Terror, law and the banal

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Abstract

Philosophy of education ideally should make a contribution to insights into both of these disciplines; we believe that an examination of TDA practices based around the impact analysis that universities are obliged to produce in return for participation in the TDA’s PPD programme provides an opportunity to make precisely this form of double contribution. We base our study on Lacan’s notion of the Symbolic Order and the law that holds this in place, suggesting that the rational of education is tied to an imaginary condition beyond experience, certainly beyond experience rendered empirically. The result of this is that by following the law too closely – the law through which the Symbolic Order is held in place, identities are forged, practices are established and meaning is granted, which we refer to as the coagulation of education – education teeters on the edge of being ontologically incredible. This we understand as education, as the education of education, which is akin to Thanatos, the Freudian death instinct. We begin by outlining this model of education, which is drawn towards the education of education, in the manner of the trail of education, in relation to Kafka’s The Trial.
Introduction

Kafka’s *The Trial* begins with its hero, K, an official in a bank, being confronted by his warders in the room where he boards, where he is under arrest. One of the apparently remarkable manifestations of K’s arrest is that it occurs in the sphere of his life where he lives, rests, thinks, dresses for work, sleeps and seems to make choices; and indeed, after his arrest, K continues to work at the bank, travels to and from his room, visits restaurants, locates the venue of his trial, determines its proceedings and arranges for his own attendance. What K experiences in this way is the law; not a particular law; not the law as external injunction imposed by rule of force; but the conditions that make the law possible; the absurd, banal, terror of the law’s existence; it’s abstract, ontologically groundless, symbolically imposing condition that defines order without a priori, rationally grounded conditionality. It is by facing this nature of the law, that K’s identity, his existential awareness is made possible; not that any choice about the matter exists. But what the realization of this possibility brings with it, and again, there is no choice about the matter, is the imaginary location of the law as being external to the self; and yet, ironically, absurdly, terrifyingly, because the self’s existential realization of itself is dependent upon its realization of the law as such through itself, by itself, as the condition of itself, the law and K, who, what, how, why and where he is, also means that K inhabits the law and the law inhabits him: in a profoundly disturbing way there is symbolically nothing more to K than this. In a sense the law is irrational as well as being, ontologically, that which defines rationality; and this mad, quite literally mad and not mad condition, of the law cannot be escaped:

“‘This law is unknown to me,” said K.

“All the worse for you,” said the warder.
“It probably exists only in your heads,” said K…

But the warder merely said in an indifferent manner: “You’ll soon come up against it.”

(Kafka, 1994: 5)

How can this law be and be unknown to K? Plainly, it cannot. And yet is. This is the quite literally mad and not mad condition that K’s identity, and its negotiation with the world, depends upon: this is what we understand as the condition of the absurd. How can he not know what he has “come up against,” in his head, as a determinate of his condition in the room where he boards, as an inescapable part of a psychological register accounting for who he is, as a contingent element pressing upon his freedom? But then, in a form that profoundly troubles K throughout his encounter with the law, he does not know what the law is. And again, this is the existential fulcrum around which being K turns: that K’s identity as it is interrogated, positioned and understood by the law, is not all that K is; and yet all that K can produce to prove this, to his warders, to the world at large, to himself, that he is not what the law says he is, that the law has misconstrued him, are papers, mere papers, whose only significance is their validation by the law, which are more or less transient references, and at one stage, quite ridiculously, his bicycle license.

*The Trial* is a Lacanian parable, or rather a parable of the Lacanian realization of the castrated subject; castrated because the assumed integrity of the subject is compromised, actually sliced off as being for itself, by the Symbolic Order, and its articulation by the law, which ironically also constitutes the subject as such. In a rather beautiful, captivating and banal way, there can be – with substantial ontological resonance – no Other. The Other here refers to the Symbolic Order. The Symbolic Order, the Other, that is not us, which is necessary but is not there, is the condition of social differentiation, language, cultural process and identity,
the interactions and consequent values that sustain the condition of economy, in short the ordered skein against which meaning occurs and is reflected back to us: it is thus the onto-epistemic backdrop against which the order of understanding occurs. A question naturally follows: in what sense can, for example, symptoms of the Other, such as language and the economy not be there? Well, they are not there in this sense, in and of and for themselves; they exist as effects, relations, constructions, interdependently with other symptoms of the Other; they have no originary, independent condition; they are without essence. If we think about the Other for K, then it is K’s conviction that some form of order exists, some rational principle by which intellectually and ethically justifiable, foundational knowledge and processes anchor K to the world and orient his identity and condition. Philosophically, this conviction on the part of K links broadly to Kant’s anchoring point of the relation between what Hurst refers to as “…the reversibility of determinative and reflective judgement. In sum, for the sake of rendering phenomenal reality ‘scientifically’ certain and rationally grounded on both sides of the transcendental relation, Kant imports an illegitimate _deux ex machina_ into his thinking” (Hurst, 2008: 24). What K spends his time doing because of this conviction is trying to uncover what has gone wrong with the system, what mistakes have been made, what disorder has been committed, so that any transgressions can be brought into the open and interrogated, by which means order will be restored, his innocence proven and his identity, business, social conduct justified. This is what K understands justice, a trial, to be about, and it is radically, but necessarily, in a classically Lacanian way as an example of _meconnaissance_ (Lacan, 1977a), misconceived. When K interrogates a painter, who is painting a judge in an allegory that combines Justice and Victory, occupying a senior position that the actual judge does not occupy, K is confused into thinking that somehow there is a truth outside this construction, and that such a truth is related to his own innocence, which, in
a metaphysically foundational way, means something quite independently of modes of
perception and processes of synthesis. In Kantian terms K is possessed of the conviction that
it is possible to follow and distinguish the means of perceiving, the process by which such
perceptions are organized and made sense of, and so grasp antecedently –

causa noumenon – objects themselves in relation to freedom, which Kant takes to be a
metaphysical illusion which is, nevertheless, necessarily so, held in place by reason’s
assumption of a primary premise being “unconditioned” (Kant, 1998). A premise being
“unconditioned” would be that it was so in and of itself, and thereby independently of any
other conditional chain of reasoning or inferential determination. Since K’s conviction that
he is innocent is grounded upon what he takes to be rationality, which is a rationalisation of
social and psychological space, as well as a philosophical topography that he has mapped out,
through which he assumes he is located, it is truly essential that such a rationality is indeed
metaphysically grounded; because if it is not, then what K is faced with is a truly terrifying
prospect: the contingent, irrational play of signification, without end, without beginning,
without essence, without authenticity; a play, a novel, within which, what, who and how he
is, namely the question of his innocence and identity, is lost; it was never there in the first
place. Kant illustrates reason’s assumption of a primary premise being “unconditioned,”
syllogistically, very lucidly. For as Guyer notes:

“...the premises and conclusions of inferences can typically themselves be connected
to other judgements in further inferences: for example the premise of our syllogism,
‘All As are B,’ might itself be the conclusion of some logically prior syllogism, ‘All
A’s are Z, all Zs are B, therefore all As are B,’ and the conclusion of our syllogism,
‘All As are C,’ may in turn be the premise of some further syllogism, e.g., ‘All As are C, All Cs are D, therefore all As are D,’ and so on” (Guyer, 2006: 131).

In order to put a halt to what Guyer refers to as “and so on” it would be necessary to have a founding principle, an unconditional origin, rather than an endless play of delayed, dispersed representations of an unverifiable semantic content, other than by means of that which leads to something else, and moves further away rather than closer towards an authentic presence. The lucidity, however, with which Kant draws attention to reason’s necessary assumption of an originary “unconditioned” premise, is misconceived by K, and misconceived, perhaps on the same Kantian grounds of *causa noumenon*, in relation to freedom and onto-epistemic identity. When K says to the painter, who has told K that he will “get him off” the charges made against him in the court, which are unknown, “‘How do you propose to do that? ...you yourself said just now the court is completely impervious to proof’” he assumes for reason to work that it must be located within a specific region, namely the court, and that within this space it will interrogate and find cause and consequence, a semantic truth that is identical with its representation, an originary onto-epistemic condition, which will be the rational and so knowable condition of how things are, including himself and his position within the proper order of the world, the Symbolic Order. This is the rationalisation of social and psychological space, as well as a philosophical topography that he has mapped, and assumes to be so. But the painter, who turns out to also be an agent of the court, replies:

“‘Impervious only to proof presented before the court... its attitude is different with efforts made in this respect away from the public court, in the consulting rooms, in the corridors or, for example, here too in this studio’” (Kafka, 1994: 118)
Unfortunately for K, rather like the Kantian chain of “conditioned” syllogisms, the “and so on” that Guyer describes, there is no way out of the legislative, mundane terror that K finds himself trapped within, which defines who he is, namely the accused. This is a legislature that, on one level, on the level of the assumption of a Kantian “unconditioned” premise is inadequate to its promise. As the painter explains, there are three possible forms of acquittal, of moving outside and escaping the ordeal of the trial, the chain of “conditioned” syllogisms, given the innocence of the accused: actual acquittal, for which there is no evidence that it has ever been granted; apparent acquittal, which results in the re-arrest of the accused, perhaps endlessly, and the continuation of the same process; and prolongation, which results in the trail being delayed through bureaucratic process, but only being delayed, so that again, escape from the legislated circuit is never achieved. On this level, the promise that a judgement might be made that is external to the Symbolic Order, but which grounds the Symbolic Order in some independent, “unconditioned” onto-epistemic veracity, that would also uphold K’s identity as being differently construed, as being independent and true to itself outside a chain of representation, is never achieved: at best this conclusion can be dispersed (apparent acquittal), or delayed (prolongation), but never escaped. On another level, however, which is not Kantian in nature, there is no outside of the Symbolic Order because the two dimensionality of its chain of signification is all there is. On this level, which is not a question of the adequacy of some promise, made by or at least implicit in the relationship between the subject, in this case the accused K, and the Other, the subject is simply, and quite hauntingly, an empty effect; an effect of the movement from one syllogism to another, from signifier to signifier; no “unconditioned” premise exists, no onto-epistemic veracity is ever there, where ever there may be.
In a very Derridean sense, we can see, though others can’t, that there is nothing, famously, outside the text. But we can take this rather famous aphorism a little further, and say: not only is there nothing outside the text, but that which is within the text is fundamentally mistaken. K wanders through *The Trial* not seeing that he is bound by how the legislature that presides over his being actually produces an effect that is his being. K *mistakes* himself as *being* something different to this; he is, quite literally, a *mistake*. And here, quite without irony, we have to thank the TDA for showing us something very significant, for revealing to us, through its obligation to account for an effect that can never be, another misconception, structured by the same philosophical core of the Lacanian *meconnaissance*, which is the same passage through which K wanders in *The Trial* and *mistakes* himself as *being*, as the person who imagines he is, when in fact K is imagined, but not even by himself, because there is no himself; and this is what the TDA shows us, through its obligation to fill out its impact report; it is this: the history of Western philosophy is itself, as the history of the determination of *being*, mistaken. We are ghosts, effects, ripples, traces; we are fundamentally mistaken by ourselves; we are not ourselves; we do not even have the determination to make this mistake; we are imagined by the Other, by a Symbolic Order which is also, disturbingly, not there. This is what the TDA shows us: Philosophy as ontology has largely been a game of hide and seek, except there has been nothing to find. Now, is this too much to claim, that this revelation, of the absence of being, and its ghostly incarnation, that the shadow of ontology, and its absent body, are revealed by the TDA impact analysis, the annual report that we are obliged to compile? Not at all; that is, not at all, if we are to take the compilation of the report seriously, rigorously, as, in a sense we are bound by our contract as academics, to do; and also, strangely, not to do; the not to do being, as we shall see, the negation of Thanatos, the Freudian death drive.
The compilation of the report

We now have to move along a disturbing continuum, which normally we are obliged not to notice: this is the illusory continuum between the personal and the general. The reason for our willed ignorance about this point, as we have already mentioned, is to escape, in however an imperfect a fashion, by means of “apparent acquittal” or “prolongation,” Thanatos, the realization that we are ghosts, ghostly references to that which has never been. We perform this escape, as a form of mundane theatre, by following the rubric of the annual report only within its embedded context of the Symbolic Order; once we remove the rubric from this context, something else is revealed, and our shadows overtake the assumption of what we are. Let us then start at the ontologically affirmative end of the continuum:

“All postgraduate professional development (PPD) providers must evaluate the impact of their provision on teachers, pupils and schools on an annual basis. They must send a summary of this evaluation to the TDA at the end of November each year” (Training and Development Agency, http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/cpd/ppd/evaluating_impact.aspx)

On the face of it, of course, this is a highly reasonable request. Let us also remember that it was reason, indeed a Cartesian form of rationalism, that inspired K to clinging to the hope of proving his identity and his innocence against the backdrop of the Symbolic Order, as if it were there: at the moment, remember, we are at the point on the continuum of the personal, we are attempting to reaffirm our ontological veracity, our meaning and identity, through reasoned discourse, by appeal to the Other. But wherein lies the Other? and necessarily, here,
we have to use the verb to *lie* in the sense of residing and also not being the case. We must assume that the Symbolic Order lies in the arena of the public, of the general, as the projection beyond ourselves of ordered reality. We do not have to be philosophical geniuses, perhaps in the sense of Kant, to see the bind that the TDA are in. They provide money to support teacher education, via universities: surely it is reasonable that universities that take the money provide evidence that they have engaged in some form of teacher education, and that what has been provided has been rigorous, of high quality? Aren’t the TDA obliged to do this? Shouldn’t they encourage, perhaps insist, on a transparency of financial accounting, knowledge generation, knowledge transfer and usage? Isn’t being accountable simply part of what we are all involved in? Isn’t it doing your job? Being an academic? Again, it is important to note that the arena within which these questions and positions are taken up is the arena of the Symbolic Order, on the stage that is public: it lies in that place where we expose ourselves. Two points: firstly, this form of accountability is embedded in a conception of naturalness, moreover an economy of naturalness, which looks towards a relationship between providing and using resources and the effects, or impacts, that this process has, and measuring effects or impacts in relation to the other factors in the equation as an index of progress; and secondly, as is implicit in what we have already said, this form of accountability also unavoidably involves a move from the personal to the general. Let us be a little less obtuse: that which is being measured is the effectiveness of ourselves, in a way that cannot but be personal. The questions posed earlier, that were phrased through the purchase that reason has on our identity – surely it is reasonable that universities that take the money provide evidence that they have engaged in some form of teacher education, and that what has been provided has been rigorous, of high quality? Aren’t the TDA obliged to do this? Shouldn’t they encourage, perhaps insist, on a transparency of financial accounting,
knowledge generation, knowledge transfer and usage? Isn’t being accountable simply part of what we are all involved in? Isn’t it doing your job? Being an academic? – help to establish the rhythm of who we are, because they appeal to a rationalism beyond ourselves, which is embedded within us as conformation of ourselves, and it is thus that we appeal. This notion of appeal carries with it two connotations that K would recognize: The first connotation of appeal is juridical, in which a relationship is assumed: between that which is alleged, referred to, symbolized, marked or in some other way represented as being so, which is manifested at this stage as being internal, against which an external order of how things are is posed, which is where the judiciary or judicial faculty is located, by which the internal claim is measured, assessed and judged as being or not being the case: the point at which this judgement is reached is being validated as being outside, as being lying within an apparently public space; this is where this faculty lies that allows matching or mismatching to occur, and for the articulation to follow that this is indeed so, that the internal claim and the external reality correspond, or this is not so, the internal claim does not correspond with the external reality. The second connotation of appeal is motivated by the desire to affirm and to know, and carries with it a sense of desperation. Both of these connotations are motivated by the Lacanian concept of lack, ultimately the lack that we are not there. What we witness here is articulation brought about by the mechanism of absence, motivated by the desire of ghosts (that never were) that they be not so. Fundamental to this process is the distinction between the register of the personal and internal domain and the register of the public and external domain. Of course, just as for K, the distinction between these two registers will break down, but for the moment it is important to see how they are sustained; this occurs principally through the condition of the law. Let us move on, now, to see how the law and the distinction between the two domains is manifested through the PPD impact report.
The PPD impact report and an introduction to education and *education*; but first *education*

The TDA asks that the report is compiled under the following headings:

“What kinds of impact has the provision had on participants?

What kinds of impact has the provision had on pupils?

What kinds of impact has the provision had on the wider life of the school/other schools?

How do you know that these are areas of impact related to PPD? What evidence did you collect? Whom did you consult? What strategies did you use?

How have you already responded to your evaluation of impact in the current academic year (2008/09)?

What are the implications of your evaluation of impact on your provision in the longer term?

Please provide a breakdown of how the collaborative funding for 08/09 was used.

How did the collaborative funding benefit your provision in 08/09?” (TDAa, 2008)

The production of the document therefore involves its participants *being* defined and placed in a certain relationship with each other, PPD and *education*. *Education* is italicised here for two reasons. Firstly, the word remains the same, whether it is italicised or not, so that in
some ways, education is the same as education: to a certain extent, the difference between education and education is imperceptible. Secondly, education written in this italicised way does mark a difference between itself and education, but in a way that is reminiscent of Derrida’s difference (Derrida, 1978). For those involved with state education within the UK, and possibly even within the West, the circuit of education is inescapable. This circuit involves its participants being involved in a mutually disjunctive but not always opposing rhythm of affirmation and hollowness. Affirmation is the easier part of the rhythm to describe: it involves a host of concepts and practices that are sometimes difficult to distinguish from each other; rather they form a coagulation around state education as a programme and opportunity for betterment, for individuals within the state’s institutions, indeed within state society, rising through education above their cultural-economic contexts by engaging with the epistemic content and modes of being that education describes and promises access to. Critiques of education within this context tend towards technical analyses of policy, learning and the organization of education, through, for example the coagulants of curriculum, standards and pedagogy. So, whilst Gorard (2006) is critical of the notion of “value-added” as construed by the government at that time as an effective indicator of school performance, he is not critical of education, only the organization of some of its coagulants; and such work – like all of the work involved in education, including the TDA, PPD, and all of the state bodies, be they in the form of people, institutions or documents, which fall into the ontological domain of being bodies without organs (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a), homogenously functional determinants, that are educationally configured – becomes part of educational coagulation, in an attempt to technically maximize its effects. Education carries with it an irony that it cannot perceive, in the form of a tautological complex, which it nevertheless enunciates, which it has no other option but to enunciate, in its very articulation
of itself as education; this is the audacity of education’s ontological possibility, and it is essentially this: the conditions of the state, notably difference as inequality in its many forms, that lead to the production of education, perceived as the moral need for opportunity and betterment through the arrangement of epistemic regimes, which education engages its bodies without organs to pursue and acquire as cultural and technical capital, as qualifications, modes of accreditation, patterns of conduct, ways of being, are also the cultural and technical means through which education and the state determines difference as inequality: in effect education is the aspiration of the state to escape itself. As already mentioned, education remains blind and deaf to the contradiction that it articulates within the space that it creates for itself, and does so by the assumption that there is a beyond, a Symbolic Order that is there in and of itself as an a priori given.

We can see evidence of this assumption in the question headings that the TDA requests universities to use to compile the 2008/2009 report justifying expenditure on PPD. For example,

“What kinds of impact has the provision had on participants?

What kinds of impact has the provision had on pupils?

What kinds of impact has the provision had on the wider life of the school/other schools?”

These questions are motivated by the impossible aspiration of the state to escape itself, the tautology itself is never confronted by education; this is managed by education erecting a screen built upon its investment in the assumption that education is grounded in a Symbolic Order, its coagulation, of practices, curriculums and documents which are a reflection of an a priori condition of being; in this way the screen shields education from the tautology, it
prevents education from being faced with this disturbing example of the Real. We can see evidence of this investment in the screen that shields education from the Real when we consider how the question headings just referred to are framed in relation to other documentation provided by the TDA. Under the heading “Impact on children and young people,” the TDA note: “It is the core objective of the PPD programme to focus on the benefits for children and young people and, wherever possible, to contribute to improved attainment and achievement” (TDAb, 2008: 9; 29). There is no ambiguity about what “improved attainment and achievement means,” as OfSTED note, CPD, of which PPD is a variety,”... should support training that has a demonstrable impact on raising standards in schools” (OfSTED, 2004: 4). Moreover, because individual teachers are seen as the recipients of CPD in general and PPD in particular, the assumption we are discussing relates directly to the effectiveness and the production of the identity of individual teachers, so that PPD is quite literally for the “development of teachers” (OfSTED, 2004: 4). The mistake made by K in The Trial was that his identity belonged to and was created by himself, and was not the product of being Other than this, a fabrication of the Symbolic Order, which was itself, not there; we see, to repeat the phrase, quite literally, with regard to teachers that the same conditions apply, and that PPD is very much about the “development of teachers,” and that this occurs as if teachers are something Other than a fabrication, of being forged in this way. Of course, a teacher’s breath, blood flow and digestive tract are not created by the TDA and TDA sponsored CPD; however, the meaning of a teacher, teacher identity, is forged through these mechanisms: teachers are bodies without organs, and in the gap between their being, bodies without organs, and their biological possibility, lies their ghostly existence. It is this understanding that is expressed by education.
Examples of not-being, ghosts in education, the impact report, the mundane

In order to comply with the protocols of the TDA for the annual PPD report, data has to be gathered in a variety of different ways, which are not in themselves prescribed, but given that such data is brought into being under the coagulation of education, a coagulation that is intended to flesh-out the ghosts that inhabit education rendered by the TDA, certain paths along which data gathering can proceed are forged. Data therefore, within the coagulation of education, for the report, tends to conform to a certain consistency. This is how the bodies without organs, that include teachers, are produced with some consistency.

Some of the data therefore includes numbers, numbers of teachers engaged in PPD during the period 2008/2009, numbers of teachers divided into the different forms of PPD that are provided by a university, numbers of courses that comprise the different forms of PPD, numbers of teachers completing courses and gaining the various qualifications that PPD leads to, and so on. This aspect of the “development of teachers” forms a hollow outline of the mass of bodies without organs that forges the rational of the Symbolic Order that lends meaning to PPD. The rational itself, that PPD should result in “a demonstrable impact on raising standards in schools” provides the justification for the mass outline, it acts as the “unconditioned” Kantian premise that causes a halt to the “and so on” that Guyer refers to; an “and so on” that must be assumed to be as Other, as already there, being outside the delineation of the mass of bodies of teachers without organs. The drive towards adherence to this assumption of the “unconditioned” premise is the condition of the law, the law that Lacan describes, the law that haunts and disturbs and, again we will use the phrase, quite literally, arrests K; and it quite literally arrests K, puts him on trial, and eventually leads to his death,
drives him towards and into the embrace of Thanatos, because he seeks its “unconditioned” ontological premise, outside the Symbolic Order, where it is not there, or at the very best is profoundly illusive. This is Kʼs education: indeed, it is the condition of education, the italicisation that haunts education, and reveals that we are traces, effects, ghosts. And this too is the revelation that we would rather not see, the terror in the absurd, the education of education, which we would rather not hear, though its absence rather than presence is there to observe.

Let us be brave, and look then, for education in education, for evidence of the illusive “unconditioned” ontological premise, against which the Symbolic Order is written, that lends meaning to the outline of teachers as bodies without organs: if it is not there, it will take the form, “a demonstrable impact on raising standards” and will thus have an empirical signature. The “Executive summary” of the TDAʼs Impact Evaluation Report for the academic year 2007/2008 for PPD notes that despite an 11% increase in registrations from the previous year for the “development of teachers,” the expansion of the collective mass their of bodies without organs, amounting to more than 25,000 such bodies, resulted nevertheless in the coagulation of the machinery of education nevertheless remaining “…cautious about ascribing improvements in pupilsʼ attainment and achievement to the effects of PPD... [as] such improvements can seldom be observed immediately and other factor may intervene” (TDAb, 2008: 2; 4). What this would appear to amount to, is a clear and significant increase in the “development of teachers” bodies without organs, but no evidence that such an increase can be supported by the “unconditioned” ontological premise that PPD has any relationship with, much less is founded on the reality of, “improvements in pupilsʼ attainment.” What this
would appear to indicate is the “and so on” that Guye described in relation to Kant; an “and so on” that K found so disturbing, an example of which is his discussion with the painter and the revelation that no acquittal, no way out, founded on rationality outside the fabrication of a Symbolic Order; disturbing because it is a Symbolic Order produced and entirely referential to the corrupt – because internally determined (though for Lacan, this is a general condition; and for Derrida, there is no externality to such a situation) – machinations of the judiciary and its creation of bodies without organs; disturbing because no other Other order exists. Nevertheless, this is only one piece of evidence; perhaps, in the manner of K, we should search for other data that will confirm an “unconditional” ontology? Very well, then: the same report notes that PPD sponsored by the TDA has “...little opportunity for... programmes to show significant impact” (TDAb, 2008: 3; 5); that “providers continued to find it easier to demonstrate beneficial outcomes in relation to pupils’ experiences and working environment than their academic achievement” (TDAb, 2008: 9; 29); that only “anecdotal evidence from participants and schools” (TDAb, 2008: 12; 39) is available to indicate “improvement in pupils’ attainment”; and that any other such claims would amount to “unsubstantiated claims about improvements” (TDAb, 2008: 12; 39). One of the ways of understanding the function of bodies without organs is in the production of desire, which in turn leads to the reproduction of the Symbolic Order. Deleuze and Guattari describe this Lacanian mechanism in the following way: “Desire is not bolstered by needs, but rather the contrary; needs are derived from desire: they are counterproducts in the real that desire produces... Desire then becomes this abject fear of lacking something” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b edition: 28-29). This is how desire produces: the lack – which is perceived in two respects, because of the fact that the Symbolic Order is not identical with the real, or as Lacan writes, the Real; and also because the subject, the body without organs, is also not identical with the bearer of the name
– brings about the production of an order to sustain the identities through which its ontological status as such is affirmed. We can see the way that this order is forged, in relation to PPD resulting in “improvement in pupils’ attainment” (or rather the failure to result in “improvement in pupils’ attainment”) in the same document that highlights this lack, for example, the TDA reports: “Providers frequently reported specific evidence showing that participants’ increased self-confidence, raised self-esteem and greater capacity for reflection were having a very marked impact on their professional capability. Of these, the most striking were the many references to what teachers felt more able to do as a consequence of the increased confidence gained through their PPD” (TDAb, 2008: 6; 18). What is being reported is PPD validation of teacher bodies without organs, and more generally of educational coagulation by which such bodies are developed, through “… participants’ increased self-confidence, raised self-esteem and greater capacity for reflection were having a very marked impact on their professional capability,” not simply despite, but more urgently because of the lack of the a priori determinant of PPD, namely “improvement in pupils’ attainment.” The fact that teacher bodies without organs’ “…newfound confidence seemed to be rooted in a deeper subject and professional knowledge” (TDA, 2008: 7; 19) produced no “improvement in pupils’ attainment” is shocking, profoundly disturbing; but it does not lead to the abandonment of education, in favour of education, just as K’s failure to find a rational reason for his arrest and trial does not lead to him abandoning the belief that such a course of action, a belief in reason, a belief in his own identity, will explain what is happening to him. Instead, the reverse occurs, a greater personal investment in such identities, in K and his own innocence, and in education, in “newfound confidence,” in “deeper subject and professional knowledge.” Adherence to this principal is the principal of the law. Not to adhere to the law, to move towards education, renders education’s identities banal, and is also, in the face of
this emptiness, a movement towards Thanatos. Perhaps, though, whilst the findings in the TDA report for the academic year 2007/2008 suggest the resistance of education to education, might these results might also be anomalous? The answer to this question: no, not at all.

The TDA offers guidance on the completion of the 2009 summary evaluation report for PPD, and as part of this guidance has selected commentaries and supporting evidence submitted by three universities as models of how to evaluate PPD provision. Beginning with Edge Hill University, whilst the institution notes “... we are making good progress towards the achievement of the objectives we set out in our application. In particular, we are working with our partner organisations to evaluate the beneficial impact of the PPD activities that we are providing and supporting” (Edge Hill University, 2009: 2); the institution also comments: “... number 6 on the typology (‘improved achievement of pupils’) is more difficult to measure or ‘evidence’ in relation to the impact of PPD. In many cases, the timescale involved between when the PPD activities took place and the point where pupil achievement is being measured, certainly by key external yardsticks such as SATs or GCSEs, is terms or even years. Additionally, the articulation of a demonstrable, causal link between the PPD activity and any improvement in pupil attainment is problematic in an arena of multiple “improvement” initiatives” (Edge Hill University, 2009: 3).

In other words, whilst PPD is determined to be successful, there is no evidence to indicate that PPD has any impact on “improvement in pupils’ attainment,” which is the primary purpose of PPD and the indicator of PPD effectiveness. Does this finding result in the
education of education at Edge Hill University, with the institution and its educational coagulation, its bodies without organs, rushing to embrace Thanatos? On the contrary, the lack which the report indicates – of an a priori rationality, a metaphysical given that justifies and guarantees the identities involved in this aspect of education, in the form of “improvement in pupils’ attainment” – results in the desire to reaffirm the meanings inherent in the forged identities of education in some other way, so that “...if the notion of ‘measuring’ PPD impact on pupils is elusive, we would argue... that our PPD programme is proving successful in enhancing participant knowledge, understanding and reflection on practice and that these in turn are leading to the more effective analysis and development of practice linked to improvements in pupil performance” (Edge Hill University, 2009: 3). This is fantastically tautological, it is both mad and simultaneously the reason through which the meaning of education is justified, and is thoroughly analogous to the position that K holds in relation to the law in The Trial. And in a sense, this is also the function of the impact evaluation report: it acts as the trial of education. The function of the trial of education is to create the conditions for the Lacanian méconnaissance, through which roles ascribed by the Symbolic Order are mistaken as existing prior to any conditioned premise, and requires in terms of identity, if we stay with the example provided by Kafka, of K not being and at the same time being identical with K (represented, empirically, banally, by him being K as proven by K being referred to on his bicycle license, which he loses), of being and not being the same as your proper name, of a teacher being and not being the same as that prescribed determination. It is the advent of the empirical, which of course the TDA must demand, which forces the trial of the Symbolic, the banal, to reach its limit. Thus in Appendix 3 to the Chester PPD Impact Evaluation Report (University of Chester, 2009) the section under the heading, Forms of Assessment for Determining CPD Impact notes that:
“The most useful measure of the impact of CPD on pupil attainment was considered by teachers to be ‘observing changes in the nature and quality of teaching and learning.’ The least informative method of assessment for measuring CPD on pupil attainment was considered by teachers to be ‘a form of theoretically objective baseline assessment, i.e. a standardized test’” (Chester, 2009: 12).

What constitutes an empirical measure, in the sense too of its objectivity, as a scientific and rational quantum of data, gained through some form of standardized measure, of that which is therefore beyond its experiential construction, is rejected by teachers, in favour, overwhelmingly of knowledge as constituted by practice, and practice in the form of the personal. The identity of the teacher is, therefore, both that which is and that which is not part of education; it is both rational and insane; and it is not a case of rejecting or favouring one rather than the other, of teachers conforming to the law and not conforming to the law represented by the Symbolic Order; teachers are both traces and not traces, not even traces, not even ghosts; ghosts moreover which are incapable of learning through education (in its italicised sense) since this would be to be outside the order through which teachers are constituted and lent meaning. And we see this rational and mad condition reproduced in official report after report, even in the construction of the TDA reporting protocols, even in the mission of the TDA itself with regard to education and PPD. The law as such, the law that dominates K, determines his actions, engenders his trial is the same law that organizes the rational and mad condition of education: and just as K is always on trial, so is education: because outside education, the education of education is the terror, the terror of the Real. It is the compulsion to reveal this education, to reveal the end of education that is analogous within this system to Thanatos, towards which education constantly teeters, and withdraws via the mundane aspect, the ghostly traces, of our work. Here are more examples of the
compulsion to reveal *education* within education, and then the withdrawal from this position through the mundane theatre of our work:

In another exemplary impact report, published by the TDA, St. Mary’s College begin by noting the following: “Our programme is premised on improving teaching and learning in individual schools” (St. Mary’s College, 2007a: 2). Clear guidance from the TDA and also OfSTED about all CPD is that it should result in demonstrable, measurable impact on the improvement of pupils’ educational attainment. This is the rational for education configured within this space: the emergence of the empirical acts within this area as the trial of education, and depending on the nature of the results produced by this rational, could possibly move education towards the education of education, towards Thanatos, its end.

Through an elegantly constructed procedure, involving a pro forma for evaluating impact (St. Mary’s College, 2007b) and a summary of student evaluation (St. Mary’s College, 2007c), comply with the juridical structure described by the TDA’s reporting procedures, because this is the law; and again it is important to emphasize that this is not a law, but the law as such, the law which is internalised as the Symbolic Order, which simultaneously creates and castrates the subject, against which meaning and identity is made possible, the law that K pursues, just as we all must. It is also the law that undoes itself, potentially, if we follow it too closely, to the letter; the law that leads to Thanatos, the education of education. And it is at this point that St, Mary’s College pulls away from education’s education, its end and the terror of the Real, where the Symbolic Order that maintains education and the coagulation of its identities, myths and meanings reside: “...it is too early to state quantitatively that there have been improvements in pupils’ curricular grades or achievements...” nevertheless, despite the absence of proof, in lieu of empirical, rational corroboration of the rationality of education within this arena, the Symbolic Order can be maintained via testimony from
“...teachers, CPD co-ordinators, senior management and school governors...” to affirm in the absence education’s “unconditioned” ontological premise that “... pupils’ learning experiences within the curriculum have been enhanced; and there have been noted increases in pupils’ capacity to learn in different subjects” (St. Mary’s College, 2007a: 2). What we have then, via this means, is education ontologically being forged, against itself, in the realm of the imaginary, mistaken, as if it were Real, so that the Real and its terror can be avoided by the mundane practices of what Guyer has referred to as the “and so on.”

**Conclusion**

From the perspective of education, it would be a mistake of a different kind to infer that the TDA and the practices that it promotes are in any way wrong or should be subject to criticism, especially of the technical variety of criticism that focuses upon managerial and strategic short-comings. What we suggest is that it would also be a mistake to attempt to invent a way out of education’s struggle against itself, for education to be educated. This is simply how things are, how identities, meanings, ontology is forged: this is what, in a Heideggerian sense, education has become. There are, however, other perspectives which might be attempted, even though these will also be subject to education. We will not outline them here, but merely suggest that one such perspective orients itself around the condition of immanence and by definition the condition of the local. Can such a perspective yield interesting results, particularly in the context of a National Curriculum and state organized education system? Perhaps the work of Deleuze and Guattari might tell.
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