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Title
Anticipating doctoral supervision: (Not) bridging the transition from supervisee to supervisor

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Abstract
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Keywords
Doctoral supervision; professional development; becoming a supervisor; autoethnography; psychosocial analysis

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Biographical statement
Emily F. Henderson joined the University of Warwick in 2015 as Assistant Professor of International Education and Development. She is developing a new MA programme entitled 'Global Education and International Development'. She recently completed her ESRC-funded PhD at the UCL Institute of Education on international gender knowledge production in transnational spaces. She is author of *Gender Pedagogy: Teaching, Learning and Tracing Gender in Higher Education* (Palgrave, 2015). She is co-convener of Warwick's AMIN – Academic Mobilities and Immobilities Network, and also co-convenes the SRHE (Society for Research into Higher Education) International Research and Researchers network.

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Introduction: From supervisee to supervisor

There has been a veritable explosion in research on supervision in recent years (Bastalich, 2017; Peelo, 2011; Wisker, 2012). Whereas supervision used to occur in a private space between supervisor and supervisee[i], using the personalised model of the supervisor in question[ii] (Bruce and Stoodley, 2013; Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015; Manathunga, 2005), increasing attention is being

paid to supervision pedagogy (Bruce and Stoodley, 2013; Thomson and Walker, 2010). This is in part owing to the scrutiny being placed upon institutions with regards to transferable skills and completion time for doctorates (Deuchar, 2008; Eley and Jennings, 2005; McCallin and Nayar, 2012; Thomson and Walker, 2010; Wisker, 2012). However researchers have identified that, while professional development is offered and often required for supervisors, supervisors draw their ideas on doctoral pedagogy from a number of sources, including 'how to' literature, their own experiences of being supervised[iii], observing colleagues, and being an examiner (Halse, 2011; Peelo, 2011; Wisker and Kiley, 2014). Previous research studies have sought to map the factors that influence how a doctoral supervisor understands and enacts the supervisor identity (Amundsen and McAlpine, 2009; Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015; Halse, 2011; Turner, 2015); this article explores a missing link in the literature, examining the invitations to reflect that result in the supervisor role being thought about in particular ways. Much literature on doctoral supervision is based on interview research, and in general the interview data is taken at face value: if a supervisor is asked what influences their supervision practice, their responses are straightforwardly recorded as evidence of these influences – rather than as a representation or 'snapshot in time' of these influences (Manathunga, Peseta and McCormack, 2010). Without going as far as to undermine the truth of these responses, or research participants' ability to access and verbalise their experiences, this article critically engages with the ways in which supervisors – or potential supervisors – are implicitly and explicitly invited to think about and represent supervision, by professional development courses, by supervision handbooks, and even by the questions that researchers pose.

The article's argument builds on Grant's (2003) 'Mapping the pleasures and risks of supervision' and Lee and Williams' (1999) 'Forged in fire: narratives of trauma in PhD supervision'. These texts are rare examples of doctoral supervision publications that fully acknowledge that (i) supervising doctoral research is a psychosocial process that plays out in rational and irrational ways and (ii) it is

impossible to eradicate the psychosocial irrationality of doctoral research (see also Grant, 2008; Manathunga, Peseta and McCormack, 2010). It is perhaps a sign of the times (both in terms of the 'impact' demands of research funding and the ways in which the evaluation of university teaching is changing worldwide) that much of the more recent doctoral supervision research seeks to know more about supervision *in order to* reduce the potential for trauma. Even in 1999, Lee and Williams (1999, p. 8) named this nascent tendency the 'improvement imperative', which they explain as the fact that 'emotional distress is seen in terms of what might be "wrong" with the institutional structures, policies and practices of the PhD'. In other words, the 'emotional bumps and bruises' (Walker and Thomson, 2010a, p. 4) of doctoral research are undesirable and, in a higher education (HE) sector where the student-as-consumer model is gaining ground, would be seen as damaging to student satisfaction (Bastalich, 2017). The underlying assumption of many 'how to' guides on doctoral supervision is that if supervisors are more conscious of their supervision practices, more aware of the options open to them for different modes of supervision, they will be able to reduce the student's 'emotional bumps and bruises' (Walker and Thomson, 2010a, p. 4). However, as Walker and Thomson (ibid.) acknowledge (see also Burford, 2015a; Burford, 2015b; Burford, 2016), the doctoral trajectory is 'biographical, complicated and partly unpredictable', as it involves 'remaking identities' – can the supervisor really eradicate the potential for emotional upheaval?

Lee and Williams (1999, p. 17) posit that the doctorate is based around a model of becoming an 'autonomous subject' (see also Manathunga and Goozée, 2007) and as such inevitably involves some 'abandonment trauma' (Lee and Williams, 1999, p. 17). They suggest that

> questions of emotions and the 'irrational' dimensions of the PhD experience, far from being 'noise' in the system of pedagogic relations and practices, are...both a necessary

> condition *and* an effect of the production of the subject of doctoral study (ibid., p. 8, emphasis in original).

In this view, seeking to improve supervisor-supervisee 'fit' (as in Pyhältö, Vekkaila and Keskinen, 2015, p. 8) may belie the fact that there is inevitably some degree of 'misfit' when the supervisor indicates to the supervisee that they must now take the helm of their project. What if the 'mismatched expectations of roles and responsibilities' between student and supervisor (Winchester-Seeto *et al*, 2013, p. 612) are in fact a part of any doctoral pedagogy? It is important to note that Lee and Williams (1999, p. 23) do not suggest that attempts to work on doctoral supervision pedagogy should be abandoned; rather they state that the 'challenge is to recognise and work with this dimension of the PhD experience'. This article speaks to that challenge.

Lee and Williams (1999) take their argument one step further, which is the key stepping stone for the argument presented in this article: not only is experiencing some emotional trauma an integral part of becoming a fully fledged doctorate-holder, but the process of completing and moving on from the doctorate involves the '*disavowal* of the "irrational" and the emotions' (ibid., p. 8, emphasis added). As such, according to Lee and Williams, both *experiencing* and then *forgetting* and/or *denying* the emotional toll that doctoral research takes are necessary stages of the process. If we work with this psychosocial theorisation of post-doctoral identity, surely this has implications not only for the way in which we understand the identity-formation of doctoral students, but also for the formation of a doctoral supervisor identity. For if completing the doctorate involves both suffering and then repressing that suffering, it would seem that when supervisors represent their own doctoral supervision experience, they attempt to recall what is in effect impossible to fully recall. Using the logic set out by Lee and Williams (1999) and Grant (2003), the rationale that supervisors express for their doctoral pedagogy is intimately bound up both in instinctive comparisons with their own

doctorate, and the underlying emotions and identifications that have been repressed through the completion of the doctoral process.

The article therefore conceptualises the thought space that precedes and is shaped by implicit and explicit invitations to reflect in certain ways about the role transition between being a supervisee and a supervisor. For instance, when Määttä (2012, p. 143) asks, 'What makes a supervisor...struggle by a doctoral student's side...?', this article asks, what would make a supervisor *think* that they should struggle by a doctoral student's side, and what is involved – rationally and irrationally – in that thinking? This is a space that supervisors themselves, 'how to' guides to supervision and indeed many research studies jump over by seeking clear routes to understanding and representing why supervisors supervise the way they do. In particular, it is a space that is easily bridged by drawing connections between a supervisor's own doctoral experience and their supervision pedagogy. Rather than constructing bridges over that in-between space, this article focuses on the disjuncture between the two roles (understood as separated by the disavowal of a supervisor's own doctoral trauma), and explores the invitations to reflect on bridging these experiences. The more practical aim of this article is to provide food for thought for supervisors and academic developers alike in the ways that they invite supervisors to reflect on their doctoral pedagogy; the article calls for the opening up of the space between the role of supervisee and supervisor to a wider set of influences and thought processes.

This article is based on autoethnographic analysis of a valuable moment in my academic career for reflecting on these factors: at the moment of writing I am positioned directly between my role of doctoral supervisee (until my PhD was awarded in [month removed for peer review] 2016) and the role of doctoral supervisor (from [month removed for peer review] 2016). Using Amundsen and McAlpine's (2009, p. 333) categorisation of 'academic and supervisory experience' for early career

academics: ‘years experience as academic’: less than one (if I discount already being in some ways an ‘academic’ during my PhD); ‘number of Master’s [dissertations supervised] to completion’: three; ‘number of doctorates [supervised] to completion’: zero; ‘current number [of doctorates] being supervised’: zero, but two starting soon. Much literature on doctoral supervision captures the perspectives of experienced doctoral supervisors, but some studies have focused on early career supervisors (Amundsen and McAlpine, 2009; Bruce and Stoodley, 2013; Peelo, 2011; Turner, 2015). I have only located one instance of a pre-supervision account, from ‘Anya’ in Peelo’s (2011) book, for whom ‘[s]upervision was still an abstract task’ (ibid., p. 126). In this autoethnographic article, which is deliberately located in that ‘abstract’ space, I capitalise on the fact that I have a short window between the status of supervisee and supervisor to explore narrative links that have begun to form but are not yet solidified on how I understand my new identity as supervisor. The article begins with an account of the autoethnographic reflection process that underpins the article, which arose from a reflective task that formed part of a professional development course on teaching in higher education that I am enrolled on as part of the probation process at my university (Henderson, 2016). Following this, the article addresses – and includes autoethnographic reflections on – the two major ‘bridges’ that are used to invite (proto-)supervisors to cross the space between being supervisee and becoming supervisor: models of supervision, and particularly memories of their own supervision process. The article focuses in on my engagement with these bridges and the space that both models and memories are used to bridge. In line with McCormack and Pamphilon’s (2004) recommendation regarding the use of metaphors to assist in structuring reflections on doctoral pedagogy (see also Grant’s [2008] use of the master-slave metaphor), the article adopts the metaphor of a bridge to illustrate structured and less structured ways of inviting supervisors to reflect. Finally, the article concludes by discussing the anticipatory approach to researching doctoral supervision.

Autoethnographically anticipating doctoral supervision

The aim of the autoethnographic reflection process in this article is to prompt structured reflection on my reception of difference invitations to reflect on the supervisory role – and what starting with these invitations may foreclose. This mode of enquiry involves placing the researcher simultaneously in the position of researcher and research participant. As in any other exploratory research study, the researcher provides the participant with a set of prompts or questions. However, in this case the researcher and participant are one and the same; 'the researcher is the epistemological and ontological nexus upon which the research process turns' (Spry, 2001, p. 711). Autoethnography is at times unfortunately used as a peg upon which to hang personal stories which are not scaffolded with any methodological framing. As such it has gained the reputation in some circles as 'self-obsession' (Delamont, 2009, p. 58), 'an abrogation of the honourable trade of the scholar' (ibid., p. 61) that can be perceived to 'threaten[] the whole project of science' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 746). Autoethnography, when framed by thoughtful and nuanced processes, can be understood as 'a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation about self and social phenomena involving self' (Ngunjiri, Hernandez and Chang, 2010, p. 2). While it is true that autoethnography 'privilege[s] stories over analysis' (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 745), stories are considered a form of analysis, through the design of representational strategies. Autoethnography is the chosen approach for this article because of the article's aim to capture the transience of my position between supervisee and supervisor; Jones (2005, p. 764) states that autoethnography itself operates 'in a state of flux and movement', and '[r]efus[es] closure or categorization' (ibid., p. 765). The autoethnographic approach taken in this article veers towards 'analytic autoethnography', defined according to the following three principles, where the researcher is

> (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such as a member in the researcher's published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson, 2006, p. 375).

This form of autoethnography considers that storytelling, or the 'representational task of capturing "what is going on" in an individual life or social environment' (ibid., p. 387), is only the first stage of autoethnographic inquiry. Analytic autoethnography demands further commentary from the researcher beyond what it considers to be the 'essentially self-absorbed nature' of 'personalised, experiential accounts' (Atkinson, 2006, p. 403). This article intertwines autoethnographic reflections with accompanying analysis, 'focus[ing not] on the self per se but on the space between self and the practice engaged in' (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001, p. 15). However it is important to question the boundary that analytic autoethnography draws up to divide itself from the more story-focused styles of autoethnography; as Denzin (2006) and Ellis and Bochner (2006) have discussed, different conceptual foundations concerning what counts as 'analysis' underpin each different autoethnographic enquiry.

Autoethnography is particularly salient for this article for a number of reasons. Firstly, I have already referred to the suitability of autoethnography for capturing transience, movement and flow. This emerges in a number of autoethnographic studies that seek to unpick the lived, fluid realities of conflicting and/or plural identity positions, especially around race (Gatson, 2003; Mawhinney and Petchauer, 2013; Pennington and Brock, 2012) and racialised identities in HE (Hernandez, Ngunjiri and Chang, 2015; McClellan, 2012; Miller, 2008) – in this study, the fluid identities of supervisor and supervisee are explored. Secondly, as Clegg and Stevenson (2013) have noted, HE research tends to dissimulate its own (auto)ethnographic character; they observe that studies on HE by

researchers working in the HE sector tend to include a large amount of detail that can only be attributed to the fact that the author is also part of the sector that they are researching. Autoethnographic HE research makes explicit the author's positioning within the HE sector, as in Doloriert and Sambrook's (2011) and Forber-Pratt's (2015) autoethnographic accounts of conflicting disciplinary and institutional orientations.

In this article, I use autoethnography to provide a counter-narrative to the tendency in doctoral supervision research to take interview data at face value as a transparent lens to the truth of supervision pedagogy. As in Manathunga, Peseta and McCormack's (2010) study of writing about supervision, I focus on the layer of representation. While it is impossible to fully access the thought processes that lead to supervision being verbally described in a particular way, autoethnographic inquiry can move closer to these processes by asking, 'how do I receive invitations to reflect on my understanding of supervision?' I have crafted the autoethnographic approach taken in this article by examining the questions that researchers have posed to their research participants in studies on doctoral supervision, as gleaned from subsequent publications. I have particularly focused on where participants have provided answers on the influences that are perceived to have shaped their doctoral supervision pedagogy – where the questions themselves been directive, as in Lee (2008, p. 276), where participants were 'asked about their own experiences as a PhD student', or more open, as in, 'Could you tell us the story of how you became the supervisor you are today?' (Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015, p. 108). I have reflected on what it feels like to be asked these questions (in relation to the disavowal of trauma as discussed above). In so doing, I have tried to recall ways in which I have already been taught (formally and informally) to pre-think the influences on doctoral pedagogy, and what these routes from supervisee to supervisor might elide or exclude. The following sections of the article are presented as analytically autoethnographic accounts of my anticipatory engagement with doctoral supervision literature.

Invitation 1: models

In Gay's (2014) essay 'Typical first year professor', she likens the experience of becoming an academic to 'sit[ting] at the adult table for the first time at Thanksgiving', '[un]sure which fork to use' (p. 28). Given the aforementioned growth of research on doctoral supervision, there is now a wealth of 'how to' guides and research literature which set out different models and typologies of supervision to help supervisors develop greater awareness of supervision pedagogies. When I started reading around the area of doctoral supervision – ostensibly to find out 'which fork to use', I experienced an affective response to these texts. In response to the 'how to' literature on doctoral supervision, I felt I was being invited to learn the 'right way' to supervise, and I resented the implication that the author would know how it would be best for me to enact my supervisor role. For example, when I read Määttä's (2012, p. 148) assertion that 'a doctoral student needs a supervisor's unhesitating support', and includes in that out-of-hours support, I experienced this as a personal invasion of my off-duty time. I also became confused as different 'how to' guides offered contradictory advice. So when I began to engage with the research literature on supervision, I experienced relief and excitement. Different approaches to and understandings of supervision were classified in different ways, and many articles indicated the need to develop different supervision styles for a range of students, for example part-time students (Evans, 2010; Watts, 2010), international students (Winchester-Seeto *et al*, 2013), indigenous students (Grant, 2010), and students with additional learning needs (Collins, 2015). The models and typologies in the research literature also helped to explain why I found some of the 'how to' texts rather abrasive: with some exceptions (eg. Walker and Thomson, 2010b; Wisker, 2012), these 'how to' texts work along the lines of a single understanding of supervision pedagogy. Moreover, here was a body of literature that

helped me to see that my own recent experiences of being supervised fit into some of the models and typologies. In reading this literature, I was relieved to find that I was not alone in some of my experiences, and to find rational explanations for some of the more bewildering phases of my doctoral journey. I in fact had a very positive doctoral experience: what these models seemed to offer was a way of explaining why I had experienced such emotional upheaval *even while* maintaining such a close and positive relationship with my supervisors.

However, as I read further into the research literature, I became suspicious of the invitations to think about supervision through the medium of models and typologies. Following a stage of exclamations of, 'Oh, *that* was what that was!' and, 'That is what happened to *me*!', I began to question whether my own doctoral journey would have been less painful if I had known about these models and typologies at the time – would naming the experience *really* have helped? Some of my suspicion about the models and typologies grew from the fact that, although the models were set up as neutral and objective, they nonetheless seemed to convey some value-judgements about which style was better, even through subtle means such as lexical choice. For example, in Lee's (2008) much-cited article on approaches to supervision, it would be difficult to deny the worth of the 'developing a quality relationship' approach in which the 'student is enthused, inspired and cared for' (p. 271). On the other hand, the 'enculturation' approach is couched in less overtly persuasive terms: 'the student is encouraged to become a member of the disciplinary community' (p. 270). As I began to question the neutrality of some of the apparently objective models and typologies, I considered that there must be a stronger current of inexpressible emotion or affect running through these models and typologies than I had initially imagined. It had initially appeared to me that

> the more alternative approaches a supervisor is aware of, the more options they have to choose from, and the more they are likely to be able to adapt their stances to the needs of their students (Bruce and Stoodley, 2013, p. 239).

However, once I had noticed that value judgements inhered to these 'options', I began to question to what extent these were genuine options. Manathunga (2005, p. 21) has noted the absence of discussions in this literature on 'the role of power...in the formation and re-formation of academic and disciplinary identities', and it does seem to be the case that even the most neutral-seeming models leak power and affect. Models and typologies clearly serve important purposes, such as de-individualising supervision experiences, and encouraging supervisors to understand supervision as pedagogy rather than the simple reproduction of a 'master/apprentice approach' (Manathunga and Goozée, 2007, p. 310). However these models do tend to write out the underlying affect and trauma that accompanies 'the complex and unstable character of supervision' (Grant, 2003, p. 176) – and, as an invitation to develop reflections on doctoral pedagogy, they foreclose these areas of thought.

Invitation 2: memories

We can visualise models and typologies as a bridge that enables supervisees to cross over into the role of supervisor – without getting their feet wet. Using models to understand supervision appears to provide a structured framework upon which to make rational judgements about how best to supervise whom. However there is an unwritten narrative that underlies these models and typologies – namely, which model or set of characteristics and roles do we choose, and why? This is even written through the models themselves, as elucidated above, in that authors underwrite the models with subtle clues as to which option may be preferable. From my current position of standing on the bridge, I found

that my attempts to respond to invitations to use the models and typologies were consistently foiled by a boomerang effect by which my own experiences of doctoral supervision would bounce into focus every time I tried to look ahead. Although this could appear to be inimically linked with my current anticipatory position, many studies recognise the importance that experiences of being supervised play in practising supervisors' accounts of their doctoral pedagogy, from 'novice supervisors' (Peelo, 2011, p. 130) to supervisors with many years of experience (eg. Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015). It is recognised throughout the literature on doctoral supervision that supervisors' memories of their own supervision experiences are a major influence (Amundsen and McAlpine, 2009; Grant, 2003; Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015; Halse, 2011; Lee, 2008; Lee and Williams, 1999; Peelo, 2011). As such, while academic development on doctoral supervision may aim to help new supervisors make the transition from 'the view obtained when a PhD student' to 'the reality of being a supervisor' (Turner, 2015, p. 96), it is not necessarily the case that the doctoral student perspective can ever be fully left behind.

We can understand the impulse to refer to our own experiences of supervision as a second type of invitation. This invitation is issued as part of professional development courses for supervisors (Manathunga, Peseta and McCormack, 2010; McCormack and Pamphilon, 2004), as well as in research studies in this area. These experiences enter supervisors' accounts even when 'unsolicited' by the researcher (Amundsen and McAlpine, 2009, p. 336). Supervisors seem to use their own experiences as supervisees as a benchmark for their understanding of what a supervisor should or should not do: some supervisors recall their own negative experiences of supervision and shape their pedagogy on not emulating their supervisors (see 'Julie' in Guerin, Kerr and Green, 2015, pp. 109-110; and a participant in Peelo, 2011, p. 129). Others try to emulate their pedagogy based on positive aspects of their own experiences as supervisees (see 'Valerie' in Amundsen and McAlpine, 2009, p. 336; and participants in Peelo, 2011, p. 129).

From one perspective, it seems quite natural that supervisors should be invited to reach for their own experiences of being supervised as a resource to shape their doctoral pedagogy. Even if other influences are cited, such as observing colleagues or supervising other students, there is clearly something about *having been* a supervisee that facilitates an emotional connection with supervision. Furthermore, the recourse to personal experiences of being supervised speaks to the traditional assumption that 'supervisors were..."always/already" effective at supervising once they had endured the process themselves' (Manathunga and Goozée, 2007, p. 309). Akin to the research participants referred to above, I have also reflected at length on my own doctoral experiences. In my reflections, I was particularly aware of the impulse to compare, and the way that untheorised comparisons of fellow supervisor-supervisee relationships framed many conversations – and the unsaid of many conversations – during my doctoral studies. Who was monitored and who was left alone, who was given opportunities and who was not, whose research seemed to interest a supervisor more than another's, who had easy access to help and who did not... These comparisons – of who is lucky and who is not, and what is fair or unfair – of course arise from the fact that, even with growing attempts to standardise some aspects of supervision, each doctorate is unique and is the product of a unique relationship. From one perspective, then, the recourse to narratives of personal experience to explain choices supervisors make about their supervision pedagogy is logical and rational. The stories that supervisors tell of their experiences of being supervised can be read as a more personal, emotional, instinctual bridge than that which models and typologies construct for role transition.

Beneath models and memories: (not) bridging the transition

The invitation to recount experiences of being supervised may seem like an organic, authentic induction into explaining how a supervisor understands their role, one which accounts for the emotions and biographies of supervisors. However I want to call this assumption into question by asking if beginning with these experiences means that other options that are missed when this bridge is constructed and crossed. Recalling memories of supervision may provoke emotional reactions from supervisors, but are these reactions helpful in constructing their ideas about doctoral pedagogy? And could this seemingly straightforward identification in fact mask a range of other, less easily accessible identifications and memories? Here I draw attention to the ways in which supervisors verbally represent their justifications and explanations for a doctoral pedagogy that may be deeply rooted in a variety of intertwined memories, relationships and identifications. In this view, both typologies and models and memories of supervision can act as bridges, as representational strategies for explaining what is always at least in part inexplicable from a psychosocial perspective (Lapping and Bibby, 2016). Thus, while Guerin, Kerr and Green (2015, p. 116) issue 'a powerful reminder to be aware of how one's own doctoral experience influences current practice', I issue a cautionary reminder that explanations that supervisors pin onto their own doctoral supervision experience may in fact elide other important influences.

In this section of the article, I focus on the space that Lee and Williams (1999) and Grant (2003) open up in thinking about supervision. These two articles push supervisors to think beyond the models and the supervision memories. Rather than trying to make understanding supervision easier, these articles recognise that supervision is difficult and strange, and that we still have to do it anyway. These articles can be extremely helpful in thinking through the transition from supervisee to supervisor, as they both allow for unaccountable, inexplicable, inarticulable – even unknowable – thought processes and feelings. In the introduction to this article, I referred to the ways in which we are invited to think about supervision. This section of the article presents a development of the

overall argument, couched in the theoretical perspectives of Lee and Williams (1999) and Grant (2003). The affective responses produced by reading Lee and Williams (1999) and Grant (2003) were responses of identification with the theorisations of supervision – of finding a framework for expressing the uncertainties I had experienced with the models and typologies and the memories approaches. Engaging with those two texts autoethnographically led to a re-thinking of the invitation to reflect on the transition from supervisee to supervisor, which I present in this section.

To return to Lee and Williams' (1999) theorisation of the identity transition from doctoral to post-doctoral identities, according to their argument it is impossible to retrospectively access the emotions and trauma of the doctoral experience. They consider that making the transition out of the doctoral phase involves 'psychodynamic processes of disavowal and forgetting of contradictions and tensions within the self' (ibid., p. 11), which processes are the only means to achieving 'apparent stability, seamlessness and coherence of identity' (ibid.) after the doctorate. Staying within this theorisation, what does it mean to be invited to hark back to those experiences in thinking through the supervisor identity? On the one hand, I want to question how we might understand the impulse to recall supervision experiences; on the other hand it is necessary to ask what following this impulse as a preliminary step in developing a doctoral pedagogy may in fact belie.

Firstly I emphasise that I am not asserting that the impulse to recall supervision experiences is an easy route to take – it may just be the line of least resistance, or the most tempting route to take. For, following Lee and Williams (1999), I suggest that we can understand the impulse to explain and justify supervision practices based on supervisors' experiences as supervisees as a means for supervisors to do much-needed identity work (McCormack and Pamphilon, 2004). It is not that the disavowal of emotional trauma results in incapacity to discuss the supervision process – quite the reverse. Lee (2008, p. 276) notes that, '[w]hen the interviewees [in her study] were asked about their

own experiences as a PhD student, there was a noticeable change in behaviour. All became more expansive.' According to the argument set out in this article, this change in participants' behaviour could be understood as an opportunity for supervisors to continue the work of sorting through the disavowed emotional trauma of the doctoral process. This is the boomerang effect that I referred to above – attempts to reside within the supervisor role can easily deflect into recollections of personal experiences of the doctoral process. However it is not necessarily the case that these experiences are 'true' representations of experiences – rather, they can be understood as *narrated versions* of those experiences that are *produced* as pertaining to doctoral pedagogy in response to an invitation.

Lee and Williams (1999, p. 11) refer to what they call 'thin stories' of doctoral experience. These are 'stories that give brief, unconflicted, unproblematic accounts of doing the PhD' (ibid.), for example:

> Karl: 'And then what I got was three years at Oxford where I was left alone to try and do it. Went to the library, read the stuff, wrote the stuff' (p. 12).

Here Karl presents a packaged, rational account of his PhD experience. Lee and Williams then found that, once Karl and other narrators of 'thin stories' entered further into the group discussion, they altered their stories to more affectively laden versions. But in reflecting on my response to the invitation to reflect on my own 'story', I wondered if all narrations of the doctoral process – even those which admit to or indeed revel in emotional trauma – are in some ways 'thin stories' (understood as stories that are in some way incomplete). For, if Lee and Williams' argument that disavowal is a necessary part of the completion of the doctorate holds true, all doctoral supervision 'stories' are narrative productions of a past experience that it is impossible to fully access from the other side of the process. We can understand these narrative productions as performing identity work

– sorting through and arranging the past so that it makes more sense, incorporating a safe version of the past into the present identity.

While recognising that reflecting on my experiences of being supervised is an important stage to go through in shaping my ideas about doctoral supervision, I simultaneously question the usefulness of this process for supervisor development. The usefulness seems to lie more in processing emotional trauma in the wake of producing the doctoral thesis than in moving forward into the supervisor role. For, rather than acting as a true bridge between the roles, it appears that the memories approach inevitably leads back to the supervisee side of the bridge – perhaps we can see it as an open draw-bridge. I ask if, because of the process of disavowal that Lee and Williams (1999) theorise, it is possible or wise for the supervisor to be invited to employ their own experiences as a supervisee to construct their pedagogy based on presumed empathy with the supervisee. The action of circling between memories and practices of supervision assumes that, in the triad of supervisor(s), supervisee and thesis (Grant, 2003; 2008), it is possible to slide across from one position in the triad to another. These positions in the triad are very different, and furthermore the relationship with the 'culturally prescribed artefact' that is the thesis (Grant, 2003, p. 181) is different for each role.

I am not suggesting that supervisors should not be invited (in research projects and professional development activities) to reflect on their experiences of supervision. To the contrary, without structured reflection of this kind, supervisors may simply transfer across from their own doctoral experiences their assumptions about supervision. However I do think that more emphasis needs to be placed on the purpose of identity work (as opposed to doctoral pedagogy development) that narrating such reflections performs. There are always two important obstacles to smoothly moving from the supervisee side of the memories bridge to the supervisor side, which should be recognised: (i) the disavowal and repression of emotion and trauma which bounces attempts to translate between

memories and practices of supervision back into the supervisor's identity-work, and (ii) the representational strategy – the verbalised narration – that inevitably stands between the lived experience and the representation of that experience that emerges as an utterance for a particular purpose (eg. a research interview or a professional development activity).

In the final element of this argument I want to turn to a further aspect of this latter point. Even if recalling memories of supervision experiences is far from an easy route to take in bridging the supervisee to supervisor transition, yet it may be the line of least resistance in comparison with other invitations to reflect which may contribute to the bridging of these two roles. Here I turn to the model of doctoral supervision that Grant (2003) constructs in her article, 'Mapping the pleasures and risks of supervision'. Grant's 'Map for Supervision' can in some ways be read as a spoof of the models and typologies referred to in the 'models' section above. For while the map starts as an orderly triangle with arrows connecting the supervisor, student and thesis (p. 180), its final manifestation (p. 186) includes chaotic wiggly lines and shadowy outlines of figures that attempt to capture the 'variable, complex, unstable, therefore unpredictable relationships' and 'unconscious desires' (ibid.) involved in the supervision process (including for example shades of family relationships and early life experiences). Grant's map deliberately tries to represent the multidimensionality of supervision by constructing the supervision process and relationship as a 'palimpsest' where

> earlier layers of inscription have been partially or completely erased to make room for newer texts. The older layers occasionally intrude into the newer, interrupting their meanings (ibid., p. 176).

Importantly, in Grant's map, the influence of past experience does not start with the doctoral journey. She indicates that identifications may relate to all manner of life experiences and relationships which may or may not be explicitly connected with the doctorate.

Grant emphasises the existence of aspects within supervision that are 'unknowable' to both supervisee and supervisor (p. 185) and that may therefore not be articulable. She suggests that supervision is 'opaque' because of the issues surrounding desire and identification (p. 187). What Grant is referring to – in the metaphor of the bridge used in this article – is the water under the bridge, the unstable, fluid, often inarticulable or unutterable processes that underpin supervision and therefore also the role transition from supervisee to supervisor. When supervisors are invited to describe and explain the factors that have influenced their ideas of doctoral pedagogy, it is possible that there are major factors which cannot be built into a verbalised narrative:

> Often unconscious, sometimes confused and changing, these desires produce behaviours from both supervisor and student that are not amenable to rational explanation, that neither might wish to admit to in the public domain (p. 185).

While the supervision literature encourages supervisors to create a 'safe learning environment' which 'allows students to develop into independent researchers' (Manathunga, 2005, p. 24), Lee and Williams' (1999) and Grant's (2003) theorisations of supervision call into question whether it is in fact possible to create an environment that can truly be considered 'safe'. The ways that supervisors and supervisees understand their respective roles – and the ways that these roles interact – are shaped by the fact that '[p]eople are strange to each other' and that '[s]upervision comes face to face with this strangeness in an intense way' (ibid., p. 188). When inviting supervisors to produce rational explanations for why they supervise the way they do, it is therefore important to acknowledge that

these explanations are produced for a particular audience, and so whole swathes of experience and explanation are foreclosed either consciously or unconsciously.

Conclusion

Writing about doctoral supervision from an anticipatory perspective is a risky endeavour; writing from an unstable, transitional position destabilises the authorial voice. Furthermore, how to write from the perspective of a role that is not yet held? Yet the transience of this authorial position can also be perceived as a generative force for thinking through some of the processes by which supervisors come to understand their role – before this understanding becomes too fixed. While it is not possible to write from this position about many elements of supervision, the aspect of supervision about which it is possible and even productive to write is how are invited and encouraged to understand the role of the supervisor. An anticipatory supervisor cannot yet be held to account about their supervisory practices; there is therefore more potential to explore without a sense of monitoring and surveillance. Furthermore, anticipatory supervisors have more unformed narratives of their role formation, and so there is more potential to question and evaluate the 'bridges' that are laid out for supervisors to cross from the role of supervisee to supervisor. A useful further development of this work could be to extend the understanding of anticipatory supervisors into a longitudinal study that charts the supervisor's ongoing relationship with these processes of reflection and being invited to reflect, as they begin to supervise doctoral students.

This article provides one account of how encountering these potential bridges was experienced by an anticipatory supervisor. While this cannot of course be taken as a generalisation, the article instead seeks to call into question (i) how supervisors are invited – in professional development, and in

research projects on supervision – to cross bridges in their thought processes, and (ii) how data from research studies on supervision is analysed. Both points circle around processes of representation. The first point alludes to implicitly and explicitly invited thought processes that result in supervisors representing supervision to themselves and others in particular ways. The latter refers to the ways that those representations are then taken to be evidence of particular interior thought phenomena. The intended contribution of this article is therefore twofold. On the one hand, the article calls for professional development literature and activities to broaden the invitations to reflect on the role of doctoral supervision which are issued to supervisors and proto-supervisors – this could involve asking questions which are related to what lies beneath the models and memories, or indeed issuing a more open invitation. This call echoes Manathunga's (2009, p. 343) statement that 'being aware of ...['tensions between...the rational and the irrational'] opens up spaces for thinking and speaking about them and becoming more reflexive supervisors'. This is a call to open up the discussion to a wider variety of bridges – and for considering the water under the bridge. On the other hand, the article makes a call to doctoral supervision researchers to read their data as responses to invitations to create narrative representations of supervision and the supervisor role. There is always the possibility that the narrative is achieving identity work for the supervisor, and/or that the narrative would have emerged differently in response to a different question or interviewer. As such, the narrative production of supervision requires its own level of analysis. Finally this article has contributed to the conversation about supervision as a psychosocial relationship and process; surely in an era where researchers and supervisors alike are under increasing pressure to cross pre-formed bridges, it is of critical importance that we reflect on the effect of these bridges on our creative imaginations – and that we get our feet wet by daring to issue different, perhaps more risky, invitations to reflect.

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Declaration of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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Notes

[i] The terms ‘supervisor’, akin to ‘advisor’, is the academic who guides the doctoral process. In team supervision, this article refers to those who are working most closely with the student. ‘Supervisee’ refers to the student.

[ii] Much of the literature addressed in this article refers to the PhD qualification. However I have used the term 'doctorate' throughout to indicate that the ideas presented apply across the range of doctoral qualifications, including professional doctorates.

[iii] The ideas and arguments presented in this article are particularly relevant to doctoral supervisors who have completed a doctorate. There are of course supervisors who have not completed a doctorate or who have completed a PhD by publication. Many of the arguments presented still apply, via other experiences of being supervised.