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**Title**


**Spinning in the NAPLAN Ether: 'Postscript on the Control Societies' and the Seduction of Education in**

**Australia**

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**Abstract**

*This paper applies concepts Deleuze developed in his 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', especially those relating to modulatory power, dividuation and control, to aspects of Australian schooling to explore how this transition is manifesting itself. Two modulatory machines of assessment, NAPLAN and My Schools, are examined as a means to better understand how the disciplinary institution is changing as a result of modulation. This transition from discipline to modulation is visible in the declining importance of the disciplinary teacher/student relationship as a measure of the success of the educative process. The transition occurs through seduction because that which purports to measure classroom quality is in fact a serpent of modulation that produces simulacra of the disciplinary classroom. The effect is to sever what happens in the disciplinary space from its representations in a luminiferous ether that overlays the classroom.*

**Spinning in the NAPLAN Ether: 'Postscript on the Control Societies' and the Seduction of Education in Australia**

**I. Introduction**

> [O]nce one steps outside what's been thought before, once one ventures outside what's familiar
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> and reassuring, once one has to invent new concepts for unknown lands, then methods and
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> moral systems break down and thinking becomes, as Foucault puts it, a "perilous act", a violence
>
> whose first victim is oneself (Deleuze & Parnet, 1995, p. 103).

'Postscript on the Societies of Control' published in 1992 suggests new ways to understand the self and

the world (Deleuze, 1992). It suggests that we are moving from a disciplinary society to a control society,

that disciplinary institutions such as schools are "in the midst of a general breakdown", that disciplinary

power is being replaced by modulatory power and that education is being seduced by business

rationalities (Deleuze, 1992). Some twenty years after its publication it is timely to ask how modulation is emerging within schools and other institutions and how the shift in forms of power has developed. This is one question that Deleuze leaves us to investigate – how will the predicted changes manifest themselves? We argue that modulating power begins the process of replacing disciplinary power, not as a seismic explosion or revolution, but as a gradual, creeping, seduction– the becoming-control society.

For us, this transition occurs through seduction. Modulation seduces by promising greater discipline through a heightened emphasis on technologies, such as surveillance, and the normalising examination. Greater disciplinarity is promised when less is actually provided. The 'Postscript' provides a lens that sharpens our focus on the corporate and performative practices and policies dominating education and unmasks the coils of the serpent - sinuously constricting and overlaying the traditional, disciplinary functions of schooling.

Readers should not mistake our sympathy for those who, confusedly and anxiously, practise a disciplinary approach to education in an increasingly modulated environment for support for disciplinarity.  Our analysis of education within the becoming-control society is not underpinned by some admiration of its disciplinary forms. We simply accept that disciplinary responses are favoured by many teachers, principals, students and bureaucrats and that, when it comes to the modulatory machine, these responses  are:  doomed to return more of the same because they misunderstand the workings of the machine; serve to further strengthen the effect of the modulatory machine; and  fail to amount to an attempt to find those "new weapons" that Deleuze encouraged us to seek (Deleuze, 1992). Rather than admiring the disciplinary, or validating the modulatory, then, our concern is with the search for these new weapons. For us, the first step is to expose the effects of power in schools – or the infiltration of a new, and for us largely uncharted, ethics of power. We stress that modulation is not an improvement on discipline, nor is discipline superior to modulation. This scarcely visible infiltration has

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meant that "worrying and hoping for the best" are the default positions of the disciplined (Deleuze, 1992). Understanding the modulatory snake allows us to "find new weapons" for disrupting the control mechanisms insinuating themselves into the ways that we are taught, and teach ourselves, to become (Deleuze, 1992).

We examine modulating power through two examples in the Australian education context: the NAPLAN tests and the My Schools website. NAPLAN and My Schools are modulatory machines (mis)understood within the disciplinary terrain of schooling. One effect of the disciplinary response to modulatory machines is a performative 'terror' within the visible spaces of the school that causes the worrying participants in the education game to burrow deeper into the disciplinary space of the classroom – much like the Deleuzian mole that symbolizes the disciplined subject (Deleuze, 1992). Our argument is that this disciplinary 'burrowing' (although somewhat understandable given the disciplined and disciplinary history of the school) limits the potential to disrupt "mechanisms of control as rigorous as the harshest confinement" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 168). To unmask this we will begin with a brief treatment of the conceptualisation of the disciplinary school before looking at what happens when modulating power "overlays" the disciplinary articulations (Savat, 2009).

## II. The Control Society

For Deleuze, the disciplinary apparatus had reached its zenith early in the twentieth century, with the subsequent decades seeing a decline in the centrality of discipline in the becoming self, such that "*societies of control* are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4). The control society is where: "[Life] is more closely and minutely monitored, regulated and policed than ever before, where personal privacy is more or less non-existent, and where information about our whereabouts, personal details and spending habits is ceaselessly collected" (Newman, 2009, p. 105).

A defining feature of control societies is a shift in focus away from disciplinary institutions, or "environments of enclosure" (Deleuze 1992). These institutions, for Deleuze, were best exemplified by the factory, which functioned "to concentrate; to distribute in space; to order in time; to compose a productive force within the dimension of space-time whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component forces" (Deleuze 1992, 3). In a control society, the factory's rigid architecture, control of time (the shift) and creation of docile worker bodies is replaced with a more fluid and dynamic architecture – that of the corporation (Deleuze, 1992). For Deleuze: "Control is short-term and of rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit, while discipline was of long duration, infinite and discontinuous" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 6).

How do we conceptualise the move from discipline to modulation? In the first instance, the move is not one of replacement. Modulation follows, but does not replace, disciplinarity, which is absorbed into or insinuated by serpents of modulation. The metaphor of coupling, as a sexual-mechanical metaphor, is apt, as is seduction – the insinuation of modulation into disciplinarity is not forced but is an induced connection. The serpents of modulation work themselves into or around pre-existing disciplinary spaces whispering promises made in disciplinary language. The coexistence and connection of disciplinary machines (apparatuses) and modulatory machines (assemblages) is perhaps best thought of as a transitory moment, to paraphrase Deleuze, the disciplinary self is part of who we are but also part of who we are ceasing to be (Deleuze, 1992). The way the modulated self uses the resonances or echoes of the disciplinary self is one of the features of this transition.

Disciplinary machines produce coherent centres of being, or individuals. The drive is to make oneself coherent and then good or normal. An individual, as "a person constituted as a particular identity, and

assigned to one of a multiplicity of subject positions always already waiting for us, is constrained to abide by all the norms associated with that identity" (Colwell, 1996, p. 211). Individuals are located in disciplinary institutions in which particular disciplinary spaces work to spatialise, organise, measure and arrange. Properly arranging, controlling or comporting the body allows one to speak in the disciplinary society, where that society is understood as the connection in series of disciplinary spaces with other disciplinary spaces to form the disciplinary institutions.

Modulatory machines produce discrete non-cumulative expressions of particular modes of designation or assignation, or dividuals. A dividual is part of a series of masses. The individual is either feminine or masculine, mad or sane, good or evil, in a manner that assigns this identity as a continuous structure that permeates the individual's entire existence and extends through the various spaces through which one moves. The dividual is assigned any and all of these identities (among others), depending on the vicissitudes of the immediate situation. Its identities are temporary assignations that are used to control short term activity. (Colwell, 1996, p. 211) In going from the individual to the dividual, "we have passed from one animal to the other, from the mole to the serpent, in the system under which we live, but also in our manner of living and in our relations with others. The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network." (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 5-6).

Deleuze's suggestion that the computer is the machine of societies of control indicates a fragmentation that results from a variety of factors. These include the coexistence of innumerable databanks, the ease of adding data to previously compiled data (endless and ongoing updatability) and the enabling of multiple data entry points (allowing input from multiple observation points). While this information is potentially assimilable into one meta-file (with the threat of a return of individuality), moments of human being are captured in discrete modes of data collection each of which has its own logic and

demands no assimilation. The level of abstraction increases from the bodily relation between subject and sovereign to the expertly constructed 'norm' of individuals before disaggregating the 'self' into a series of emanations from (points produced by) modulatory machines that produce dividuals that do not combine.

If dividuals are formed/deformed through the accumulation of attributes that can be measured for recording in a particular database, then the crucial question concerns what has to be done to achieve measurement (to be measured). It is a matter of being counted; of making 'one' self accountable or available for an account. This requires producing countable emanations. From an electronic-discursive standpoint, dividuals are constructed in databanks, each dividual is identified in separate computer files, each file available for a different purpose, with the parameters of each file organised around that purpose.

In this conceptualisation, the focus on short-term success opens human beings up to control. By focussing not on the temporally enduring individual, but on what one is doing or can do here and now, a form of power is exercised that prevents the person from becoming an individual, from forming an identity that can construct an overall response to, or appropriation of, the demands of the immediate situation. The end of the individual self is also the end of care. No care of the self can be practised without a self for which to care. What takes its place is not clear but it could be that we are in the process of replacing the care for discipline with the care for data-sets. It is difficult to envisage how this care for points of data resolves the crisis of the Foucaultean disciplined, self-governing subject in industrial times.

If the simple machine of sovereignty clank and groan slowly and the complex machines of discipline beat and punch with monotonous regularity, then the digital machines of control hum. It is a matter of speed. The increased pace at which modulatory machines operate reduces the differentiation of each moment

leading to a collapse into apparently continuous sound. When modulatory machines insinuate a disciplinary society the frequencies of the modulatory machine superpose those of the disciplinary machines and modulated humming is the only discernible output (some of the noise of the disciplinary machine is cancelled out and some feeds into the modulations).

In the conceptualisation that underpins this analysis, the serpent of modulation coils itself around the molar/mole's spaces of disciplinarity to insulate the spaces of disciplinarity and prevent them from working together to produce an individual. The image is that of the biosphere. A space is constrained by a surface that acts as a means of preventing direct contact between what is within and without the sphere, and requiring that anything that seeks to pass out of the sphere does so through a space through which it can be adjusted for exposure to the outside. This may be conceptualised as a translucent film that overlays the enclosed space, offering a distorted perception of what happens within the biosphere, reminiscent of the luminiferous ether of early scientific theory[i].

By surrounding disciplinary spaces, such as classrooms, the serpent of modulation disconnects each from the other disciplinary spaces that produce a disciplinary society. This has the most profound consequences for those trained to work within those disciplinary spaces. The coherence that subjects formed in disciplinary spaces are accustomed to generating persists *within that space*. It cannot be represented outside that space, however, and cannot be used as a means to connect the disciplinary classroom with other components of the disciplinary school (such as the principal's office, the staff room, curriculum meetings, staff development sessions, parent/teacher meetings and the training of the teacher within the disciplinary university).

**III. Education before the Insinuation of Modulation**

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the creation of modern institutions that enclosed individuals. Environments of enclosure included prisons, schools, hospitals and families. A hallmark of these

enclosures was that the individual was 'known' through mechanisms that focused on the body. These carceral institutions implemented a range of micropractices for disciplining the body: "The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it" (Foucault, 1991, p. 138). Schools became terrains within which the bodies of staff, students, parents and principals were the focus of disciplinary power.

Foucault argues that disciplinary power was a series of productive technologies that produced certain subjectivities, knowledges and discourses within each institution. The individual became a discursive site for the training and production of the 'good', the 'capable', the 'moral' citizen through the micro-practices of power that legitimise certain rationalities and 'truths' that the individual is trained to know about themselves. In disciplinary society, a "certain 'political economy' of the body" is utilised to regulate the individual (Foucault, 1991, p. 25).

The disciplinary society located the body, measured it, controlled it, enclosed it with the goal of making the body docile, more productive and, therefore, more 'useful' to the state in its desire for a disciplined workforce and citizenry. A key part of this is the mechanics of power that teach the individual to self-regulate or to comport themselves in 'reasonable' and appropriate ways. It is through the modern institutions and the modern systems of power that parts of this utility-docility are deployed, through the "meticulousness of the regulations, the fussiness of the inspections, the supervision of the smallest fragment of life and of the body". (Foucault, 1991, p. 140)

Mass, compulsory schooling became a concern of industrialising societies as they grappled with the creation of a seemingly new underclass – the urban poor (Jones, 1990). Within the disciplinary school, the teacher/student relationship was at the centre of normalising process. This relationship was predicated on the idea that an individual who had the required knowledge, ethics and values should teach young people what was required. At the core of instruction was an asymmetrical relationship

"between somebody who already is a subject (the educator) and someone who has yet to become a subject (the child)" (Biesta, 1998, pp. 1-2).

The disciplined subjectivity of the school teacher is, however, neither stable nor coherent, but is a contested and contradictory space containing competing claims about the 'nature' of the good teacher. These include the claim that the virtuous teacher is a moral guardian or ethical trainer teaching the young the 'correct' values and attitudes and that the good teacher is a disciplinarian responsible for preparing the young for work after they leave school (Jones, 1990). What is significant is that each conception was suffused with notions of care for the disciplinary subject (Savat, 2009).

In the early 20th century these discourses of the moral and efficient teacher were further augmented by bio-power in the form of the bio-teacher, or the teacher who enacted a "new caring and advisory relationship with the home, but in a subsidiary relationship to the scientific authority of the medical officer and the child psychologist" (Jones, 1990, p. 73). Stiegler argues that this bio-power is essentially: "a form of care, a historic form of care charged to the State, as governmentality" (Stiegler, 2010, p. 114). In Australia, a colonial zeal to adopt the principals of Christian pastoralism intensified discourses "embodied in the pastoral relationship between teacher and student" (Hunter, 1994, p. xxi). These principles of Christian pastoralism, the "distinctive articulation of surveillance and self-examination, obedience and self-regulation", persisted in Australian schools long after the Christian story ceased to be a common expression of social aims and beliefs (Hunter, 1994, p. xxi). This is not tangential to a genealogy of the Australian teacher, though, as it highlights the productive element of disciplinary care at the core of teacher/student transactions.

**IV. NAPLAN and My School**

Since 2008, Australian school students have sat the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions and Numeracy in Years 3, 5, 7 and

9. NAPLAN tests report individual students' attainment of skills against a set of standards. Schools are ranked against other schools depending upon the aggregate of their NAPLAN results and these results are made publicly available via the My Schools website. Over three days in May[ii] students across Australia sit predominantly multiple choice tests administered by their classroom teacher. Student test papers are collected and returned to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) for evaluation. ACARA is the statutory independent authority that designs and manages the tests. These tests are designed and developed by "a core group of highly skilled staff" plus a small group of 'partners' who "research and provide evidence-based research on improvements" (ACARA, 2011a). After the tests have been completed each student's parent or carer receives an individual report of the student's results[iii].

The My Schools website is a Federal Government initiative that allows for comparison of the NAPLAN results for individual schools. Like NAPLAN, My School is overseen by ACARA. The website enables comparison of schools in the same locality. Those in similar socioeconomic categories can also be compared (a complex formula, the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), is used to produce these categories). Schools are colour coded. Red if their results are below average or below that of similar schools. Green if schools are above average or above that of similar schools. My Schools also enables the easy generation of statistics that include the percentages of indigenous students and ESL students, attendance rates and funding levels (Bonnor, 2011).

**V. Seductive Promises**

NAPLAN appears to fulfil functions one would expect in a disciplinary society: it organises and stratifies individuals, it uses the technology of the examination to normalise dispositions, aptitude and conduct, and it is replete with claims of improved efficiency, quality and accountability. NAPLAN enhances "the learning outcomes for all Australian students" (MCEETYA, 2009) because identifying and supporting

schools and good teachers are taken to be the means to make education more equitable for a diverse student population (McGaw, 2010). The My Schools website claims to further enhance the efficiency, accountability and transparency of schools. In 2011 it began to provide information about finances and school communities "for the purpose of accountability and reporting, research and analysis, and resource allocation" (ACARA, 2011b).  In short, NAPLAN and My Schools claim to promote the efficient use of resources through the most effective arrangement of subjects. The seductive power of the NAPLAN machine lies in the promise of improved disciplinarity to key (disciplined) stakeholders – politicians/policy-makers, voters, parents, principals and teachers.

Voters are promised greater efficiency and control, as the government promises to cut spending while improving effectiveness in sectors like education. For the politician/policymaker the disciplinary promise of NAPLAN and My Schools is increased surveillance over what happens in the 'hidden' classroom, with a concomitant reduction of the 'waste' resulting from poor teaching. Part of NAPLAN's promise is that complex educative processes can be simply measured and reported, and easily publicly disseminated and understood. Most importantly, NAPLAN allows politicians/policy-makers to be seen to actively promote skills basic to productivity, such as literacy[iv], in the face of a widely perceived and mediatized 'education crisis'.

Parents are promised greater access to and influence over what happens in the classroom. They were guaranteed simple, easy-to-follow information that allows them to gauge their child's progress in relation to other children in their year and across Australia. Hierarchical ordering is the disciplinary par excellence because it is both easy and numerical –discernable differences between subjects are real because 'numbers never lie'. When launching My Schools, then Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard encouraged parents to have "robust conversations" with teachers about 'their' NAPLAN results in order to "put pressure on people" (Coorey, 2010). Parents are to hold the (in)visible classroom to account – as

the data published on My Schools opened the classroom to a (putatively) panoptic gaze. For the parent-as-consumer is a discursive site for contemporary education, adding to the traditional pedagogic relationship of disciplined teacher instructing becoming-disciplined student.

While principals were to expect greater opportunities for monitoring the classroom, those whose schools performed above the national average were promised increased esteem and potential enrolments as parents 'vote with their feet'. The promise of NAPLAN is disciplinary leverage, with principals able to make 'informed' judgements about the (in)visible practices of the classroom and gain more control over those spaces. This could mean extra teacher or student support, access to mentoring or improved funding. There is also an economic incentive for principals: the dismissal of principals of underperforming school (Harrison, 2010).

Teachers were seduced by promises of greater public recognition and 'performance pay'; NAPLAN would identify 'good' teachers and their expertise would be rewarded (Thompson J. , 2011). A system for recognising and rewarding previously unobserved 'good' teachers resonates with the corporate seduction of education but also makes sense with respect to the disciplinary self – teachers are to act as entrepreneurs, and open themselves to surveillance so as to maximise their financial return. Opening oneself to a regulatory gaze means that 'good' results will ensure secure permanent employment, if on contract, or a move to 'better' schools, if already permanent. Modulation does not care that no necessary relation needs to exist between 'good' sets of data and those micropractices of power wielded in the classroom. The only important factor in deciding value is that 'good' results continue from the testing.

**VI. Modulation and Discipline in the Australian Education System**

As we have indicated, modulatory power does not extinguish disciplinary power. Indeed, the school bears witness to the resilience of disciplinary apparatuses – the surveillance classroom spaces, the

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normalising hierarchies of student subjectivities and the disciplining of knowledge (Thompson, 2010).

What we argue is that modulation overlays discipline; uses it in some cases, contradicts it in some

instances and complements it in others.  When Foucault articulated disciplinary power, he argued that it

"hasn't replaced all the others, but infiltrates the others, sometimes undermining them, (…) extending

them, linking them" (Foucault , 1991, p. 216). Savat (2009, p. 59) argues that disciplinary and modulating

power must coexist as they often use similar technologies, albeit with different intensities.

Disciplinary power still produces subjectivities and knowledges in schools. The body is still a site for

normalising judgement and the disciplinary school remains governed through the technologies of

hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination (Foucault, 1991). Disciplinary

universities continue to prepare teachers for practice and train them to understand education within a

disciplinary terrain. Superposition of the modulating effects of power means that there are other, more

subtle, covert and fluid forms of power that modulate conduct and organise dividual through grids that

are greater in number, more dynamic and more amplified than in the past.

Savat (2009) argues that the instruments of modulation are the simulation, the categorical sorting and

the sample. The simulation may best be explained as the amplification of data being used to pre-empt

and model the future, such that the individual becomes exterior to the functioning of the institution

because they are being pre-constituted. Categorical sorting becomes the "infinite comparative process

that determines which norms, profiles or categories you are" (Savat, 2009, pp. 53-54). Lastly, the sample

has overlayed the disciplinary examination because it requires no awareness – it operates effectively

independent of participants' consent. The examination demands the earnest effort of the examined;

whereas the sample requires no engagement. Instruments of modulation control the subject's

movement through multiple terrains, and it is amplification in the names of 'effectiveness' and 'quality' that forms part of the terrain of schools within control societies (Vinson & Ross, 2003).

These instruments are part of the gridding of the possibilities of the Deleuzian dividual, or the emergence of 'enclosed spaces' through which subjects 'move' in increasingly controlled and controlling ways. Technologies of simulations, in which "the subject is increasingly no longer required to be present so to speak", are important (Savat, 2009, p. 48). The simulation of aptitudes and characteristics though the collection of test data stored in the database is an example of gridding through simulation. The database removes context from the calculation, presupposing a level playing field imbued with meta-narratives that essentialise positionalities, while breaking them down to small deformations that become the objects of debate.

In this analysis, databases overlay the pastoral power historically embedded in disciplinary relationships and constitutes dividuals in codes and through data points, the generation and correlation of which is neither readily understandable nor constitutes coherent individuals. Data is produced and controlled by processes that remove temporal and spatial relationships (and the reassuring elements) of coercive or disciplinary power to replace them with the nameless and the faceless. Savat (2009, 56) argues that in modulation:

> One is not made into a 'good individual'. Whether one makes oneself such or not is an irrelevancy – in fact, it doesn't even register since the modulatory machine simply does not contain a connection amongst components capable of even recognising it.

Given this approach, the following analytic of power suggests itself in relation to NAPLAN and My Schools. First, a disembodied authority (ACARA) is created to collect information about schools and students divorced from the space-time in which the teacher and student interact. Second, performance, rather than learning, is measured and overlays the disciplinary teacher-student relationship. Third, students are no longer bodies requiring intervention, rather they become disembodied bytes and bits plotted in various statistical spaces.

The result, for teachers, is that those in other assemblages within the control society receive a spread of data points that creates a new meaning for the classroom independent of that which takes place within the classroom and without regard to the volition of those arraigned within it. This abstraction of the classroom, both temporal and spatial, is one of the key features of this modulation. The My Schools website further abstracts the data points from the activity of the teacher-subject, and enables a hierarchy of data points, relating each data point to a simulated ideal and then allowing the plotting of data points that arrange individual against class, class against class, school against school and state against state.

One of the effects of modulation is an existential fear. This is a by-product of the disciplinary knowledges attempting to maximise return within a modulatory machine. Fear functions as a landscape that is "played upon and accelerated by various aspects of contemporary culture" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 311). This acceleration is evidenced by the growth of a performative culture within schools. Reactions to modulation suggest an existential disquiet in which inner turmoil, agitation and a nameless, bodiless terror are produced by disciplinary subjects attempting to force coherence onto a disintegrating narrative of self.

Performativity deploys this fear in unique and isolating (or abstracting) ways. Performativity is best understood as "a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change" (Ball, 2003, p. 216). Ball argues that education reforms like NAPLAN and My Schools make teachers subjects through commodifying discourses that seek to measure effectiveness, productivity, outputs and/or quality (Ball, 2003, p. 216). Ball uses Lyotard's notion of performative terror to name conditions in which teachers find their values and ethical understandings displaced or elided (Lyotard, 1984). The teacher's terror is that the true and accurate measure of the classroom that NAPLAN, and subsequently My Schools, purport to be is in fact not an artefact of the classroom at all. Rather it represents de-spatialised assessment that, as an artefact of modulation, occurs in the luminiferous ether surrounding the disciplinary classroom.

The use of measurement within the performative culture of education prioritises what can be measured, quantified, broken down and used in increasingly unsophisticated, but seductive or persuasive ways. That which can't be quantified or numerically evaluated is increasingly harder to value and is likely to disappear from the lexicon of education. Newman argues that it is this "weaving of an intricate web of overlapping circuits of control, information gathering and identification", as opposed to the character of the institutional context, that differentiates modulating power (Newman, 2009, p. 105). It is in these circuits that teachers and students (amongst others) are producing their dividual 'selves' and their various worlds and places in those worlds/data sets.

In this performative culture, the subject, who expects that modulatory machines and the data they generate will enable total control and pure order, is faced with persistent, even increasing, uncertainty about how to respond or act. The constant and varying processes that measure performance prevent

the subject being certain of 'making the grade'. The result is that the environment is full of pitfalls, or risks, that evidence little, if any, stability. As Ball suggests:

> It is not the possible certainty of always being seen that is the issue, as in the panopticon, it is the uncertainty and instability of being judged in different ways, expectations and indicators that make us continually accountable and constantly recorded--'giving the position of any element within an open environment at any given instant'... This is the basis for the principle of uncertainty and inevitability, it is a recipe for ontological insecurity: 'Are we doing enough? Are we doing the right thing? How will we measure up? In effect 'controls' overlay rather than displace 'disciplines' in most educational organisations even if the emphasis is shifting (Ball, 2000, pp. 2-3).

Uncertainty becomes terror when the teacher feels that the disciplinary narrative located and practised within the enclosed spaces of their classroom no longer represents their classroom and they are subjected to control in terms of a series of simulacra produced through modulatory practices. The performative culture has had significant consequences for teachers: greater emotional pressure and stress, heightened intensity of work, diminished social relationships, ever growing paperwork, increased frequency of external measurement of their work and an expanding gap between senior staff and teaching staff (Ball, 2008). For performativity is about acceleration, about spinning faster but not going further.

What is most obvious about performativity is a move away from 'care' for what is 'good' for the individual student. The classroom now appears less as a series of disciplinary relationships between the teacher and each student and more as a set of transactions that must be measured to ensure efficiency and accountability. The violence of the disciplinary is being overlayed by the brutality of the modulatory. In the luminiferous ether, notions of efficiency and accountability transform. They cease to be of the

classroom and partake of the spaces surrounding the classroom –they become of the serpent that overlays the disciplinary classroom but moves us no closer to disrupting the enclosed spaces of the classroom.

A technical language of bands, standards, averages, means and ranges of achievement, surrounds teachers. Their classrooms are represented by a series of encoded points that map some statistical space, but bear little relation to the enclosed space of their classroom. Learning is being replaced by performance. Teachers, who once understood their role to be caring for, nurturing or developing the student-individual in highly normalising, competitive and regulated ways,  who have moved through a set of disciplinary institutions and been rewarded within the disciplinary university for understanding education in disciplinary ways, are ill-equipped to understand, let alone protect themselves from, the modulatory serpent.

Teachers, who are unable to respond effectively to a modulatory machine that produces no disciplinary sense, become like the Luddites who sought to destroy the machines that were changing their lives. (Please note that we side with neither the Luddites nor those promoting the introduction of the machines the Luddites sabotaged.)  Indeed, a variety of unwanted behaviours have emerged in other countries in which high-stakes testing models like NAPLAN were introduced (Reid, 2009). These included teachers narrowing the curriculum ('teaching to the test') and school administrators hiding information, improperly manipulating data and focusing teaching resources on a narrow band of students (Reid, 2009, p. 11). These effects are understandable – the disciplinary teacher responds to crises by trying to improve, to do the same but more and better, in effect to accelerate or vibrate faster.

One disciplinary response to NAPLAN is the teacher who hides or 'burrows' in their classroom in an attempt to hide within the modulatory ether. Another is an attempt to engage with the data in such a way that only serves to accelerate modulation. A disciplinary fantasy, in which the data can somehow

represent 'good', 'bad' or 'in need', fails because of a lack of representation. This leads to a drive to accumulate ever more data.  This disciplinary response to NAPLAN leads to more testing to improve test performance, more measures of teacher capability, increased emphasis on test results, doing more tests and greater numbers of data manipulations, all done in order to produce more outputs, codes or data points. (Moves are already in place to accelerate the frequency and extend the scope of testing, adding Year 11 and potentially university students to those tested.)

Fear in control societies has three distinguishing characteristics. The first is amplitude. The humming machines of control induce spin and vibration as the core of dividuals and the level of this spin and vibration is available to the ceaseless increase in level or amplitude. NAPLAN and My Schools become part of a landscape of anxiety, created by  new and mass media sources that "select, isolate and exaggerate apparent threats and in doing so contribute to the alienation of contemporary life (we become spectators in a fearful world)"(O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 311).

This points to the second characteristic of fear in a control society. It produces isolation. Becoming increasingly agitated that their performances are being informated, tracked and stored in databases, teachers find it harder to connect outside the classroom and feel increasingly alone to deal with measurements.

Third, and linked to the other two, fear in a control society has become small, intensified, abstracted and bodiless. Data points, plotted around discrete nodes for information gathering, retrieval and analysis, function to create a space constituted as an artefact of measurement that contains dense concentrations of data that no longer connect to the experience of teaching in a classroom and further abstract the self from their world (Bogard, 2009). This micro-fear is fluid and multiple and has become increasingly difficult to name, and therefore discuss and understand. Above all, it has become impersonal, removed, de-individualising and more terrifying as a result.

A change in the language of education from care to codes marks this transition. In Deleuzian terms, NAPLAN is a key set of features on a map (or nodal points like statistics, certainty, narratives, professionalism, accountability) that trap the 'faciality' of the teacher and the student within its orbit[v]. In a disciplinary system, these nodes are orbited at a fairly constant frequency. A modulatory machine subjects the orbit to continuous acceleration. The face fractures into a set of spinning features that cannot be made to cohere, the spinning and the associated lack of coherence giving the illusion of movement as they circulate, while always maintaining an approximate distance from the nodal point. Teachers' fear produces the desire to spin faster – a disciplinary response to modulation.

Modulation results in commonsense aspirations for schools increasingly working against the disciplined teacher. The teacher, as multiple artefacts of NAPLAN and My Schools, is alienated from the teacher-self as disciplined professional within the classroom. Despite attempts to do better in the classroom, to be more, to spin faster, the disciplinary teacher lacks the language to form a coherent narrative within the luminiferous ether in which modulatory machines produce/generate teacher as dividuals. Teachers are evaluated outside of the classroom but still understand themselves within the classroom. When they step into the ether the language that makes sense in the classroom is skewed and distorted and ceases to make its old sense. Two languages of evaluation are superposed.

These languages inflect difference practices of care. Disciplinary power cares for the individual to the extent that the individual is productive (Savat, 2009). Modulating power, on the other hand, recognise no individual because it acts to divide 'rigid' individuals into discrete moments derived from the data collected and synthesised, which can be stored and acted upon. The classroom and teaching processes break down into a series or sets of data points produced by a modulatory machine that allows no care for the teacher because the teacher, as a set of data effects, cannot be integrated into a coherent individual. As a result, there can be no care for the teacher or the student; at most, there can be care for

the information gathered and the ways that it is synthesised. The modulatory machines of NAPLAN and My Schools signal the beginning of the end of the ethic of care. The ethic of care for the teacher and the ethic of care for the uniqueness of students are being replaced with dividualising data narratives. It may be timely that these signifying discourses of the individual are in the state of being overthrown, however, it remains to be seen what "lines of flight" are possible within dividualising terrains (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005).

Teachers experience ever-increasing agitation as they seek the regularisation and synthesis of the representation of their teaching by accepting increased testing. Teachers have learnt certain disciplinary techniques and they seek to have their teaching evaluated according to their use of those techniques. They accept greater testing of their students in the belief that this will mean that NAPLAN and My Schools better represent their teaching. Spinning faster around each of the existing testing points and introducing more testing points are strategies doomed to failure. They simply accelerate the rate of orbit, and therefore number of orbits, with no discernable benefit for a teacher attempting to (re)impose coherence over the fractured narrative of the teacher in the classroom. Their disciplining as teachers and experience of testing in the classroom lead teachers to accept that NAPLAN tests will measure their good teaching (something reinforced by the introduction of ideas of 'performance' pay). This results in teachers experiencing increased stress due to the "pressure to perform in a highly competitive environment" (Smyth, Angus, Down, & McInerney, 2008, p. 56).

**VII. Conclusion**

Applying Deleuze's description and explanation of the transition to a control society to NAPLAN and My Schools raised a variety of questions concerning the utility of the concepts he presented. The first questions related to the persistence of disciplinarity, which would remain in at least the early stages of

the emergence of a control society. If there was no clean break, then the co-existence of disciplinarity and modulation in the Australian education system had to be conceived. The conceptualisation employed here was one in which disciplinary locations were uncoupled, with the space between them becoming a modulatory space that superposed disciplinary effects to over-code disciplinarity itself. The processes through which individuals are generated persist in the disciplinary location of the classroom and the teacher self and the student self continue to manifest discipline therein. There are still things being done in the classroom but the testing that occurs outside the classroom begins to change the nature of the entire assemblage.

A crucial question concerns the willingness of those within the education system, including teachers, to accept and even participate in the changes. The fact that the shift from discipline to control is not a revolutionary moment but a more subtle process of transition means that the change does not trigger profoundly dysfunctional responses from those exposed to change. The mobilisation of individuals against planned reforms cannot disturb the change process. Sense can be made of this in the context of reform to the Australian education system because of the way the reforms were 'sold' to teachers and to voters. In short, seductive disciplinary promises were made to justify modulatory reforms.

The result is an education system in which disciplinarity and modulation persist, at least for the time being. As modulation increases, teachers find themselves being evaluated according to a modulatory effect and not a set of disciplinary practices. Their classroom is represented by and as a series of statistical points that bear no relation to practices for delivering good teaching and training good-productive students. As a result, more and more agitated teachers expose themselves to increasing levels of statistical representation in the vain hope that their classrooms will be properly represented in the luminiferous ether of NAPLAN and My Schools. Ever more frenetic preparation for testing, including through more mock tests, causes teachers to spin obsessively around practices and processes for data

accumulation and analysis that never (because they cannot) represent the (disciplinary) classroom. More tests applied to more areas more often and at more stages of a student's education ensures ever greater activity and productivity; though a radical change in products occurs when the modulatory serpent coils itself around the (disciplinary) classroom.

If the analysis in this paper is valid, then we can expect that, over time, the Australian education system will be characterised by increasing levels of modulatory superposition over the effects produced by the disciplinary location of the classroom. The rate at which the education system moves to full modulation may depend on the extent to which the teacher training conducted in Australian universities continues to partake of discipline rather than modulation. The persistence of practices that constitute the teacher as disciplined professional-individual in universities means that the spaces of lecture and tutorial remain connected to that of the school classroom and the coils of the serpent are yet to encircle and modulate each so that they no longer couple to produce a disciplinary machine. These locations may ultimately break down and we may all find ourselves endlessly spinning in the luminiferous ether of a society of control searching for a line of flight.

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[i] The luminiferous ether (or aether) was a commonly held theory of early scientists such as Lord Kelvin and Isaac Newton. The air was supposed to be full of subtle particles that vibrated in certain ways faster than light and that that allowed light to travel. In short, all forms of space were full of this ether that transported and distorted light such that the image (reflection and refraction) is modified in its travel through the vibrating particles. The theory fell out of favour in the early 20th century to be replaced by relativity and quantum physics.

[ii] In 2011 the tests were sat on the 10th, 11th and 12th May.

[iii] A sample of the report can be found at http://www.nap.edu.au/Test+Results/Student+reports/index.html

[iv] The literacy wars is between competing views of how literacy should be defined, how it should be taught and what basic skills young people should be expected to acquire through their education. For an excellent account of the polarising 'literacy wars' read Roy (2005).

[v] For a detailed explanation of faciality, see Deleuze and Guattari (2005, pp. 168-191); O'Sullivan (2006). For an analysis of faciality within the school terrain see Thompson and Bell (2011).