Recent researchers in higher education have explored significant issues relating to the PhD through examining narratives of doctoral education: Margot Pearson (2005) discusses the dominant narratives of the PhD in an Australian context, while Bill Green (2005) compares four narrative accounts of individual experiences of postgraduate study. In this paper I compare three narratives of doctoral education from an international context: two recently published novels and one ongoing online comic strip. I argue that cultural representations of postgraduate study like these do impact on doctoral candidates and on their supervisors. To put it another way, stories about supervision have an affect on supervisory relationships, and representations of doctoral students impact on PhD candidates' conception of their 'self'. The extent to which individual subjectivities are textual (or discursive) has long been argued in cultural and critical theory; Lacan's (1966) work, for example, has contributed much to our understanding of the complex relationship between discourse and identity, and Foucault (1994) has emphasised that aesthetic practices such as literature contribute to 'technologies of the self'. We experience things through a variety of mediums and our 'experience' is intricately bound up with 'representations'. This analysis will consider three related questions: what kind of self or individual subject characterises the PhD student in these representations? What kind of relationship between supervisor and student is portrayed, and how does this relate to our understanding of supervision as pedagogy? What do these narratives reveal about the ways in which postgraduate study in general, and supervision in particular, is represented in cultural practices, in the West, at this time?