens a window onto the relationship – and particularly the power relationship – between a particular supervisor of postgraduate research, Howard, and his Master’s student, Ray. It draws on research that explores how contemporary influences in the university domain intersect with individual agency and with power relations to produce knowledge on two levels: the thesis as an extrinsic product of processes of education, and the person as an intrinsic product of processes of learning.*

*Selections of Michel Foucault’s insights are used to explore the notion of power and how it operates through rules of discourse to construct knowledge and identity. Accordingly, the research describes and tracks the functioning of two discourses pivotal to Howard and Ray’s experience of supervision: anarchic educational leadership discourse, and humanistic discourse. The research on which the paper is based is constructivist, and as such it is underpinned by the assumption, or rather belief, that the discursive construction of reality is mediated by individual agency. In order to analyse how power operates between individuals, and between them and their broader educational contexts, a conceptual tool capable of accommodating manifest strategic processes – identified along a positional continuum as ‘push’, ‘allow’ and ‘pull’ – was devised.*

*The case study yields several thematic correlations in interpersonal and institutional power. These are: 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 impact of personal affinity on supervision; and the influence of ontology on thesis-as-product and person-as-product.*

### **Introduction**

The supervision relationship plays a vital role in mediating the quality of postgraduate theses and, by implication, the quality of postgraduates. Yet few in-depth qualitative studies of research supervision exist, and fewer still examine power in the supervision relationship. This paper draws on research aimed at

addressing this gap by exploring 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?* One of three cases from the original study – that of Ray and his supervisor Howard – is presented here.

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A selection of Michel Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) ideas were chosen to guide – but not dictate – the study's ontology and epistemology. This study is, therefore, not a phenomenological one. Foucault's intellectual career was rooted in the phenomenological tradition, but those of his insights featured here belong to a later stage of his career when he had abandoned all theory in order to scrutinize its constitution. Nonetheless, some essentials of *empirical* phenomenology (van der Mescht, 2004) are reflected in Foucault's later work: his suspension of preconceived ideas; his focus on the contextual embeddedness of knowledge; his clear, precise descriptions solidly grounded in data; and, of course, the poetic elegance and eloquence of his writings. Some sense of these attributes must have seeped into my *Verstehen*, because, without having intended it so, the study developed a phenomenological ambience. Perhaps this is partly because it aimed to explore and describe Ray and Howard's *experience*, and partly because the analysis of their experience resonates with phenomenological notions of space, time, body, relationship, and intentionality.

The paper is structured as follows: It begins with a brief description of two discourses operating in the contemporary educational domain: *humanism* and *anarchic educational leadership*. Following this, a selection of Foucault's (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) insights on power is presented. After a brief description of the research methodology, information from all the preceding sections is brought into a dialogue with data from the case study of Ray and Howard. A brief commentary concludes the text.

### Discourses in the University Domain

This paper explores how people's relations of power function through institutionalized discourses to produce knowledge and shape identities. In the paper, discourse refers to the knowledges, attitudes and practices that are produced through interrelationships between people's worldviews, values, languages and contexts (Bougey, 2000; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Steffe & Gale, 1995). Thus discourse refers to language in the widest sense of the word, as a way of calling into being – of *realising* – all levels of our experience.

This section presents the main tenets of two discourses in which Howard and Ray's supervision relationship is embedded. The discourses were not chosen arbitrarily from texts on education or the contemporary university, but were identified in a hermeneutic process – an oscillation between evolving interpretations of data and theory, text and context.

### Humanistic Discourse

In Western thought, humanistic discourse was advanced by the work of psychologists such as Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport and Victor Frankl. 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 towards the actualization of their fullest physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual potential. Humanistic educators need to be emotionally available to their learners and to honour “choice, free will and especially the human capacity for self-determination and self-fulfilment” (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1991, p. 116). Individual growth is nurtured in the belief that it is valuable for self *and* others. Educators accept that learners have the freedom of choice to decide which information they use in the construction of their own sense of meaning. As Vandenberg (1997) declares, “education is ... the discovery of one's own possibilities of being ... it is the enabling of unalienated (that is, authentic) existence” (p. 14).

As will be seen, humanistic discourse shares much with anarchic educational leadership discourse: both are holistic, both are sensitized to human experience; they both value personal agency and the importance of nurturing the *people* within educational systems; their interpretation of freedom is similar; and they both embrace and work *with* change – particularly those teachers or supervisors who refrain from attachment to outcomes and allow their students to author their own processes.

### Anarchic Educational Leadership Discourse

The title ascribed to this discourse originates in a comment of Howard – the supervisor in this case study.<sup>1</sup> His observation led me to explore literature on

<sup>1</sup> “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 ...

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. Grice and Humphries (1997, p. 417) 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 ... .

Regarding the “purposefulness of individuals” and their autonomy or agency, there is one important distinguishing characteristic of 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*. This does not mean that anarchic leaders do not commit, for example to a job or an institution, nor that they are without preferences in terms of outcomes, but rather that they choose a position, *live congruently with it* and then *let go* to allow the world to organize itself around them according to whatever organizing principle there is or is not, to then work *with* whatever arises from the emerging situations, events, people, and so forth. In doing so, the anarchic leader engages with change in a dynamic way.

Like the *anarchic*, the *anarchist* (and we refer to this because of the potential linguistic confusion and because it is necessary to clarify the distinction in terms of how anarchic discourse is construed in this paper) acts as an “equilibrium buster ... deliberately looking for information that might threaten stability” (Wheatley, 1999, p. 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

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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* in the research, I first explored the relevant literature to see whether I had correctly understood the dynamics of what Howard was saying. When I felt that my understanding was congruent with what Howard was describing, I broadened it by reading more widely. I then discussed my interpretations with him and proposed the title ‘anarchic educational leadership’. He approved and validated my choice.

should be replaced by a system of voluntary cooperation” (*Collins Concise English Dictionary*, 1978, p. 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 or collective autonomy, but rather the anarchic 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 evolving.

The ontological vision that governs how anarchic leaders address the tension between structures and people derives from quantum physics. Physicists such as David Bohm (1981) and Werner Heisenberg (in Bohm, 1981; Capra, 1982, 1989) present persuasive research findings to show that, out of anarchy or chaos, a pattern of order emerges. This insight has been appropriated and assimilated into discourses of leadership (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 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, p. 82). 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).

Participation is central to anarchic leadership; it is the door between quantum thought and quantum practices. 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 experiences of co-workers as they engage with the daily realities of the workplace. Wheatley comments that “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, p. 67).

Anarchic discourse presupposes change and requires leaders to work with shifting outcomes. It is plausible, therefore, that the vision or outcomes towards which an anarchic educational leader navigates an

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institution, department, programme or student, will have leapt well beyond the rigid confines of proposed outcomes that are formally documented and thus made accessible to, and assessable by, 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, therefore, anarchic educational leaders are positioned “outside institutionalized managerial values” (Grice & Humphries, 1997, p. 417).

### The Dynamics of Power

Unlike most power theorists, Michel Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) does not view power as a reified thing that is possessed. Instead, he envisages power as a relational process that “must be analysed as something which circulates ... it is never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). According to Foucault, power relations are negotiated via strategies of resistance: these 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 domains.

To some extent, societal rules inherent in discourse limit our possibilities for being in the world – for understanding and acting in it. Particularly when a discourse is sanctioned and promoted in spoken and written texts, that discourse will become a dominant societal pattern, overshadowing alternative discourses and their ways of seeing and being. In this regard, spoken and written texts are influential voices that mediate our views of reality: they reinforce and institutionalize certain knowledges, attitudes and practices. In Foucaultian terms, texts endorse what is *sayable* (Kendall & Wickham, 1999) – sanctioned and promoted – in discourse. Much of Foucault’s work consists of showing how words shape forms: how the *sayable* becomes *visible* (ibid.), manifested in things and people.

Foucault insists that, even when power relations are almost “perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom” (1996, pp. 441–442), we are all capable of exercising power. Hence he urges us to take responsibility for exercising power over ourselves – for inventing our own self. To do so it is vital to nurture awareness of how we are

positioned and shaped by discourse: this empowers us to resist being regulated by others and by the norms and discourses in which we are embedded. When Foucault speaks of the need to “produce one’s own self” (1996, pp. 441–442), 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 (Rau, 2004). 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, p. 14).

Part of our painting – of transforming personhood – involves interrogating how we see and are seen. This scrutiny depends to some extent on how discourse situates us in, and simultaneously differentiates us from, our contexts. Foucault terms the positions we inhabit in the world *subject positions* (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). They indicate our identity in a shared cultural world – for instance supervisor, student, parent; and, more intricately, encouraging supervisor, slow learner, controlling parent, and so on (ibid.). 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 exemplary 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.

Subject positions are taken up within particular domains. In the Foucaultian sense of the word, a domain is a specific, exclusive and institutionalized body of knowledge (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). For example, the university is an educational domain with specialized concepts, languages and practices that are enshrined in policy texts and mission statements. Within the university domain, psychology is a disciplinary domain with specific set of concepts preserved in language and practices that enable psychologists to define human beings and to prescribe ways of being human. Within a domain, certain discourses and subject positions are regarded as more desirable than others and are thus privileged and promoted. This is accomplished through cycles of *surveillance, assessment and feedback*.

For instance, in the university domain, surveillance, assessment and feedback target students via research methodology discourses. These discourses prescribe research paradigms and methods whereby the value and validity of not only the research, but also of the *researcher*, can be measured. The process works as

follows:

- First a research student's work is overseen by a supervisor who is a sanctioned authority within the university (the process of *surveillance*).
- Then her or his work will be evaluated using favoured – and often normative – methods of calculation (the process of *assessment*).
- Finally, this assessment is communicated through mechanisms of reward and punishment (processes of *feedback*).
- Customarily, if students and their research are found to display thinking and behaviour congruent with favoured or sanctioned norms, their work is likely to be regarded as valid and valuable, and they will be encouraged by mechanisms of reward. If students' research falls short of favoured or sanctioned norms, they are likely to be subject to overt or covert penalties devised to correct and reduce deviation. In other words, surveillance, assessment and feedback are mechanisms for negotiating – or, less equitably, imposing – relations of power.

Importantly, the surveillance-assessment-feedback cycle not only impacts and constructs formal knowledge (the student's work, in this case), but it also influences how the student will arbitrate claims to truth, select values, and assimilate and transform knowledge: in short, how the student will develop and function as a *person*. Thus, through rules of discourse, people become both the targets *and* the vehicles of what they know and learn. This is central to Foucault's view of power:

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. (1980b, p. 98)

A vital implication of this is that *a person's identity or subjectivity becomes a form of knowledge* (Foucault, 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b): when people are repeatedly subjected to surveillance, assessment and feedback mechanisms that promote (or, less equitably, force people to comply with) rules of a particular discourse, people begin – knowingly or unknowingly – to recruit these rules to judge *themselves*. So discursive rules and values begin to serve *self-surveillance*, *self-assessment* and *self-positioning*.

If people reproduce what they know or have come to accept as true according to the discourses in which they are embedded, the forms of knowledge

associated with those 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, who observes that “most of us, most of the time, are no more conscious of ... our assumptions than we are of the movement of the Earth – we are at one with them, as with it” (1993, p. 47). Knowledge (including subjectivity or identity) can become so deeply rooted through this conditioning process that even the ways in which we reflect will work to entrench, instead of interrogate, ways of being and seeing.

Discourses and their underlying values and assumptions may be reproduced, but they can also be interrupted, challenged and changed. These processes occur in a cycle which Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982, 1988, 1996b) calls the will-to-knowledge.<sup>2</sup> In this cycle, rules of discourse operate via surveillance, assessment and feedback to target and construct forms of knowledge. These forms of knowledge converge with chance or contingent factors and with people's power relations or resistances, and in this intersection the forms of knowledge change in some way. The adapted forms of knowledge then feed *back into* and influence the discourses, people and contexts out of which they emerged in the first place. This process repeats itself in perpetuating cycles in which knowledge is constructed and reconstructed.<sup>3</sup>

An implication for postgraduate research students, their supervisors and the university domain is that power relations produce knowledge on two levels:

<sup>2</sup> Foucault (ibid.) 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, p. 218).

<sup>3</sup> To examine what forms of knowledge are produced by power relationships, Foucault (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) 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 visibilities, i.e. forms of imprisonment and punishment (including the design of actual prison buildings, notably Bentham's Panopticon: see Foucault, 1980b, pp. 147–165). These visibilities then double back to produce people as particular kinds of criminal subjects. The 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 an example of how the will-to-knowledge works.

- Written or spoken forms of knowledge (discourses that are formalized in written and spoken texts such as theses, publications, conference presentations and lectures).
- The subjectivities or identities of the student, the supervisor and – in the sense of its profile in the educational domain – ‘the’ university.

Thus two forms of knowledge that develop out of power relations in postgraduate research and supervision are *thesis-as-product* and *person-as-product* (Rau, 2004).

### Working with Foucault

It is essential to note that the research uses Foucault’s *insights* to explore power relationships, but does not use his archaeological or genealogical methods. This is primarily because the poststructural-constructivist approach of this study differs significantly from Foucault’s more structural-constructionist stance.<sup>4</sup> Despite his claim that people have freedom and agency, Foucault portrays the construction of reality as being almost overwhelmingly moulded by the muscle of discursive rules and institutionalized power. So his insights can be used to explore how power relations inherent in discourses and institutions impact on individuals, but do not offer ways to view the process in reverse. An analytical tool, described a little further on, was therefore designed to do so.

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 for offering a definition to bridge this gap, one that remains compatible with Foucault in that it avoids reifying power: “Power is the existence of inequalities” (E. M. Stack, personal communication, 2002). To ground the abstract concept of inequality in the context of the supervision relationship, I drew on preliminary exploratory

<sup>4</sup> The research is situated in constructionist-constructivist epistemology as it endorses the view that consensus reality is an unstable representation of the real world that is naturalized through the ideologies embedded in language and discourse (Connole, 1998; Steffe & Gale, 1995). More specifically, the research is constructivist, as it argues that the linguistic construction of reality is mediated by individual agency (Steffe & Gale, 1995). The study is also situated in critical research discourse, which pays close attention to issues of power and regards knowledge and education as political (Connole, 1998; Kvale, 1996). Thus, in terms of epistemology, the research is critical-constructivist.

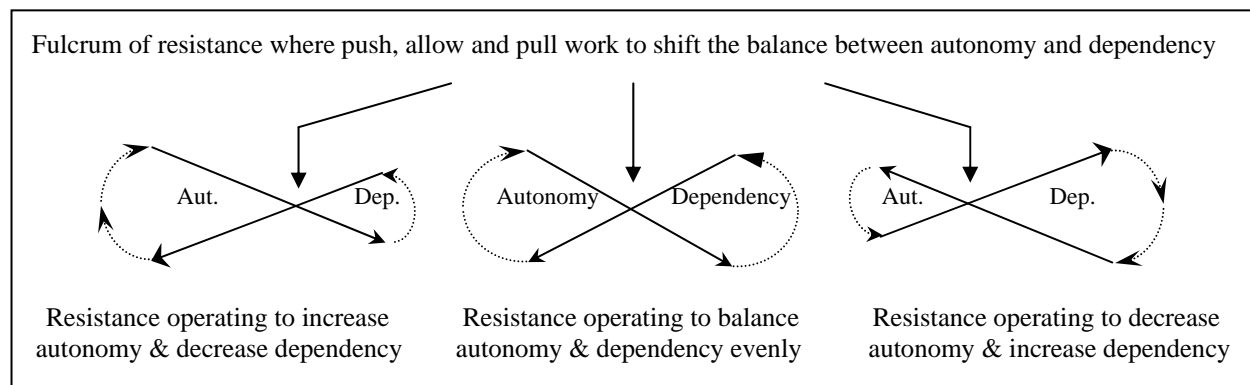
conversations with students and academics, in the course of which I had noted that they often mentioned control – either having too much, or too little, or an equitable balance of it. The way students and supervisors spoke of their experience of control indicated that they either *perceived* themselves 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<sup>5</sup> were recruited as central constructs in the research.

Merging the definition “power is the existence of inequalities” both with the constructs of autonomy and dependency and with Foucault’s (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) 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.*

To incorporate the notion of individual agency, it was necessary 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 designed a conceptual model or analytical tool which construes strategies of power/resistance as falling along a continuum between three main categories: push, allow and pull (Rau, 2004). 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* along a continuum between autonomy and dependency.

The following figure illustrates how resistance *processes* of push, allow and pull shift the balance – and proportion – between the *positions* of autonomy and dependency.

<sup>5</sup> The meaning of *autonomy* in this research follows its definition in the *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary*: “the possession or right of self-government; freedom of action” (2002, p. 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., p. 311).



The concepts of *push* and *pull* correspond with the everyday use or common meanings of the words.<sup>6</sup> On a continuum between them, *allow* falls in the middle: it happens when push and pull are almost evenly balanced. *Allow*<sup>7</sup> 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. It is the defining intention underlying empathy – the ability to put oneself in the position of the other.

In this research, reflexion (expressed in self-surveillance, self-assessment and self-positioning) is considered integral to negotiating individual freedom or agency. So push, allow and pull can operate in relationship to 'other' as well as to 'self'. The implication for analysis is that Howard and Ray can use push, allow or pull on one another, but they can also use these strategies on themselves.

Depending on the person and context of any strategy – and, of course, the subjective perception of the researcher – it could be interpreted as push, pull or allow. In this regard, the conceptual scheme is perhaps too open to arbitrary interpretation. On the other hand, its openness may be an advantage: the constructs of push, allow and pull are neutral enough to enable readers to develop their own understanding of how and why they operate in the relationship. As Kvale notes: "It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations and to arbitrate between them" (1996, p. 245).

<sup>6</sup> The *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines *push* as denoting "influence by force, move or make one's way by using it, shove, propel, impel, urge ...", while *pull* denotes "influence by persuasion, take from, bring towards ..."

<sup>7</sup> Brennan (1993) uses the term *allow* in her text on esoteric healing to refer to a self-contained yet open behavioural response pattern; it occurs when people remain available to each other without violating the boundaries of self or one another.

## Methodology

The study is situated in poststructural ontology and in critical-constructivist epistemology. The method is qualitative and uses a focused case study format.<sup>8</sup> Data-collection occurred by means of a series of audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews with a supervisor-student pair selected from the education faculty of a South African university. The analysis of the data combines grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) techniques with a few of Foucault's lenses:

- Examining how discourses influence participants' power relations and what is produced (tracing the connection between the *sayable* and the *visible*);
- Describing participants' strategies of resistance;
- Identifying the subject positions participants take up in relation to themselves, to each other and to their contexts.

The dialectic process between data, theory and interpretation commonly referred to as the "hermeneutic circle" (Bleicher, 1982) yields a critical description of how rules of discourse weave together participants' **resistance strategies**, their **autonomy and dependency**, **expectations**, **abilities**, and **professional and pastoral care**.

## Howard and Ray: A Case Study

The case study shows a slice of Ray and Howard's relationship from their first meeting to the submission of Ray's research proposal. The analysis of power is presented in a narrative style in order not to lose either a sense of their experience as *people*, or the rhythm, continuity and development of their relationship over time.

The analysis begins with a description of Howard and Ray's worldviews and motivations, Ray's research

<sup>8</sup> Only one of three cases in the original study is presented here.

topic and their professional and personal matching. It then investigates how they use power relations – specific resistance strategies that fall within the broad categories of push, allow and pull – to go about constructing one another and shaping Ray’s research.

The discussion of this constructing process first juxtaposes their professional expectations and abilities in relation to the professional care they give and get. Thereafter, their pastoral expectations and abilities are juxtaposed in relation to the pastoral care they give and get. Applying Foucault’s (1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) insights, I show how Ray and Howard are targeted by and positioned in discourse, and how they use strategies of resistance to reposition themselves and one another. The case study concludes by noting what is produced in terms of person-as-product and thesis-as-product.

## 1. Initial Positioning

The following section describes Ray and Howard’s initial positioning – or, in Foucaultian terms, their subject positions – in relation to one another. It identifies discourses in which Ray and Howard are embedded, and presents data regarding their motivations, worldviews and Ray’s research focus.

### 1.1 Introducing Ray and Howard: Their Worldviews and Motivations

Originally Ray 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 struggle continues: “This was the so-called perfect world that we were fighting for ... . Is it being realized? ... Are we moving towards that?” Ray is undertaking a Master’s by thesis, not for the degree or the prestige, but to accumulate knowledge and “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 people that I want to serve.”

Howard describes his role as teacher: “... it’s kind of who I am ... 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’s really why we learn, and why I am teaching ... to help people find out who they are.” Howard 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 only structure that makes sense is the structure that

agency brings about.”

### 1.2 Professional-Personal Matching and Research Topic

In the earliest stage of their supervision relationship – the process of matching a supervisor to a student – Ray and Howard’s interactions and comments indicate that they are at ease with one another. During a series of group meetings that combine an introduction to research methodology with choosing a supervisor or student, Ray reports feeling “comfortable” with Howard and chose him as supervisor. Howard also chose Ray, partly because of his expertise in Ray’s field of research and educational leadership – and partly because of personal affinity: “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 to supervise.”

From this first phase of surveillance, assessment and feedback, Ray and Howard adopt a collaborative (*allow*) stance in relation to one another: a position that evenly balances their autonomy and dependency. Ray sees Howard as “a person of authority in the sense that he knows 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 away from the power-distance aspect of supervision, but I try to play that down as much as possible ... I don’t want that to be uppermost in what we do, and how we do this thing”.

Ray’s wish to “serve” and to share what he learns with others shows his strong affinity with humanistic discourse. In this discourse, people are guided to an understanding of their unique worth and encouraged to strive towards emancipation and individual autonomy. From this perspective, “education which has no consequences for social action or personal growth is empty” (Morris, 1972, p. 218). Howard is aligned with this view: “... studying 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”. Thus Howard and Ray are positioned congruently in terms of a shared humanistic worldview.



Ray's research topic centres on leadership in the context of the implementation of the South African government's new Curriculum 2005. He is 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 – in essence, their emancipation from structures that are "confined and rigid" – in order to formulate "workable solutions". He explains: "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*." His statements show that Ray shares Howard's inclination towards anarchic educational leadership discourse. Although this discourse does not deny the existence of institutionalized structures, it resists the authority of extrinsically enforced rules and structures that 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, p. 417). Greenfield (1993) 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" (p. 259). Personal autonomy and intrinsic integrity are 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). In this discourse, emerging structures have similar qualities to those that Foucault attributes to power relations: they are "mobile, reversible and unstable" (1996, p. 441).

Supervisors working within an anarchic educational leadership discourse need to cultivate flexibility and open communication and participate with their students to foster a shared vision of the research. Wheatley comments:

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, p. 39)

This dovetails with Howard's reason for teaching: "to

help people find out who they are". For Howard and Ray, the double alliance of theory and topic is likely to influence power relations between them and significantly strengthen what is *sayable* (what is sanctioned and institutionalized in spoken and written texts) and what is or becomes *visible* (made manifest) through the rules of anarchic educational leadership discourse.

Having explored Howard and Ray's initial positioning, we now turn to examine how they employ power relations – specific resistance strategies – to go about constructing one another. The discussion of the constructing process that follows first juxtaposes Howard and Ray's professional expectations and abilities in relation to the professional care they give and get. Thereafter, their pastoral expectations and abilities are juxtaposed in relation to the pastoral care they give and get.

## 2. Expectations & Abilities: Professional & Pastoral Care

### 2.1 Professional Expectations & Abilities

From the outset, the formal expectations and 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 institutionalized – sayable – expectations merge 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; Ray elaborates: "I expect ... to get the necessary guidance ... to make meaning for myself and to make sense 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 that "ultimately I will be the one that does the research".

What Howard expects from Ray, as from all his students, is "critical engagement with *everything* that [he] reads". Foucault regards questioning and reflexivity as essential to alert us to the connection between knowledge and power. Fostering critical reflexivity is regarded as one of the most important aspects of effective teaching. It is a way of fostering *intrinsic* or *self* surveillance and assessment – the combination of personal autonomy and responsibility essential to a humanist perspective. Howard wants to facilitate a process of "real growth" in Ray's critical capacities and his personhood. If Howard were to direct 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 research". Howard comments: "I would not be satisfied ... . It's not a good sense of fulfilment. I'd feel like I failed ... it's just the product ... . Got a degree. Great. So what?"

## 2.2 Professional Care

When he began the supervision, Ray was very strongly positioned to *push* for a cause. As Howard articulates it: "...he came in with a very strong agenda. [He] wanted to do research for the wrong reasons ... to show officially and formally how *strongly* [he] disapproves of what's happening in education". 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. He 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". As pointed out before, reflexion is an important and necessary response to criticism. Ray elaborates: "I went home to think about it ... then ... okay ... 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" (in Grant & Graham, 1994, p. 167). True to their evenly balancing autonomy and dependency, Ray accepts Howard's criticism, but *resists* it 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, p. 27).

A Foucaultian view recognizes that policy influences practice – what is sayable influences what is or may become visible. Thus 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 who is 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 – in order 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 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". Although he finds students' dependency "the most worrying part of the job", Howard affirms that, by using a strategic combination of directing and questioning, "in a remarkably short period of time they can turn a corner". Morris reflects on the humanist approach:

... 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 ... . He [or she] is the only agent in the educative process who is in a position to convert knowledge into meaning ... . (1972, pp. 216–218)

Ray must thus make his own discoveries and assimilate them in a way that helps him to cultivate his personal nucleus of meaning. Howard acts as a catalyst in this process. Ray recalls how Howard *pushed* him towards autonomy: "go and do prior research by yourself [and] develop your own position".

Ray is dependent on himself now; he has been instructed to *pull* from his own resources. His struggle to find and justify a valid positioning for himself begins with his literature review, a process that takes him into tangents and sometimes lead him awry. 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". 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 okay 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". Openness to change involves viewing chance and contingencies, risks and mistakes as potentially fruitful. 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. Howard empathizes with the way it might feel for Ray to hand in written work: "Can I show this to anyone? And then ... ouch ... cringe while they read it". He assesses and positions Ray: "I think [he] was very short on confidence 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 of knowledge", he appears to trust Howard enough to risk being vulnerable: "Ultimately that's why I'm *here* ... to find new ways ... to learn from the situation". In 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 start of their relationship, Howard positioned Ray as "a natural inquirer ... [who is] inclined to scholarship ... very able ... [and who] seems to want to work hard". These are attributes that most supervisors wish for in a student. 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 first proposal: "[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, consequently, what forms of knowledge they are likely to produce, including forms of their personhood – the identities that they come to inhabit. In humanistic teaching discourse, as in

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 engaging the person's creativity by encouraging him or her to participate in the construction of knowledge. Accordingly, Howard positions himself to *push* Ray away from reproducing rhetoric: "of course you can't *say* that ... you have to lead 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 need to go to the next level. They also need to problematize their own position. *Huge!*"

Ray recalls Howard instructing him: "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 *say* 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, p. 87). Howard alternates strategies of 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 is a way of "testing" Ray by getting him to test himself: "... so *this* is what you think? *Why?* But you could think *that*, couldn't you?" Howard *pushes* Ray to *pull* from his own resources, but "that's not a part of the tradition of the kind of education that Ray would have had, except in the Honours year".

Ray's second draft proposal shows that he shrinks from the challenge by pulling away, by 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 "fell back on what he knew ... [it was] almost as though he shoved the Honours year aside ... a sort of reversal ... *aaargh!*" The reversal arises out of Ray's intense struggle to listen to and find himself – his own voice. Howard recognizes this: "... 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". Ray confirms: "you struggle 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, p. 9) – in order to facilitate his next 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 it.

As Howard remarks: “it turned out well because our next session was a breakthrough 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 Howard attempts to account for it with “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, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) inclusion of the role of chance and contingency conspiring to render the outcomes of power relations unpredictable.

The insight that Ray brings to his breakthrough session – that educators and educational leaders need to initiate the changes they require and envision, and to co-construct their organizational identities by proactively formulating contextually relevant solutions to the challenges of implementing Curriculum 2005 – shows how he is becoming a visible product of an anarchic educational leadership discourse. 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 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 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.

Ray recalls that “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 there’s still this uncertainty because I don’t think I have an entirely in-depth understanding that ‘Okay, this is it!’” Part of the difficulty of committing to a research position is that researchers “have to leave room for non-knowledge” (Schumacher, quoted in Capra, 1989, p. 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* of 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, p. 83). Wryly alluding to this, Ray observes: “Knowing the person who is my supervisor, the research could take other directions”.

### 2.3 Pastoral Expectations

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 students’ background ... if they’ve come from an impoverished educational background ... the dependency level rises hugely”. Howard appears to respond to dependency needs very well, and Ray comments on Howard’s capacity for care: “his nature is so ... humane”. 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 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”.

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 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”. A supervisor’s respect for the personhood of her or his student is a quality that the literature mentions as essential for establishing and maintaining an equitable and successful supervision relationship (Grant & Graham, 1994). 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, p. 10) – which is an aspect of Ray that Howard 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”.

The excerpts from the interview data presented above indicate that Howard’s and Ray’s respective ways of being and interacting 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. As with their professional expectations, Ray and Howard’s pastoral expectations are closely aligned. Again, there is a strong possibility that both 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. This is the cyclic process of the will-to-knowledge (Foucault, 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1982/1996a, 1988, 1996b) in which subjects are targeted by and positioned in discourse so that they are simultaneously produced *by* it and producers *of* it.

#### 2.4 Pastoral Care

According to Foucault, the discourse of pastoral care is “a matter of constant, individualized, and final kindness” (1988, p. 62) which veils, yet serves, institutionalized control. 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, pp. 62–67)

Translating this process into an educational context: the teacher becomes the parent, the pastor, the mentor, the guide, 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. Importantly, what is sayable

(disclosed to the teacher-guide in words) and what is visible (made manifest and visible to the teacher-guide, for instance in deeds, attitudes or 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 serves surveillance, which serves assessment, which serves feedback, which serves (overtly or covertly) to direct people along a certain path.

This leads us to explore Howard and Ray’s power relationship in terms of Foucault’s question: “How [are] the reflexivity of the subject and the discourse of truth linked?” (1988, p. 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 this 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. But is Foucault’s notion of pastoral technology as a form of *controlling* people applicable in this relationship? As we interpret the data, Howard’s guiding principle appears to be the emancipation of the individual, *even from the teacher*. There is a sense that Howard marshals humanistic-anarchic 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” (quoted in Vandenberg, 1997, p. 177).

Howard positions Ray in the future: “with people like Ray, there comes a sense of change. He can actually become a different person”. But 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 that “education is ... the discovery of one’s own possibilities of being” (1997, p. 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".

### 3. What is Produced

#### 3.1 What is Produced in Terms of the Thesis-as-Product?

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, he asserts: "Yes ... I will get through".

#### 3.2 What is Produced in Terms of the Person-as-Product?

Howard achieves his aspiration – to lead students towards professional and personal growth. He experiences Ray's breakthrough insight (the personal and professional alignment between Ray's autonomy and the need for autonomy in school leaders) as "amazing ... that magic moment ... satisfying ... it's a very fine thing to see".

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. Ray shares some 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 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".

#### 3.3 What is Produced in Terms of the University and Broader Educational Domains?

Throughout the supervision process, what Howard says is congruent with what he does, and, by translating philosophy into action, he reproduces and strengthens the discourses that construct him. His anarchic leadership style offers an interesting alternative to practices associated with a commercial educational management discourse, particularly in relation to change management.

Ray's struggle to redress an inequitable educational system continues. He strategises by bringing his new knowledge into his power relationships in the broader educational domain, seeking to pull them 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". As an educator, Ray's growing grasp of critical thinking also positions him to train his school-level learners more effectively, potentially impacting on the future cohort of university students.

#### Conclusion

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 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. The case study data illustrate how an anarchic educational leadership discourse addresses the power dynamic head on: it creates an atmosphere agitated by criticism and reflection that is essential to democracy and transformation. Notably, anarchic educational management aims to work *with* and not against change: its ethics of participation and shared responsibility open a space for humanist ideals of the traditional university to converge with commercial demands in the contemporary educational context, as well as with the changes attending South Africa's transformation agenda.

As a supervisor, Howard facilitates the development of Ray's capacity to think critically and to claim his autonomy. These factors are crucial to Ray's empowerment and his emancipation from a disadvantaged educational background. His freshly

awakened critical capacities contribute to his professional and personal transformation as a student, and potentially benefit him as an educator and educational leader. Because of the philosophies of the humanistic and anarchic educational management discourses, in this relationship pastoral and professional care are intricately interwoven. The discourses share many commonalities and converge successfully to target and construct both person-as-product and thesis-as-product. Along the continuum of resistance (push-allow-pull) their power relationship inclines towards *allow*. Specific strategies that recur in their relationship are listening, questioning, challenging, reflecting, collaborating, accepting, respecting, accommodating, nurturing autonomy, communicating openly, engaging, and caring. These are congruent with anarchic as well as

humanistic discourse.

The case study shows how shared ontology translates into shared epistemology, and how both contribute to the harmony and success of Ray and Howard's supervision relationship. This dynamic prompts the recommendation that, when supervisors and students begin to work together, and preferably beforehand, they need to reflect on and pay close attention to the values they hold – and thus, by implication, to the discourses in which they are embedded or which they favour. These are likely to shape their professional and personal affinity and, by association, the thesis-as-product, the person-as-product, and the influence of both in the university and broader educational domains.

### About the Author

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Dr Rau is currently conducting action research on the curricular response to HIV and AIDS at Rhodes University. This seventeen-month EU funded project is affiliated to the national HEAIDS (Higher Education HIV/AIDS) Programme. She describes this contract as “a delight – a mix of responding to on-the-ground challenges and drinking deeply at the well of theory”.

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