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# Education and learning: a disciplinary turn

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The present policy catchphrase ‘earning or learning’ is the latest manifestation of work as life’s purpose, of education for work, and of the contemporary neoliberal project. Learning appears to occur in a wide range of life activities beyond educational institutions – in social, health and punitive institutions – though this learning is less visible, more informal, and often practiced unconsciously. This attention to life activities bears a resemblance to the original Western pedagogy of Ancient Greece that formed part of a philosophy as a way of life and of care for the self, care for others, and care for the city. Social pedagogy and Greek philosophy offer ways of a more fulfilling education to that of the nineteenth century model of education modified, but otherwise unchanged, by the present neoliberal project.

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## Introduction

This paper seeks to identify a conceptual space made up of goals and content of education, a space distinct from a nineteenth century construction of classroom education, largely intact despite political modifications from time to time such as late modern neoliberalism. It does this by considering a study of pedagogy undertaken with a social agency in regional Australia. It does this also by re-identifying with the goals and content of philosophy and education of Ancient Greek in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Kimball (1995) has described this period as ‘the pedagogical century’.

Philosophy represented an underlying system of thought in Ancient Greece. This system of thought was replaced by Christian theology from the fifth century CE and by science from the

eighteenth century. Science, represented completion of the shift from the cosmology of philosophy to the fragmentation of disciplines, though without a capacity for the parts represented by disciplines to relate back to the whole represented by philosophy. Only recently has the notion of ‘inter-disciplinarity’ emerged in response to the limitations of exploring only within the boundaries of each discipline and not as well the spaces between. It may be a little premature to assume this leads to a return to a cosmological whole.

The most recent iteration of the system of thought of science formed the basis of the nineteenth century education model. More recently still, mainstream political parties in Anglocentric countries have adopted a political ideology of neoliberalism. This ideology was initially applied to the economic sector but has since been extended to the social sector, including education. Neoliberalism privileges the singular discipline of economics that in turn privileges the free market. The free market does not exist in the social sector, so a partial and hybrid modification of the nineteenth century educational model has been required.

European countries pursue a contrasting political ideology of the social model and education is practiced more widely than in the classroom. Similarly, a study in regional Australia has indicated that pedagogy may extend more widely than the classroom, albeit without pedagogically-educated workers.

## Neoliberalism and education

One of the tools of political discourse is catchphrases, designed to catch the passing attention of the media and through them the voters. Catchphrases sum up in a few words perceived issues and/or policy solutions. Sometimes they may take on a pejorative meaning, for example, when referring to groups representing the ‘Other’ –groups different from the normal ‘us’ and therefore perceived as a threat. Pejorative catchphrases may escalate to taunts when the ‘Other’ becomes a source of fear. A threat of refugees produces catchphrases such as ‘queue jumpers’, ‘illegals’, and ‘detainees’. A threat of the unemployed produces ‘dole bludgers’ and ‘job snobs’. Equally, policy solutions may be encapsulated in similar terms. Thus, ‘dole bludgers’ and ‘job snobs’ require ‘tough love’ to inculcate ‘mutual obligation’. More recently, the threat of unemployed school-leavers not contributing to the economy has produced the catchphrase ‘earning or learning’.

‘Earning or learning’ entered the lexicon of the Queensland Labor Government in a seemingly benign way in 2002 to headline an education and training reform program. The

purpose of this program is to ensure young people leaving school go immediately into education or work, but on no account may they become idle. The Premier, Peter Beattie, launching the program, said: 'We believe young people should be learning full-time until they turn 16 or 17 — or they should be earning full-time' (Beattie, 2002). The Leader of the Federal Labor Party turned this catchphrase into a taunt in the lead up to the General Election in 2004. The taunt was further strengthened by a number of supplementary and vituperative catchphrases. Notice in this excerpt from a Channel 9 interview the use of 'bludger's paradise', 'mutual responsibility', 'tougher attitude', and 'goofing off' to strengthen 'earning or learning':

CHARLES WOOLEY: It's becoming clear that Latham's Australia would be no bludger's paradise. He offers no soft option for people who won't participate.

If people don't want to seize the advantages, what do you do about them?

MARK LATHAM: Well, I think mutual responsibility where ... government takes a tougher attitude is appropriate, that ... for young people, they've got to be learning or earning. There's no third option of just getting out there and goofing off. You've either got to be in education or work (Wooley, 2004)

School-leavers, in this transcript, are transformed from subjects into objects, from 'us' into 'them'. They become in this way an undifferentiated commodified mass representing a burden on our economy and therefore on our society. A policy solution is constructed based on this policy problem. The solution is to create a duty by school-leavers to work or to learn to work, and so contribute to the growth of a competitive economy in their new role of producers and consumers. The Queensland school-leaver policy (Queensland Department of Education & the Arts, 2005; Queensland Government, 2002) imagines the problem confined to a point in time, the day they leave school and the day after. In this construction, school-leavers have no other history or future. Work or learning to work is the extent of the state's interest in their life activities. The state appears to doubt the school-leaver shares this imperative so the policy is designed to control and coerce.

Work for the unemployed school-leaver forms part of a wider political discourse of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is an Anglocentric ideology, of which 'earning or learning' forms part. It assumes that there is no alternative for ensuring a growing economy, despite six of the ten growth economies being European countries following a contrasting social model ideology (Lopez-Claros, Porter, & Schwab, 2005, p. 7).

So much is work an imperative to the Anglocentric state that a long held political commitment to encouraging students to complete senior school and proceed to tertiary studies seems to be weakening. The Prime Minister in Australia has said that:

... a generation in this country [of] parents [have] discouraged their children from going into trades, and they said to them, "the only way you will get ahead in life is to stay at school until year 12, go to university." Year 12 retention rates became the goal ... Instead of us as a nation recognising there are some people who shouldn't go to university ... what they should do is at year 10 [to] decide they are going to become a tradesman. They will be just as well off, and from my experience and observation, a great deal better off than many others. (Howard, 2005).

The first application of the neoliberal project was to the economic sector from the 1980s, removing barriers to competition in industry, such as tariffs and regulations. An early modification was re-regulation after it became clear that the market has no ability to self-regulate. A second application was to introduce neoliberalism to the social sector. This required transforming health and education from a public service model to institutions competing with each other. Competition was seen in terms of winners and losers. The Federal Minister for Education, Science and Technology in 2003 advised as the fifth point of a ten point agenda of a national education framework:

Intolerance of Poorly Performing Schools: Every child deserves to be taught at an outstanding school by outstanding teachers and if a school is underperforming, then action should be taken. There is no room for cultural acceptance of poor performance in our school system (Nelson, 2003, colon added).

Embedded in this statement is an assumption that the cause of poorly performing schools is poorly performing teachers, regardless of other operating conditions of these schools.

The activities of the market are production and consumption. So, production in the form of work becomes the purpose of an education market whilst consumption is left to industries producing and promoting consumer goods. This requires modifications to the curriculum. Courses are reconstructed and commercialised so students can quickly enter the workforce or, if already in work, to upgrade their work skills. Some success is enjoyed with courses that lend themselves to work, such as science, business, and professional courses. Less success is enjoyed with commercialising the humanities and social sciences. The Academy of the

Humanities has been awarded a small grant by the federal government to identify commercial applications for the humanities (Nelson, 2005b). The Federal Minister for Education, Science and Technology seeks 'breakthroughs' in the humanities in a similar way to science:

My ... late brother ... spent the last two years of his death in the quixotic search for a cure from a disease from which he knew he would almost certainly die. This is repeated in many families ... every day of the year. But the most important human emotion in my experience, which is also the most fragile, is hope. And hope of a confident future lies in breakthroughs in health, in medical, in applied sciences, and ... in humanities and social sciences in terms of how we understand and adjust to that (Nelson, 2005e).

Remnants of an earlier conservative ideology seem to remain, despite the seemingly overwhelming presence of the neoliberal project. Some of these remnants appear to contradict the free market assumption of neoliberalism. An example of this is a desire for inclusion of the topics of government, citizenship, democracy, and values in the curriculum. Surprisingly, there is no similar desire to include capitalism and work. The Federal Minister has said that:

We are strongly committed to ensuring that when students leave school they have an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life (Nelson, 2005c). It is crucial that our students' civic knowledge and understanding, citizenship participation skills and values are well developed before they leave school so that they may participate in our democratic way of life as active and informed citizens (Nelson, 2005d).

Values receive particular attention. The seventh point of the ten point national education framework is 'Making Values a Core Part of Schooling'. It states that:

While all Australian schools teach values, some do so more explicitly than others. Such schools have specific statements about their values, and their values are embedded in every aspect of the school. The Australian Government is currently developing a framework for improved values education in Australian schools with a view to seeking State and Territory Education Ministers' agreement to adopting this framework (Nelson, 2003)

A study on values was commissioned (Curriculum Corporation, 2003) and schools are required to introduce these values from 2006. The nine values are: care and compassion;

doing your best; fair go; freedom; honesty and trustworthiness; integrity; respect; responsibility; and understanding, tolerance and inclusion (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2005, p. 4). The Federal Minister provided background to implementation in an interview with journalists in 2005:

... the Australian Government announced last year a \$30 million program for values to be formally taught in every Australian schools including the thirty Islamic schools throughout Australia. I have sent to every school in the country the National Values Framework (Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training, 2005) and the nine key values: responsibility, care for one another, tolerance, understanding, fair go, doing your best – a whole range of values ...

... over the top of it, I have superimposed Simpson and his Donkey as an example of what is at the heart of our national sense of emerging identity.

We are also going to be providing funding to all Australian schools to actually sit down with their parents, their teachers and their broader community and talk about the values they teach, how are teachers going to actually reflect the values we want taught in Australian schools ...

... more specifically, I will be meeting very shortly the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and I will be discussing with them how we can formally develop programs to ensure that not just in Islamic private schools, but also in government schools, we make sure that all children and Australian Islamic children fully understand Australian history, its culture, its values. We believe in giving every person a fair go. We don't care where people come from; we don't mind what religion they've got. But what we want them to do is to commit to the Australian Constitution, Australian rule of law, and basically if people don't want to be Australians and they don't want to live by Australian values and understand them, well they can basically clear off (Nelson, 2005f, paragraphs added).

This interview constructs a part-mythical hero – Simpson and his donkey – from the First World War (Hawley, 2005; Roy, 2005) to embody values assumed to make up an Anzac spirit that was shared by white Australians of the time. These are to be imposed on teachers, parents, their communities, and students. Islamic schools receive special attention. Muslims can 'clear off' if they do not share these values; an expression similar, you might recall, to

that of the former leader of the opposition of ‘goofing off’ (Wooley, 2004). Such invective seems to contradict the spirit of values to be enforced.

The framework is exclusive to schools. It does not address the environment within which students, teachers, parents, and the community are situated. This environment includes business and politics where competing values operate. The framework does not therefore prepare students for coping with other sets of values they come across outside the classroom and when they enter the workforce.

## Pedagogical interventions beyond the classroom

A number of social pedagogical models operate in a variety of social spaces in European countries. This contrasts with an Anglocentric nineteenth century legacy model of operating in the classroom. This legacy model excludes other social spaces. I have suggested in a recent study an approach to exploring these spaces, namely, identifying the degree to which pedagogy is presently undertaken, consciously or unconsciously, in social, health, and punitive institutions. This action research study was undertaken over a year within a family support agency in regional Australia. The study identified a practice, largely unconscious, of pedagogy undertaken between workers and clients. This form of social intervention drew on pedagogical principles to produce a difference in clients, without a direct knowledge of pedagogy by the workers. Beneficial outcomes of what I would suggest are *quasi-pedagogical interventions* indicated the possibility of applying these forms of intervention to other social institutional settings. It further suggested that such application might reduce the increasing flow of funding to additional infrastructure for interventions later in the cycle of deterioration of the wellbeing of the client such as the many forms of punitive institutions (Donald, 2004).

Clients of the agency were adults experiencing harm in their lives, typically neglect, abuse, and violence. Often the harm extended to children. The workers focused on the adult client much more than on the child. Neither the workers nor the supervising psychologist had a direct knowledge of pedagogy. Yet workers had unknowingly constructed a content and process of pedagogy that bore resemblance to a curriculum. They did this by drawing on their knowledge and experience of social work and on the knowledge and experience of a supervising psychologist. This collective knowledge was sufficient for them to include in the process the use of didactics and dialogue; for them to mobilise the capacity of the client by drawing on the needs, interests, strengths, and resources of the client; and for them to

introduce to clients a theory framework of affects (Tomkins, 1962) and a sub-set of this theory of shame (Nathanson, 1992). This theoretical framing allowed client and workers to design together a program of practice and reflection that focused on relationships between adults and with and between children. In this way, the adult acted as agent for the child. Outcomes for adults, and where relevant their children, were consistently beneficial in moving them from harmful to harmless to fulfilling behaviours (Donald, 2004).

The social agency also operated a playschool. Playschool workers focused more on the young mothers than the child. Equipped with relationship skills from the harm program of the agency, the young mothers were introduced to other life skills. The mothers practiced these acquired skills with their children in the playschool under the guidance of the workers, and in the home and other settings without this guidance. They reflected though with the workers on their progress when they returned each week to the playschool. Again, there were components of a curricula operating, but without the benefit of direct pedagogical knowledge by the workers (Donald, 2004, p. 67-68, 145-146). Perhaps most striking was the capacity of the playschool clients:

to acquire advanced skills at citizenship so quickly. The workers had workshoped with the mothers using butcher's paper on better public transport for their areas. A local government councillor and a senior member of council staff attended a presentation by the mothers and to arrange transport to attend a council meeting where they would be advocating better public transport. The councillor stayed on after the manager left and the parents reflected after she left that 'she was a young mum too' (Donald, 2004, p. 68)

The absence of opportunity to acquire this knowledge and these skills in part or whole in their lives to date contributed to the harm that they were perpetrating and/or experiencing of neglect, abuse, and violence. The activities acquired by clients from the agency and its playschool were identified as relationships, recreational, physical and mental health, home maintenance, transactional, citizenship, learning, and vocational (Donald, 2004, p. 162).

The social agency undertook policy work, as part of implementing the social policy of the state government department, in return for which it received funding. The policy strongly supported innovation at the level of social agencies. However, the local level of the department appeared to discount innovation and instead direct the agency to an instrumental model based on quantitative throughputs of clients rather than qualitative client processes and outcomes. They did this under the constant threat of withdrawal of income. This constant



distraction through the year of the study reduced the number of clients with which workers could have engaged (Donald, 2004, p. 182-189).

The study separately examined acquisition of life skills in schools. A principal of a school in a deprived area commented that previously ‘teachers were battling to teach the curriculum’ when social issues of children were so overwhelming:

We had a lot of conversations here at this school with staff and family about achievement levels — literacy, numeracy, high level subjects on the basis that we have to focus on the academic but if you had that conversation with teachers, they asked how do you behaviour manage crises at school, crises at home, families in chaos. You spend the day mopping up the social issues and the dysfunction in the home, mopping up the kids so that can actually do some learning (Donald, 2004, p. 147).

The school formed groups of parents based on identifying their interests:

One of them is about a cultural group with a specific focus that meets at the community centre each Monday. There’s a cooking group. There’s a young parents group; they invite someone to talk about babies for example. There are a couple of training focus groups ... There are other examples. They have computers down at the community centre and that has got some in. We run computer sessions here as well in the afternoon ... There’s a community choir as well involving a couple of my teachers (Donald, 2004, p. 116-117).

The school encourages participation of parents in school activities. Six of the mothers volunteering for tuckshop had gained vocational skills there sufficient for them to go on to paid employment (Donald, 2004, p. 169).

## A wider concept of learning

I have identified in this paper so far two contrasting activities. On the one hand, the prevailing political ideology of neoliberalism adjusts some parts of the nineteenth century legacy model of education whilst leaving other parts intact. I now want to introduce a third theme, assisted by the remnants of an earlier conservative ideology of inclusion of government, citizenship, democracy, and values in the curriculum and by a desire of the Federal Minister for

‘breakthroughs in ... in humanities and social sciences’ as well as in the sciences (Nelson, 2005e); and by his references from time to time to Socrates and Aristotle (e.g. Nelson, 2005a). This wider canvas than a free market and work offers a possibility of education framed within a historical and philosophical context.

The use of the term ‘breakthroughs’ seems to relate to an assumption that the sciences and technologies produce quick results; and that humanities and social sciences can do so as well. Breakthroughs in philosophy and history share two characteristics: they are usually in the past, and most have been discarded in the past. Breakthroughs in Western philosophy occurred 2500 years ago. Philosophy formed the underlying system of thought of Ancient Greece and subsequently of Rome for a period of thousand years to 500 CE. The principal breakthroughs were by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Athens 450-350 BCE. Christian theology replaced Greek philosophy as the underlying system of thought from 500 CE for another thousand years; with Augustine in the fourth century incorporating some philosophical breakthroughs in his theology and discarding others. Then science replaced theology from the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Science discarded most of the remaining philosophical breakthroughs. It is science that has continued as the system of thought to the present day.

Only remnants of Greek philosophical breakthroughs remain in our thought and language today. It has only been in the second half of the twentieth century that there has been a renewal of scholarship in ancient philosophy and in its relevance to the contemporary world (Annas, 2004, p. 24-26). For example, Foucault drew on the ancient philosophical work of Pierre Hadot in developing his ‘culture of the self’ (Flynn, 2005, p. 614; P. Hadot, 2002, p. x).

Philosophy, as a system of thought, operates at a higher level of abstraction than other disciplines. At this higher level, philosophy allows us to look at the whole as well as the parts of human nature and activity; and thereby at the connections between disciplines, such as education, politics, and history on which this paper draws of. Philosophy allows us to look at human nature in a timeless and enduring manner. Such characteristics allow us to identify a range of education alternatives, detached from our existing nineteenth century legacy system and from a prevailing but passing neoliberal ideology.

## The content of education

One breakthrough in philosophy 2500 years ago that we might recover was Plato's concept of philosophy as a way of life. The French historian of ancient philosophy, Pierre Hadot, makes the distinction between philosophy as a way of life and philosophy as a theoretical approach (Neiman, 2000, p. 575). Philosophy as theory emerged from the thirteenth century with the medieval university. Philosophy became an abstract and scholarly discourse (Neiman, 2000, p. 578). Philosophy as a way of life, with its focus on the person and the improvement morally and spiritually of that person, was overlooked (Neiman, 2000, p. 576).

A second Plato 'breakthrough' was knowing how to live, about a moral life, about good, and about ideals of what ought to be. A third 'breakthrough' represented this time by Socrates and Plato, was a threefold role of the person of care of the self, care of others, and care of the city (P. Hadot, 2002, p. 37-38). To quote Socrates from Plato's *Apologia* (38a): 'I examine myself and others' and he goes on to say that 'an unexamined life is not livable for man'. Socrates exemplified the person who cared for himself, for others, and for the city. His reason for living was to concern himself with others. His interlocutors were aware of this and of him removing them from their daily lives to consider their values and actions. At the same time, Plato and Xenophon identifies a man fully participating in the life of the city (P. Hadot, 2002, p. 36-37). This threefold role reappears throughout the remainder of Greek and Roman philosophical history. To live such a life is to turn to intellectual and spiritual nourishment of the soul, represented, in Hadot's words, by 'an inner disposition in which thought, will, and desire are one' (P. Hadot, 2002, p. 65). Pierre Hadot's partner, Isletraut Hadot (1984, p. 15), describes this as a slow and difficult education of the entire person.

The threefold role requires articulation of the soul, mind, and body. The contemporary meaning of soul is largely a theological one. The Socratic meaning was philosophical. Socrates suggests, in Plato's *Phaedo*, that it is the soul that animates the body. But whilst Socrates attributes some mental functions to the body, Plato, in the *Republic*, attributes to them to the soul. Plato distinguishes three parts of the soul, namely, the reason, the spirit, and the appetitive. Reason relates to knowledge and truth. It guides and regulates the life of the person to the extent of wisdom accumulated. It takes into account the concerns of the three parts of the soul and the soul as a whole. The spirit seeks recognition and esteem of others and accounts for motivation and ambition. Desires frustrated give rise in the spirit to anger and indignation. The appetitive gives rise to desires for food, drink, and sex on the basis that fulfilling such desires is pleasant. Socrates extends these desires to money (Lorenz, 2003).

People have different conceptions of what they desire, of what they see as valuable. Which desires govern the soul depend on the degree of socialisation and education each receives in these desires and which desires lead to false or true happiness (Reeve, 2003, p. 14).

The Stoics, one of the philosophical schools in Hellenistic Greece, narrowed the concept of the soul. The person was now made up of a soul, mind, and body. The soul was made up of eight parts: the mind, the voice, the five senses, and certain aspects of reproduction. The mind controlled the body and the other constituents of the soul. Lorenz (2003) suggests that this concept of the mind may have led in a convoluted way to the Cartesian notion of the mind. This in turn may account for the contemporary discourse of mind rather than the soul.

A focus on the soul allows exploration of the significance, meaning, and role of virtues in Greek philosophy. To be virtuous is to give ourselves to realising fully the potential of our human nature. We may do this by adopting virtuous habits and conforming to our own standards than those that might exist externally. A virtuous life produces a happiness that represents the *telos* of the human life. Such happiness is sufficient to overcome the temptation to vice. This philosophical approach contrasts with the succeeding theology of Christianity and its attention to sin, temptation, vice (Pellergrin, 2003, p. 50-51), and the flesh.

Differences in the way people lead their lives are due to differences in the way that they exercise the virtues of their souls (Lorenz, 2003). Aristotle identified intellectual and moral virtues. There are five intellectual virtues of the soul. The theoretical virtues include theoretical wisdom (*sophia*). This is a perfect form of knowledge (1962: 1141a17) 'where inductive logic can apprehend first causes and trace particular phenomena back to them' (Tubbs, 2004, p. 553). Theoretical wisdom depends on two other theoretical virtues: intelligence (*nous*) and theoretical or philosophical knowledge (*episteme*). Intelligence is intuitive understanding of principles and ends. Theoretical or philosophical knowledge 'deals with real knowledge of universals as opposed to mere opinions about them' (Tubbs, 2004, p. 553). There are two other intellectual virtues. Practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is 'the production of good character and true or right ethical action'. It may be work whose *telos* is external to itself (*poiesis*) or work whose *telos* is internal to itself (*praxis*). The practical (*technique*) is the tools, technologies, and competencies of production: it is the means to the end of production (Tubbs, 2004, p. 553-554) (Orton, 2004, p. 576-577). Moral virtues relate to the character of the soul. Those most easily observable are 'friendliness, wit, bravery, honor, mildness, generosity, and magnificence'; those less easily observable are 'magnanimity, temperance, truthfulness, and justice' (Fallona, 2000, p. 689-670).

## The process of education

The good polis strives to bring about realisation of the capacities of all its citizens within which the individual strives to transform the 'self and soul' (Nightingale, 2004, p. 6, 10). The content and process of education in Ancient Greece was within the context of a concern for a better rather than an ordinary life, by higher activities rather than by activities of existence, by 'contemplation, for some, the citizen life, for others' (Taylor, 1985, p. 155).

Education in Ancient Greece starts with the sophists and continues successively with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The sophists emerged in the Greek city-states from c. 500 BCE. They were the first to recognise 'the conscious ideal of culture' as the highest expression of civilisation; that is, for them a universal and whole of life concept. The term *paideia* meant both culture and education since the effort of finding culture in its highest and various artistic forms, for them, was an educational activity. One sophist, Protagoras, saw education as shaping the soul. The sophist technology of education in shaping the soul was described by Jaeger as 'one of the greatest discoveries which the mind of man has ever made'. It was a technology underpinned by 'the systematic expression of the principle of shaping the intellect, [that] begins by instruction in the form of language, the form of oratory, and the form of thought' (Jaeger, 1965, p. 298, 303, 313-314).

Socrates said virtue was knowledge. In doing so, he was not thinking of abstract theory but of knowledge that is seeking the good, one of 'an inner disposition [of the person] in which thought, will, and desire are one' (P. Hadot, 2002, p. 65). Plato insisted that 'education must not be narrowly vocational, that virtue must take precedence over utility, that knowing has a pre-eminent claim over doing, and that training must have for its ultimate end the making of the good citizen endured over the centuries, ideas which have always provoked both sharp criticism and fervent support' (Lucas, 1972, p. 83). Plato emphasised oral discourse as he believed it linked two souls in personal exchange requiring active input from each. The process formed and transformed the person by demanding reason and thereby forming the norm of the good. In contrast, written discourse provided ready-made and impersonal knowledge without a capacity to ask and respond to questions (P. Hadot, 2002, p. 71-73).

Plato believed that philosophy could enrich political life. He sought to train philosophers who could be statesmen in the love of the good and in transforming the person. To govern the city (*polis*), his pupils first of all had to govern themselves, an approach that subsequent Greek philosophical schools followed (P. Hadot, 2002, p. 59-60). Both Plato and Aristotle saw 'the

polis as the essential environment for the life of the fulfilled individual'. They saw no conflict between the aspirations of the individual and the demands of the polis. For Aristotle, living in the polis, allowed the citizen to develop and exercise his faculties to the fullest (Hampsher-Monk, 1999). In *Politics* (VIII, 1337a), Aristotle states that 'it is wrong for any citizen to think that he belongs to himself. All must be considered as belonging to the *polis*: for each man is a part of the *polis*, and the treatment of the part is necessarily determined by the treatment of the whole'. Aristotle's phrase that 'man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all' (*Politics* I.2, 1153a31-33) relates to his remark that:

Speech ... serves to make clear what is expedient and what is inexpedient, and so also what is just and unjust. For by contrast with other animals the human being has this peculiarity: he or she alone has sense of good and evil, just and unjust etc. An association in these matters makes a household and a state (*Politics* (1253a 14-18) (Curren, 1994, p. 16; Mulgan, 1999, p. 192).

The ultimate good for Aristotle is human happiness (*eudaimonia*) (*Nicomachean Ethics* I 7, III 4; *Eudemian Ethics* I 2) but he recognises 'other intermediate or subordinate ends or goods, such as personal health, intellectual activity, the good of friends and family' (Mulgan, 1999, p. 196-197). Education in virtue, for Aristotle, is 'the ability and inclination of each citizen to not only participate in the best life himself, but also [to] assist his fellow citizens in doing so'. In doing so, citizens of the city share 'in the common end of living the best life' (Curren, 1994, p. 2).. Thus, 'the only *stable* foundation' for establishing trust 'is a mutual *recognition of virtue*' (*Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.4, 1157a21-25) with education public so as to ensure the same for all. Without this, one might expect injustice to occur (Curren, 1994, p. 3, 10).

## Conclusion

Three seemingly disparate topics have been examined in this paper: neoliberalism, social pedagogy, and the philosophy of Ancient Greece. It has been the purpose of this paper to identify the connections between them and the common ground on which might be built concepts of education that contrast with the nineteenth century legacy system.

The original pedagogical project of Ancient Greece made no distinction between philosophy, politics, history, science, culture, aesthetics, and education in pursuit and fulfilment of the

purpose of life of happiness for children, adults, and the city. This life purpose operated at a higher level than mundane activities of production and consumption that underpin contemporary neoliberalism. Philosophy as a way of life sought to care for the self, care for others, and care for the city. Care for the self came to be in Hellenistic times a therapeutic activity; it might be seen in terms of the nineteenth century invention of the discipline of psychology. Care for others might be seen as the equivalent of the nineteenth century invention of sociology. Care for the city was seen as politics. Care for the self involved the soul and the body. Care for the soul involved the intellectual virtues: theoretical wisdom that draws on intelligence and on theoretical knowledge. Intelligence intuitively identifies principles and goals (*telos*) of learning. Theoretical knowledge deals with universals rather than opinions. Practical wisdom might be equated with the professionalism of good character and ethical action. The practical is the tools or means to produce the action. Care of the soul also involves development of the character, drawing on the moral virtues.

My study in regional Australia identified a social agency and playschool where pedagogical interventions and, albeit implicit, curriculum were more akin to the philosophy of Ancient Greece than to the pedagogy of the nineteenth century classroom. The adult client presented as perpetrator and/or victim of neglect, abuse, and violence. Care of the self was represented at a therapeutic and pedagogical level between adult client and worker. The pedagogical intervention was represented in an elementary way by introducing the client to the location of his or her behaviours in the theory of affects. This and subsequent interventions drew on the accumulation of resources of the client. Care of others was represented by drawing into the dialogue those affected by these behaviours, and by adults becoming agents for each other and for children. The pedagogical intervention was now relationship skills, and subsequently for young mothers in the playschool other life skills. Care of the city was represented by the young mothers preparing and then presenting a case to council for improved transport.

The present political philosophy of neoliberalism largely retains the nineteenth century model of education but directs the curriculum towards work and expeditious outcomes. This curriculum is performed within public service institutions competing with each others for students. The curriculum is modified by an earlier conservative ideology of prescribing values that contrast with those of a free market. The modified curriculum contrasts with that of the original pedagogy of Ancient Greece and, more modestly, with a pedagogy of a social agency reported here. These last two pedagogies centre on the life activities of adults and children and the 'city' in which they are citizens. They draw on the resources of the citizen, and on the latent capacity of the citizen (even those in extreme life circumstances) for care of the self, of

others, and of the city. And both of them, presently or potentially, allow the state to rely less on its range of punitive and health institutions.

The contemporary and, in a historical context, temporary neoliberal ideology is likely to run its course. There are indications that the remnants of an earlier ideology are emerging to compromise the neoliberal project. Other forms of partiality might suggest that the purity of assumptions of the founding ideal – in this case the free market – is compromised too by growing contradictions and unintended consequences of implementation of the project. The accumulation of these then reaches a point where another ideology becomes more attractive.

There are indications of this occurring in education. There is growing scholarship on the assumptions, contradictions, and unintended consequences of neoliberalism in Anglocentric countries. There is the continuing – and no doubt irresolvable – challenge to commercialise the humanities and social sciences. And there is the recent statement that:

It is crucial that our students' civic knowledge and understanding, citizenship participation skills and values are well developed before they leave school so that they may participate in our democratic way of life as active and informed citizens (Nelson, 2005d).

Such a statement bears resemblance to the philosophy of Ancient Greece and perhaps to the possibility of alternative schemas of education that value care of the self, of others, and of the city again.



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