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# Mired in the shadows: Quiet students in secondary schools

**Greg Thompson\* and James Bell**

*Murdoch University, Australia*

## **Six Key Words**

Student subjectivities, postmodern, Deleuze, quiet students, faciality, becoming.

Quiet students are a feature of the organisation of secondary schools. Using qualitative methods and Deleuzian conceptualisations of modern subjectivity, this paper explores the ways that quiet students negotiate the terrain of their school. These negotiations often seem to produce a self that is trapped rather than a subject who seizes opportunities to be inventive, creative and experimental of their self. Understanding the faciality of quiet students provides opportunities to advance debate on how schools could encourage freer selves.

Why do quiet students seem so unable to engage with school? Why do quiet students often seem to be understood as unable to seize the opportunities to be successful in secondary schools? This paper explores the ways that quiet students speak of themselves and their schools as a preliminary step in understanding how schools have become places that limit the ability of students to know themselves in innovative and creative ways. Mass, compulsory schooling is often understood from the perspective of governments, departments or educational professionals. We argue when schools are understood from the perspective of students new possibilities emerge as to how schools could be as opposed to what they are. This paper is located within a philosophical, rather than sociological, tradition in educational research because we see that better understanding of becoming student ‘faces’ could provide freer terrains for students by unmasking how individuals know, are taught to know, and speak about the self. In this context, ‘faces’ or ‘faciality’ implies a Deleuzian theoretical position as to how individuals move within terrains such as schools. Terrains or territories implies more than the physical environment of the school through which the student moves. It incorporates those strategies and organisations of power that ‘establishes an intraspecific critical distance’ between individuals (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 322). In short, terrain implies both the physical and human environment, and those strategies that encompass the differentiation of individuals. Perspectives of quiet students have been examined because of the subtlety of the ways that their understanding of self nuances how they speak of their schooling. We do not see quiet students as essentialised positions, we see the quiet student as a becoming that circulates within certain ‘faces’ or possibilities they understand within the terrain of student subjectivities in secondary schools.

Many postmodern studies of education suggest that schools produce subjectivities as a result of the ways that power is deployed constructing ‘docile bodies’ and ‘disciplined subjects’ (Foucault, 1991). This paper, however, ‘pushes through’ these notions of a

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\* Corresponding author: Murdoch University – School of Education, South St, Murdoch, Western Australia, 6150. Email: [Greg.Thompson@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:Greg.Thompson@murdoch.edu.au)

disciplinary society to an understanding of society where power has progressed to ‘societies of control’, where: ‘your identity is not dependent on your narrative as a subject’ but is rather concerned with the information about the self that codes who we are and who we become (Deleuze, 1995). These codes of the self are carried between institutions and become significant in the ways that individuals understand the landscapes through which they move (Deleuze, 1995; Sorenson, 2009). One of the criticisms of theories informed by notions of disciplinary societies is about how free the individual is to act and/or resist, given the array of technologies directed towards the individual that are productive of certain prescriptive ways of being (Mills, 2004). When applied to quiet students, this reasoning argues that there is value in understanding why quiet students navigate their terrain as they do. Using a Deleuzian<sup>1</sup> lens to explore the ‘faces’ of quiet students offers new possibilities for the understanding of subjectivities to frame student responses and experiences of schooling. This paper uses data gathered from students who were seen by schools as exhibiting behaviours and subjectivities that allowed them to ‘fly under the radar’ – the quiet students so often mired in the shadows of classroom and pedagogical practices. This is important, particularly in the context of a culture of education where active, dynamic and assertive expressions of increasingly valued as ideal (Francis, 2005).

Whilst we focus on the enunciations of quiet students, we see faciality as a lens to consider how all students understand and navigate their schooling. We ask what (if any) advantage they see in comporting themselves in these quiet ways? We challenge notions of quiet students as powerless within schools, but our research has found that they are often unable or unwilling to conceptualise themselves as any other becoming than what they currently inhabit. This provides a sophisticated understanding of the reasons quiet students select their positionality and their understanding of the return offered, even though that is often offset by experiences of disadvantage.

## **The current state of knowledge**

There is a rich tradition of ethnographic research that has looked at subjectivities in schools from a sociological perspective. Ethnographic studies that interrogate subjectivity through gender (Connell, 2000; Davies & Hunt, 1994; Lyng, 2009; McLeod, 2000; McLeod & Yates, 2006; Tsolidis, 2001; Youdell, 2004), class (Eckert, 1989; Lesko, 2001; Wexler, 1992; Willis, 1977); race and/or ethnicity (Devine, 2009; Tsolidis, 2001; Tsolidis & Pollard, 2009) have provided a wealth of information that has enriched our critical understanding of the ways that education works in producing certain kinds of citizens. We seek to build on this tradition in subtle and nuanced ways that ask questions of how individuals move within terrains rather than ‘fixing’ them within subject positions. Increasingly there is a movement away from the traditional uses of class, gender and ethnicity as stable, collective and coherent identities to be ‘replaced with multiple, fragmented and more uncertain’ understandings of the self (Wetherall, 2009, p. 1). In promoting these new articulations of the individual we see ourselves as engaged in shifting theory from the disciplined society to a more mobile, less embodied society (Deleuze, 1995; Francis & Skelton, 2008; Hey, 2002). That this position is contested is unarguable, however, we see it as crucial in understanding the multiple and dynamic experiences of quiet students in secondary schools in these ‘New Times’ (McLeod & Yates, 2006).

Contemporary ethnographic research that directly addresses quiet students outlines four models of the quiet student. The first model is that of the quiet student as deficit. By this we mean that the quiet student is seen to be lacking some materials or characteristics that enable them to overcome this deficit. This is often seen in terms of social or emotional health,

where quiet students are often seen as lacking social skills, confidence or positive peer relationships, and this results in their becoming ‘silenced’ within the school. This deficit model is often widened to include contextual characteristics such as coming from poorer backgrounds or being members of families that experience domestic problems (Collins, 1998; Eckert, 1989; Willis, 1977).

The second model that emerges from the literature is that of the quiet student as one who demonstrates disaffection. The student is quiet because it allows them to disengage from the classroom and/or the school (Nardi & Steward, 2003). Quietness is seen as a form of ‘resistance’ against educational practices they see as ‘pointless’ and ‘boring’ (Lyng, 2009, p. 472). They are ‘playing truant in mind while the body is present’ (Collins, 1998, p. 4). This results in four strategies adopted by students: such as being invisible, refusing to participate, hesitation in tasks and adopting inappropriate foci (Collins, 1998).

The third model is the quiet student as unremarkable. The quiet student is essentialised as a ‘natural’ set of attributes and practices. In a Norwegian study, Lyng investigated various gendered subject positions available to students. One possibility for female students was that of the ‘mouse’. This position was identified as being ‘almost unnoticeable, both in learning situations and in informal socialising in school’ (Lyng, 2009, p. 472). The quiet student is seen as demonstrating some part of their essential ‘nature’. Here, quiet students are seen as ‘shy’ – where shyness is an innate characteristic preventing intervention (Scott, 2004, p. 92). The quiet students (whether they see themselves as quiet or not) are unremarkable or ‘entirely regular’ (Lyng, 2009, p. 472).

The fourth model sees the quiet student as constituted through institutional practices. This may be explained by the prevalence of measurement/assessment strategies schools deploy which can result in significant withdrawal by various students (Hall, Collins, Benjamin, Nind, & Sheehy, 2004). This strategy of withdrawal may also be caused by fear of assessment, fear of failure, feelings of insecurity and teacher expectations that the student might find threatening (Collins, 1998).

## **Theoretical frame**

Deleuzian thought offers much in the problematisation of contemporary institutions and practices associated with the modern subject. Gilles Deleuze was a contemporary of Foucault and Derrida whose work focused on the ways that thought is dynamic and evolving; and who argued that philosophy is to understand life as creative and diverse becomings (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996). For Colebrook, Deleuze is significant in the ways he asks us to transform life from the disciplined and controlled modern subject to seize opportunities to become inventive, creative and experimental (Colebrook, 2002). Deleuze sees practices of power as dynamic and evolving, such that subjectivities need not be static, oppressive constructs. There is more freedom to operate within subjectivities through new ways of speaking the knowledges (or enunciative acts) we have set for ourselves. It may be that schools are unaware of the limited ontological possibilities that students understand as a result of their education. Quiet students may comport themselves as they do because they have access to limited ways that they can speak or enunciate of their selves.

Faciality is a concept that explains the complex relationship between subjectivity and significance played out through the ‘modern subject’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Significance, or the desire for interpretation, intersects with subjectification to create the ‘condition of possibility’ available to the individual (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 180). This ‘organises power’ in discrete and subtle ways constituting opportunities for the individual to interpret the ways they are made subject. ‘Faces are not basically individual; they define

zones of frequency or probability, delimit a field that neutralises in advance any expressions or connections unamenable to the appropriate significations' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 168). It may be best to see this as 'gridding', as the modern subject is located within matrices of signifying elements that are discernable, and those 'subjective choices to be implemented' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 180). This gridding becomes part of the terrain, within which the modern subject moves, and we argue, particularly effective in education. Fear is one defining characteristic of this faciality in late capitalist society and is a product of the emergence of a modern subject who is defined through abstract 'landscapes' through which the subject 'moves' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 172). The faciality of the quiet student is organised according to what they are 'capable of seeing, doing and being' and schools are instrumental in teaching students what their possibilities are (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 311). Schools can be understood as working to create the conditions for connections that are inscribed within ways of knowing. Seeing subject positions in schools as 'faces' requires investigating how students 'move' within the terrains of school, how they 'distribute territorialities, relative deterritorialisations, and reterritorialisations' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 145).

Faciality machines are the Deleuzoguattarian explanation of the ways that signification and subjectivity abstract the modern subject (O'Sullivan, 2006). These echo Foucault's theories about how the body is made docile through regimes of power in late capitalist society (Foucault, 1991). These abstractions trap the modern subject in the grid, ensuring 'there is no easy escape from faciality' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 312). The modern subject is often seen as oppressed through those practices of power contained in institutions such as the school. The modern subject is premised on certain 'truths' of the self that have ensured the individual lacks the knowledge to be self-creative in any but the most prescriptive ways – the anti-creativity of the modern subject.

This work asks questions of the terrains in which students move. This means mapping the grid of faciality as the first step in moving through this anti-creative modern subject. This theoretical perspective requires interrogation of the ways that the modern subject is produced.

Faciality works through organisation. 'It organises a field of possibilities, determines, at least to a certain extent, what we are capable of seeing, doing, being' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 311). Faciality organises power into forms that construct, measure and evaluate subjectivities. Faciality is productive, and what it produces (organises) is the truths that we can tell about our selves, with the effect of limiting the ways that the individual can disrupt or escape faciality. Faciality is the 'human system of organisation' of late capitalist times (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 311). It delimits human experience and provides 'the coordinates and contours that allow the subject to emerge' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 311). Faciality operates on the white wall/black hole system. In this explanation, the white wall is the inscribed 'signs and redundancies' of significance (in other words, the ways that semiotic/language codes are revealed). The black hole system is the ways that subjectification 'lodges its consciousness, passion, and redundancies'. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 167) We explain this as subjectivity needing language signs and symbols for any particular subjectivity to operate, and language being central to the ways that we 'know' our truths as modern subjects. Faciality 'organises' power – it constructs both (and at the same time) the limiting, 'powerful' possibilities of subjectivity through the language play of the white wall, while needing those same subject positions, the black hole, to understand the signs coded on the white wall. This explains why it is so difficult to 'escape' those subjectivities that seem so omnipresent in schools: the good student, the rebel, and the quiet student to name a few. If we understand the black holes, we lack the white wall and vice versa. The faciality machine is how the white wall/black hole system of organising power is played out over the rest of the body and the landscape through which the self moves: 'the black hole/white wall system is

not a face but the abstract machine that produces faces according to the changeable combinations of its cogwheels' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 168). Subjectivities here are presupposed because of the ways that the terrain organises what is communicated (significance) as possible. This explains why it may appear we lack the language for freer subjectivities, because significance is central to how we read, interpret and think about those possibilities.

Quiet students are significant because their understandings of their possibilities to become often tell of how hard it is to be creative of the self or to act in freer ways. We look at ways that quiet students enact faciality machines in secondary schools, to see how fear and desire are deployed in their lived experiences. We see this as a preliminary step in 'going through' faciality, creating new debate and new knowledges that may result in new landscapes that allow room for freer selves. We see the limiting effects of subjectivity in schools and seek to find strategies for schools to allow freer selves to operate. This involves 'disrupting existing modes of organisation from within the organisation, utilising the stuff of the world but in different ways' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 312). We see in the Deleuzian body of work many possibilities for theorising different subjectivities that have hitherto been invisible in schools. This may then realise our ambition for schools to become ideal places for 'inventing our own faces' (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 312).

## **Methodology**

This data is taken from a wider study that investigated the visions of the good student in three secondary schools. These schools were diverse and incorporated different articulations as to what a good student should be. Using a socially-critical case study methodology, data was collected from a variety of sources within each of the three schools. Discourse analysis of key school documents, interviews with the school principal, classroom observation and field notes were utilised to examine the discourses that informed the 'faces' of students. A brief description of each of the sites where the research was conducted follows as these describe the terrain of the school.

### *Banksia College*

Banksia College is a low fee-paying coeducational Catholic Secondary School located in the South East Metropolitan area of Perth, Western Australia. The school was commissioned in 1984 in what was then the urban/rural fringe to the East of Perth. Over the years the urban sprawl has overtaken Banksia College, but it is still possible to see the transition from semi-rural living to urban living. The area from which the majority of the student population is drawn is recognised as being a low socioeconomic area that has a reputation for social disadvantage. Census figures paint a picture of the area as being below social indicators in most categories (ABS, 2005). The school principal saw that the majority of parents chose to send their children to Banksia because they wanted to give their children educational opportunities that they had not had.

### *Jarraah College*

Jarraah College is moderate fee-paying Catholic coeducational boarding college located in a regional centre some 400 kms from Perth on the coast. As with many regional centres,

socioeconomic disadvantage and advantage could be found in roughly equal measure in the surrounding community. Students at Jarrah tended to come from the wealthier sections of the community. Despite more than 8% of the population describing themselves as Aboriginal, less than 0.5% of the school community identified themselves as Aboriginal (ABS, 2005). The school principal spoke of the academic success of the school as allowing them to choose better students from the community. One of the things that stood out about Jarrah was how homogenous the school was. Despite being in a rural community that had a high indigenous population, the students who were enrolled at this school were almost all white Anglo-Australians.

### *Marri College*

Marri College is a public, coeducational high school that operates within inner-city Perth. The surrounding area has the reputation of being a tough, socially disadvantaged area with high levels of social problems. This school is classified as a 'Hard to Staff School' by the Education Department because of the problem they have in retaining teachers who want to work at Marri. It has one of the highest rates of 'Critical Incidents' (that is incidents that involve the police coming to the school) of any metropolitan school. It also has one of the highest rates of truancy. In 2006, the attendance rate at Marri was 81.1%, significantly lower than the state average of 88.0% (Education Department of Western Australia, 2007). Only 6 students, which represent 12% of the Year Twelve cohort in 2006, were studying the required number of TEE subjects to qualify for direct tertiary entrance<sup>2</sup> (Education Department of Western Australia, 2007).

In each school we interviewed focus groups of three Year 11 students selected by the staff as being 'Quiet'. Selections of these students were made by a small panel of staff who nominated potential students they saw as quiet. The members of each panel were either the Principal or Deputy Principal and the Year 11 Coordinator as these people have a good working knowledge of the ways that students perform in each school – their faciality. Across the three sites, five female and four male students were selected as quiet by their schools. Each of these students were either 16 years old or turning 16 in the year of the study.

In focus groups of three, students were then asked a set of open-ended questions about how they negotiated and 'performed' their self within the terrains of their schools. It is this data that we have found most useful in articulating the faces that quiet students wear. These responses enunciated experiences (white wall) through the ways that they were made subject (black hole). Their responses spoke of grids and codes, of becomings, choices, zones and the possibilities they saw within the terrains through which they moved. These students adopted multiple faces but these faces tended to be informed by the same regimes regardless of the site at which they were a student. These faces can be best thought of as enunciating three ways that the quiet students understood that they could act within the terrain of their school.

### **Findings: Fear, reward and escaping the gaze**

The students nominated by their schools as being quiet voiced many interpretations (significance) of their experiences of secondary schools. In the following section we have drawn together student responses thematically that occurred across the three sites. We argue that it is these commonalities across sites that begin to explain why it is so hard to move through the faciality of the quiet student. These student experiences, although unique, tended

to speak of three discourses that informed the faces that they adopted. These centre on regimes of fear, reward and the desire to escape the disciplining gaze. It is important to note that these are not static categories, rather, students moved between these coded imperatives in multiple ways and at multiple times. Thus, these quiet students were fearful and strategic, compliant and active, rewarded and marginalised in multiple ways at various times as they negotiated and performed their faces. Understanding how quiet students move within the possibilities they see for themselves in their school moves beyond static classifications of student subjectivities. In other words, these quiet students understood themselves through the enunciation of their possibilities, dominated as they are by understandings of their differentiation through terrains of fear, reward and the desire to escape the gaze.

### **Fear within the society of control**

Fear is the significant characterisation of the Deleuzian society of control (Deleuze, 1995). The quiet student as fearful is not a surprise, but what they are fearful of communicates how they understand the possibilities within the terrains in which they move. We argue that it is this fear that traps the quiet students within narrow differentiations of the self through abstracting the individual from the world. This is done through organisation, through coding of characteristics, performances and aptitudes, through contemporary culture. Becoming fearful meant adopting a face that would allow students to avoid the most obvious negative consequences they saw as emanating from multiple positions, including teachers, peers, and parents. One student commented:

If a teacher says this is a bad student all of the teachers believe that, like in a class they treat them differently to a good student. They don't take them seriously like if they are known to ask stupid questions, when they ask a serious question they think it is another stupid question. These people never succeed.

This student feared the power of teachers because this power appeared to be wielded collectively. Negative judgment from one teacher became a means for an institutional apparatus of judgement as other teachers also judged the student. Whether this happens or not is largely irrelevant, what is important is that for this student school was dominated by oppressive practices of power, wielded in fearful and invasive ways.

The other part of this gridding was the fear that success after school was dependent on how each student played within this matrix of signifying elements. Negative judgments within the school were seen to potentially follow a student around and minimise life chances after school. One student reflected:

Some of the things they [teachers] do are pretty stupid I reckon like they just pick on people who are just like individuals. They carry that with them for the rest of school.

To return to the idea of faciality, this interpretation of teacher and school power is part of the landscape through which this student moved, and established what subject options the student was able to enact. This fear permeated the ways that these students spoke their truth of the school; as places where bad things could happen and the results of this may not be able to be erased. This fear becomes the signifier that codes and defines how they interpret many of the multiple connections made in school.

Fear is produced, positioned and enacted in schools to construct powerful and prescriptive facialities. Quiet students often understand the school as a harsh, authoritative assemblage that needs to be handled very carefully. Enacting behaviours that led these



students to being judged as quiet are actually an attempt to maximise their positionality by avoiding oppressive power. Fear is one of the effects of power that most influence how a student understands the world and their place in it. This could be fear of getting into trouble, or fear of standing out in the crowd. It was often fear of victimisation from teachers, with the commensurate idea that teachers actively work to make life difficult for students that they don't like. One student commented:

If the teachers think you are a good student, you are free from negative judgement and it stays this way your whole school life.

For this student, relationships with teachers were dangerous, so the best strategy was to avoid being forced to negotiate these relationships. He expressed the fear that he was negatively judged by his teachers: 'Sometimes I worry my teachers think I can't do anything right.' The fear of consequences is nameless and shadowy. These students have the suspicion that students carry these negative judgements, or 'codes', with them as they move through the landscape of the school into wider society. Negative judgments, as enunciated by these quiet students, become powerful markers of the self within societies of control. When pressed, this student could not identify any ways that this teacher power had impacted on him in any negative concrete ways, but he was sure that it was lurking, waiting to punish those students who 'muck around in class'. Fixing this fear into faciality is one of the ways that societies of control operate.

### **Escaping the gaze**

Being quiet often means accepting that schools value compliance and docility. This compliance was often in response to how the quiet student reads parental and institutional expectations, because 'doing what their parents want them to do' seems a way to avoid negative consequences. This strategy became one of the defining behaviours of the quiet students – actively searching for ways to avoid the normalising gaze. Paradoxically, this active strategy manifested itself in compartments that were docile and compliant. Partly, escaping the gaze can be seen as an extension of the impact of seeing school as a fearful place. However, it could also be enacted as tacit approval of a sort of contract between the teachers and the quiet student – sometimes by avoiding the gaze the quiet students see themselves as enacting the expectations of good students because they are giving the teacher what they want. The faciality of the quiet student is informed by an interpretation that avoiding the disciplining gaze can be the best way to gain advantage in schools. One student commented that avoiding the gaze was a strategy that made life at school easier:

In Year 9 it gets easier, the teachers don't really pay attention to what you are doing, they don't check up on you. They don't walk past and ask you what you are doing.

This signification grids the choices open to the individual. Their faciality offers very limited subject positions – quiet students act as they do because of their largely tacit understanding of the gaze. One student reflected:

You have friends at home and friends at school as well. The teachers judge my friends at school just like my parents do. Teachers are always on the lookout for students say who have their top button undone. They will give one person a hard time but not another person depending upon what their friends are like. They kind of don't see the other person.

Often quiet students saw being a good student as a docile becoming: 'Good students are the students who don't upset anyone, who always avoid arguments, especially with teachers.' Another student commented: 'The good student is someone who will sit down and shut up.' These docile strategies certainly made the students less obvious in the school, but it also limited the faces they saw as possible for them to enact. This is one of the ways that faciality encourages people to circulate within terrains rather than 'move through' those terrains to realise the inventive, creative and experimental becoming we see as significant in freer selves.

The continued paradox of these behaviours lies in the ways that becoming invisible to the gaze often disadvantaged students from the rewards they felt their behaviour justified.

Like when you get chosen to do something, there's a type of order, even although the teachers say it is not: 'The first volunteer will be selected.' In reality, it is the loud ones and those who get good marks that get chosen. The ones that get good marks get chosen first, then the loud ones. People who are well-behaved and do their work always get ignored even if they volunteer. People who are average and sit in the middle don't get much at all.

At another school site, a student voiced similar experiences:

It's not really an order; they don't say you're in the average group. But in practice, I know that I will not be chosen by the teachers.

What more normalising effect of disciplinary power is there than to make the self 'average'? For these students, comporting themselves appropriately as well-behaved students who do what the teacher wants should have corresponded with some evidence of reward, because this was how they understood schools, and the played of power, to operate.

Escaping the gaze could become so significant for these students that it led to behaviours that had serious implications:

I didn't really work in Year 9. Then I started getting a lot of negative comments from teachers and other people and I started to hate school. I used to wag a lot of the time. I just hated feeling like I was dumb or a freak or something.

This quote demonstrates the ways that fear and avoiding the gaze is linked. They are not separate categories that can be easily compartmentalised. Rather, they are often involved in a dynamic relationship, where escaping the gaze can be seen as students enacting their fear. Negative school experiences led this student to adopt behaviours that minimised the intrusion of the gaze through the adoption of quiet faces, docile, compliant, non-confrontational to name a few. It is difficult to argue, however, that these behaviours were either creative or inventive, and there is much research to suggest that behaviours such as absenteeism significantly limits the life choices open to many students.

For other students, sometimes being quiet was an active step in removing their consent from practices of schooling with which they did not agree. Rather than orchestrating confrontation, quietness may be one of the few possibilities for young people to register their protest. When asked if they had a goal for school, one student stated:

I don't. So sometimes I leave homework at home and the teachers say: 'My God, you have left your homework at home!' Some of the stuff you learn isn't exactly useful, so I don't get too fussed. [Once] I went for a month without school books.

For this student, escaping the gaze was a strategy compounded by educational terrains that had little meaning and value. By inhabiting this quiet face, this student was able to actively disengage from school.

Teachers were not the only significant people in the ways that students performed at schools. Parents and other students were highly significant in the ways that quiet students learnt to read the terrains of their world. One student commented:

But I think that some people who have goals when they are young have them set by their parents, so it is what their parents want them to be not what they want to be. Your parents don't really know what school is about.

Subjectivities are multiply framed, but faciality is the way that the competing demands of parents, teachers and peers are forcibly condensed into a coherent interpretation of the self. The influence of student expectations was also a strategic minefield within which these students operated. The strategy that these quiet students often employ involves avoiding being noticed by the students as well. Partly this is driven by fear, but it can also be a choice based on the awareness that they do not really understand the landscapes within which they move. As a result, they attempt to make themselves invisible, thus escaping the gaze.

### **Reterritorialising rewards**

For some students, being seen as quiet offered distinct advantages when compared with the possibilities they understood. These students negotiated their faciality because they saw becoming quiet in a school system set up to value elements of compliance and docility as giving teachers and parents what they wanted. This process is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as reterritorialisation (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005). Reterritorialisation explains how supposedly freer movement within the school (such as actively choosing to be compliant) actually enmeshes individuals in faciality grids that make freer thought and action less possible. Those quiet students who actively chose to enact quiet faces because they saw themselves as being advantaged could be seen as becoming ever 'mired in the shadows' of quiet faciality. We would argue that enacting docile and compliant behaviours for rewards does not equate to students who are becoming inventive, creative and experimental selves. One student commented:

There have been times when I was seen to be a bad student because they could see that I wasn't trying. The teachers thought I was going nowhere. But then when you are acting good, doing all your work and getting good marks, then they have hopes for you; you can do whatever you want.

Students who demonstrate docile and disciplined behaviours are rewarded in a number of ways in schools. This can mean: 'the teacher will cut you some slack and you can get away with a bit more. This makes school easier to handle'. It also could mean: 'If you have a good relationship with the teacher, the teacher will be good to you.' On the one hand those who are loud and disruptive are often harshly dealt with. On the other hand, being loud and disruptive could correspond with increased social rewards from other students and even more opportunities to make connections with teachers. It is this multiplicity that forces students to negotiate their subjectivities through gridded responses that reflect how these experiences teach students to know themselves.

Part of this production of faciality involves students reading what is valued and valuable in their world. Faciality as understood in schools is largely driven by behaviour – or the rewards that certain behaviours can bring. One student saw this in this way:

Teachers value behaviour more than academic performance. They always say if you don't want to learn that's up to you because we are getting paid regardless of your education. They don't really care about education.

There was also the reward of popularity from their peers for those students who comported themselves in appropriate ways. Even for quiet students there were unwritten expectations within which they moved: 'The thing that gets me is the people that suck right up to the teachers. You can see it and the teachers actually fall for it.' Being quiet can sometimes bring reward because it eliminates some potential for transgressing the complex play of power within peer groups.

These student experiences speak of the landscape through which they move, and the ways that their faciality as quiet traps them within grids that correlate subjectivities with significance. Fear, escaping the gaze and the reterritorialising reward are three examples of the ways that students move through this landscape – the ways that they negotiate the 'habitual ways of being in the world' (O'Sullivan, 2006).

## **Discussion**

Faciality becomes a tool for control in a Deleuzian sense, because students are trapped within those grids that limit how they can respond when they are fearful, when they do not agree, when they want to avoid confrontation. In other words, they are unable to be creative and inventive because of the ways their becoming as quiet is gridded, and subsequently, how they know themselves. They are mired in the shadows of the possibilities they have been taught they can enact. The end result seemed to be disengagement, avoidance or dissatisfaction. None of these students said they were happy with or enjoyed school. These quiet students articulate some of the ways that faciality acts as an organising regime that abstracts the individual, in this case the student, from their territorial self (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 168). In the case of these quiet students, one of the results was their abstraction from their self as an inventive possibility.

The quiet students spoke of their facialities in terms of behaviours, values and performances. In their experiences, it is these things that swirl around their selves constructing their 'condition of possibility', or the choices that they make (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 180). Becoming quiet students is not predetermined or imposed, rather it is a set of choices that are implemented dependent upon how and why the student reads the terrains and possibilities of their school. It is not just quiet students who implement these 'subjective choices', rather it is that quiet students enact choices that are different to students who wear other facialities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p.180). We argue that these choices tend to abstract these students from the rich possibilities of education, and from an ability to act on the self in freer ways. Paradoxically, this is done through choice because these students do not recognise that there are other, freer possibilities. They are unaware they do not need to accept those subject positions that school communities so skilfully manipulate students to make. The data collected suggested that quiet students struggled to move beyond passive choices.

One of the major reflections is that these students, spoke of acting in ways that were most likely to prevent them 'escaping the face' despite their potential to be creative (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Fear, the desire to escape the gaze and the belief that docile behaviours earned rewards are all examples of ways that quiet students become trapped by the grid of their faciality and become stuck circulating within the terrain of the school, rather than

striking out on journeys through the terrain that could be more productive of inventive, creative and experimental selves. A major part of this has to do with the ways students understand schools and schooling and their connections to possibilities. If we are serious about schools being places where freer selves are possible, then communicating to young people that they are able to be creative and inventive with their selves is one of the key starting points. Using faciality as an analytic tool affords greater potential for understanding how schools and schooling operates.

## Conclusion

Quiet students wear particular types of faces. These faces are both unique and similar in that quiet students are invisibly present in all educational institutions, yet they are also unique because they depend upon how the individual speaks the terrains of their subjectivity. We have found that quiet students, regardless of their school, tend to voice the same understandings of their place and role within the school. This faciality means that quiet students are often rendered relatively invisible in pedagogical spaces. In the past, this has often been seen as akin to a 'deficit' that implies that quiet students are missing something important that allows them to be more 'normal', or that quiet students are essentially quiet by nature. This paper suggests otherwise, that quiet students actively comport themselves in quiet ways because of how they read the landscapes within which they move. In particular, these students spoke of three forms of connections that they understood in school. The first of these was fear. Quiet students actively chose to comport themselves in certain ways because of how they understood power as being wielded within the school. The second of these was their desire to avoid the gaze. Avoiding the gaze often involved enacting strategies that made the student docile and compliant, as a way of avoiding confrontation, discipline and negative repercussions. The third connection that these students enunciated was that of being quiet as a strategic choice for the maximisation of the returns possible to the individual from the school assemblage.

Often these connections meant that students enacted behaviours that are best described as anti-creative in a Deleuzian sense. It is important to note, that seeing quiet students as making choices does not necessarily mean that they are making positive choices that allow them to move through and beyond their faciality. Absenteeism, docility, compliance and disengagement may not be the best strategies to become the creative, inventive and experimental subject that is potentially transformative that Deleuze saw as possible. This does not mean to say that the transformations are necessarily 'good', but given the status quo, some may argue that anything creatively different is better. These quiet students were active choosers, but their choices more firmly fixed them in their gridded facialities. Understanding how young people in institutions such as schools can escape the white wall/black hole symbiosis is a challenging question for those involved in education to address if we truly aspire to a creative, inventive and experimental society.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Deleuze often wrote with Felix Guattari, a French psychotherapist who critiqued the established modes of thought found in contemporary psychotherapies. This collaboration is sometimes referred to as Deleuzoguattarian to acknowledge the role of Guattari in much of Deleuze's work. In this paper we will refer to this work as Deleuzian.

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<sup>2</sup> In Western Australia, students must study a minimum of four TEE subjects in order to satisfy the requirements to be considered for university entrance.

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