Access and Equity: Futures of an Educational Ideal

Marcus Bussey
University of the Sunshine Coast
Australia

Abstract

This paper offers an analysis of the concepts access and equity using CLA to highlight the complexity of the discourse and the nature of the contested conceptual space. An historical context is used to situate the discourse and place the tension between open ended and closed interpretations of these terms in their historical-cultural context. The social imaginary is applied to the field of social ordering in order to recognise the power of myth and metaphor in determining social context. The paper concludes with an exploration of alternative definitions of access and equity and the roles of fear and hope in defining the possible.

"Since its election in 1996, the Howard government has pursued an extreme version of neo-liberalism in its approach to education. The government has subjected education to market forces, and has made competition, choice, and accountability central priorities. These policy directions have affected all sectors of education in detrimental ways. This agenda has been taken up in narrow ideological ways and has threatened the social-democratic traditions in Australian education. ... In general, we have seen a shift from a view of education as a public good – central to the operation of a civil society – to a view of public education as a safety net operating in a system characterised by competition, stratification and individualism. The policies have reshaped public education – built on notions of universal access, diversity and democracy – and have marginalised programs addressing educational inequality." (Taylor 2005: 8)

The neo-liberal policy attack on access and equity and other pillars of the Australian social-democratic tradition that Sandra Taylor describes here, has a long and noble history. The Australian prime minister, John Howard can chart his moral and intellectual roots back beyond his families' colonial roots to such western luminaries as Socrates and Plato. The struggle to defend and develop concepts such as access and equity shares the same lineage, being rooted in the stand off between the Athenian citizenry and Socrates. In this contest Protagoras, the great sophist teacher parodied by Plato, can be seen to represent the opinion that education was of universal value and the right and responsibility of all citizens.

Socrates nor Plato, nor for that matter the Australian prime minister, share such an opinion. The Socratic position is that education is differential: it is an unspoken but firmly held belief that most people are

unable to ascend to the heights of great minds and that culture, far from being universal, is the particular province of cultivated and cultured sectors of any community. In our age of political correctness this can no longer be stated so boldly, but in the Athens of Plato he could quite happily compare the average citizen to a donkey (Jaeger 1939/1965: 307; James 2005).

When exploring the futures of concepts like access and equity it helps to place them in their historical and cultural context. It is here that we find the fears and hopes of cultures as well as the contested value systems that form the intellectual and moral fabric of societies. From fear and hope, and the myths and metaphors that give them form, we come to understand why social expressions take the form they do when challenged in particular ways. Similarly, it is the dominant values of a culture that underwrite the definitions for what is possible and what is not and also set the limits of official knowledge and shape the nature of ignorance.

Throughout this article the historical standoff between Socrates and Protagoras will be used as a metaphor for the tension that lies at the heart of current definitions of access and equity and provide the context for thinking about the futures of such educational ideals.

An Ancient Wound

Werner Jaeger describes how education for the Sophists was a revolution that challenged patrician power. Their purpose in educating was to create good citizens. They posited that their vision was an advance on the earlier conception of education as a process of enculturation for the ruling patrician families. This tradition is represented by Protagoras, Hippias and Prodicus (Jaeger 1939/1965: 308). Patrician education, which aimed at creating good leaders through the amassing of cultural capital, was aligned with power and fostered a high culture that was felt to be beyond the reach of the ordinary populace. Amongst the critics of popular education were Socrates, Plato and later Aristotle (the teacher of that archetypal great-man, Alexander the Great). The 'culture' in question, for both groups, was essentially political (Jaeger 1939/1965: 300). Who had access to it was determined by the aims and political ideology of the leading educational thinkers of the day.

For Jaeger, this tension lay at the heart of Greek educational and cultural creativity. Protagoras, whom Jaeger describes as a proto-humanist, spoke of an egalitarian universal culture and developed the concept that "Man is the measure of all things". The patrician thinker Plato turned this idea on its head and posited instead that "The measure of all things is God" (Jaeger 1939/1965: 301). By placing knowledge in a transcendent context Plato strategically reinforced a dualism that fostered the splitting of humanity into two groups, the elite leaders who were gifted with culture, and the followers who were incapable of it. Plato offered a transcendent, yet authoritarian, culture and taught mostly nobles while Protagoras offered an immanent, egalitarian and universal culture and sought to bring his teaching to all[1].

Both approaches saw education as essential for effective governance. To both threads of Athenian-Greek consciousness culture was essentially political. The individual did not exist in a vacuum but was contextualised within the *polis* (James 2005). All meaning came from their being a part of the functioning of the city. Political culture was 'universal', as social organisation, the sharing of values and ideals, was the culture that bound human beings of all walks of life together in an effective polity. In this way access was determined by the need to be equipped with the skills to participate in the life of the *polis*. Obviously, the elitist perspective had no need for the concept of equity because people were essentially unequal. In democratic Athens however, Protagoras and the other Sophists taught that equality was earned through education and demonstrated through civic engagement. Culture was the cement of the *polis*, and had universal application to both camps. Thus Jaeger concludes that:

> *"This conception of the nature of universal culture summarizes the whole history of Greek education: ethics and politics taken together are one of the essential qualities of*

true paideia...the close connection between higher education and the idea of society and the state is an essential feature of classical Greece." (Jaeger 1939/1965: 300)

These two strands, the egalitarian and the elitist, have been in a constant dialogue ever since. Yet the balance has always been in favour of elites. This is not simply because Plato was its most eloquent advocate. Christianity too, with its equally pessimistic assessment of humanity, the 'fallen', as in need of constant rectification has perpetuated the distrust of authority for the crowd. Furthermore, Ziauddin Sardar has pointed out that the authoritarianism of Socrates has been a defining feature in both the western and Islamic traditions. The question of educability lies at the heart of this tension and it goes back to the argument between Socrates and Athens. Socrates had argued we were not equal and all were certainly not educable to the same degree. The Athenian polity took and implemented the reverse position, namely that any cook could rule. Greek thought is stamped with this standoff and modern intellectual history in general, and educational theory in particular, perpetuates it.

"Greek thought envelopes the ways of knowing as well as the very being of Western and Muslim civilizations. We live and breath it, it is our perpetual shadow, our eternal guide from the dark Cave into the world of reason and light, our road to reality." (Sardar 1989: 3)

Roberto Calasso explores this tension further, pointing out that although the *demos* was a Greek discovery, it went hand in hand with their gift for subverting both freedom and justice via public opinion (Calasso 1993: 255-256), which acted as a form of popular authoritarianism. The contempt that Socrates had for the crowd was mutual. Thus, I.F. Stone observes that Socrates would not claim as his defence his entitlement to freedom of speech, that defining feature of the Athenian *polis*. Socrates treated that freedom with contempt and taught others to view the average citizen as little better than a donkey. Stone concludes:

"Socrates would have found it repugnant to plead a principle in which he did not believe; free speech for him was the privilege of the enlightened few, not of the benighted many. He would not have wanted the democracy he rejected to win a moral victory by setting him free.

His martyrdom, and the genius of Plato, made him a secular saint, the superior man confronting the ignorant mob with serenity and humour. This was Socrates' triumph and Plato's masterpiece. Socrates needed the hemlock, as Jesus needed the crucifixion, to fulfil a mission. The mission left a stain forever on democracy. That remains Athens' tragic crime. (Stone 1989: 230)."

Education has been living with this 'stain' for two and a half millennia. It is deep and the tension is as alive and vigorous today as it was in the time of Socrates.

The Reasons for Educating

This historical overview reveals that the reasons for educating are linked with the way we educate, the range and scope of how we educate and the way we define the group we educate. Access in this sense becomes a question not just of delivery but of definition. Equity no longer refers to the single issue of a facilitated and selective access but to the systemic response to the human right to a rich, diverse and empowering education. At the risk of perpetuating a dualism, these two positions, encapsulated in the standoff between Socrates and the people of Athens, help us to establish the boundaries of the question: what does and can access and equity mean?

In exploring this question a spectrum of possible positions emerge. These positions are the result of attempts to resolve the wound of Socrates' death. Socrates won a profound moral victory when he goaded the people into sentencing him to death. Were they right to do so? Did they prove their ignorance and pettiness by passing sentence? Is human nature essentially mean, sinful and vindictive?

If the answer is Yes, then education will focus on control and discipline, on what Gordon Tait calls 'individuation, differentiation, normalisation' (Tait 2004). If however, the

answer is No, then the focus will be on the child and their family, on holistic learning and on building strong critical and personal relevance into learning. If the answer is Yes, then access becomes a means of selection and assimilation, of the division of labour and of maintaining a belief in merit and of the rights of the individual over the collective. Equity, too becomes a differential concept, which when linked to the concept of merit rationalises the individual's, and whole sections of the populace's, inclusion or exclusion from power and wealth. If the answer is No, then access becomes a means of engaging with social division, the impoverishment of culture and the selective discrimination against various vulnerable groups within the community. Similarly equity, becomes a social justice issue as opposed to a neo-Darwinian tool and education becomes a vehicle for social renewal and a resource for community and regional enterprise.

Furthermore, if we were to step beyond the dualism implicit in much of western thought and embrace the 'synthetic' position of many non-western traditions we find a space of possible interpretations and actions based on an entirely different set of principles. Such a space Edward Soja describes as a 'third space' in which hybridity of values and voices sets the scene for inclusive but not homogenised possible solutions to the tensions inherent in western dualism. (Soja 1996)

Yoshiharu Nakagawa makes a similar point when he states that "Eastern philosophy does not see language as the all-embracing matrix or as the highest organ to grasp the universal laws (*logos*)." (Nakagawa 2000: 148) The tension that is the hallmark of the western educational tradition becomes a non-tension in this context. Access can mean openness and equity can mean fulfilment. In this context learning and unlearning become linked in a dance between ignorance and knowledge, both in this 'other' educational space holding a meaningful place within a seemingly paradoxical holistic educational setting.

The neohumanism at the heart of this position is a reformulation, one might say a transvaluation, of the Greek ideal as expressed by Protagoras and taken up two millennia later by Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More. It offers a new critical dimension to educational thinking in which relationship and community are as important as analysis and individuation. When both positions are allowed to step out of the straight-jacket of binary logic, access must reconcile with the conceptual and social tension that there is no even playing field and equity must allow for both personal ability and structure to form fluid solutions to the personal and the social paradox that no two human beings are the same and therefore at some ultimate level the notion of equity is flawed.

The point here is that civilizations are networks of values that define our expectations and generate the reasons for human individual and collective action. The dualism at the heart of western educational discourse is but one way of defining what is knowable and therefore real. Beyond dialectic there is the possibility of a third or neohumanist space that is a creative synthesis that is forever fluid and responsive to shifts in human and social order. This is the living space of cultural ordering where concepts are mutable and genealogical analysis opens the present up to its past.

Whose Definitions?

Institutions tend to be blind to history. Educational systems are no exception. This however does not exempt them from the play of history. As it stands, modernity has taken Socrates' side in the debate over human nature. This is why the issues of access and equity exist. Western society is not as free and liberal as our leaders would have us believe. Our educational institutions are dominated by systems that perpetuate exclusivity and inequity. Education is, we are told, about merit, excellence, performance and accountability and these concepts generate hierarchical, discriminatory and selective values. Furthermore neoliberalism, the ideological and economic structure of late modernity, perpetuates myths of ascendance and differential reward (Apple 2003; Illich 1971; Postman 1969; Pusey 1991)

This situation is maintained by the ahistori-

cal nature of the educational gaze. From this neoliberal context the ideological struggles of the past are deemed to be over and modern education, for all its recognised problems, is heralded as one of the great victories of modernity. The subtext is simple: Why quibble about issues of access and equity when we are getting education to a vast and diverse population, meeting a vast array of needs and challenges and skilling our populations with new and exciting technologies, known in the trade as 'essential learnings' and/or 'multi-literacies'? The implication is that it is the future that education must respond to, not the past. The imperative, politicians and large tracts of the media would have us believe, is to prepare children for the threats, challenges and possibilities of a future that is essentially unknowable, yet darkly forbidding. Fear thus becomes the fuel for our educational conservatism.

Yet, from the expanded humanist position exemplified by Protagoras and the perspective of critical futures education, how education responds is moulded by its past, the choices. made and the values that informed these choices In this sense, the future becomes a magnet, the past the context and the emergent present provides a range of possibilities.

Still, to push our metaphor further, Socrates casts a long shadow. The modern state, threatened as it is by the dual forces of globalism and resurgent community action, stands in that shadow, and its perspective is shaped by unconscious assumptions about human nature being ignorant, lazy, short-sighted, chaotic, deceitful, etc. One logical response is to seek to extend control over this unruly nature via increased central control over education and other vehicles of civic and cultural cohesion. However, as James Scott dryly observes "the administrator's forest cannot be the naturalist's forest" (Scott 1998: 22). Similarly, the administrator's school cannot be the child's school.

For the administrative mind, control requires legibility, the quantification of natural space. So education, as an activity of the modern bureaucratic state, demands legibility (Scott 1998: 183); it requires practices that enable schools, teachers and their students to be assessed, measured and quantified. Such practices become internalised and act as a form of social control. Foucault described this process by analogy to Bentham's panopticon, a revolutionary prison design that builds self-surveillance into the prisoner's psyche. (Foucault 1977). State surveillance via testing and reporting operates in this way, actively changing the way students and their teachers function (Meadmore 2004: 27). Such self-regulation is only required when social institutions such as education are felt to be under-performing. The logic of neoliberalism, encapsulated on this occasion in the concept of 'performativity' is rooted in a lack of trust of the citizen/child/teacher and promotes the application of what Daphne Meadmore has called 'disciplinary technologies' (Meadmore 2004: 26). The need to measure the performance of schools is an administrator's response to the need to manage a populace, characterised by the flaws Socrates attributed to it, for a future that is described as unpredictable and complex.

The modern state's response is encapsulated in a recently released educational framework from the Australian state of Queensland. The focus here is to increase that state's competitive edge. The framework, from Education Queensland, opens with the following observation:

> *"The world is changing rapidly. Queenslanders need to be highly skilled and educated to excel among their competitors overseas, and their skills need to be updated continually to keep pace." (Queensland Government 2005: 1)*

The future is used here not in the futures sense of an open domain to stimulate the emergence of what Richard Slaughter calls 'social foresight' (Slaughter 2004: 170ff), but as a tool for the further colonisation of social and personal space by the state. In the Australian context this escalation of bureaucratic surveillance in education has been described as a function of the nation's powerful, yet shadowy, elite to define the language and values of the populace (Connell 2004). State intervention, through the promotion of reforms and the rewarding of per-

formance, is an appropriate tool for this activity. This is important as concepts such as 'access' and 'equity' have been defined by policy in narrow quantifiable terms that fail to acknowledge the social aspiration inherent to them.

Damien Cahill (Cahill 2004) stresses the central role that definition, the ability to define the real, has in the contestation of a hegemonic political/ideological landscape. Resistance today is often bound by the language and agenda of the state. Futures thinking helps to see beyond that agenda by proposing an analysis that acknowledges the roots of the present in the past, identifying the forces shaping the present and generating a sense of agency based on future images that acknowledge both that which is feared and that which is desired. Without such an approach we remain, as Cahill notes, bound by the rhetoric of those interests driving an aggressive, future-colonising agenda.

> *"Too often the language of the elite is being adopted by those resisting its agenda, and in doing so the words, ideas and the language of the powerful are accepted as the platform on which strategies are then mistakenly built. If it is accepted that the state is central to the program of neoliberalism then movements for change will be in a better position to strip away the propaganda behind such terms as 'free trade' and 'deregulation'." (Cahill 2004: 84)*

The same can be said of terms such as access and equity.

Mapping the Tension

Let's return for a moment to the Greeks. One way of interpreting the present and exploring the future is to look at the dualism expressed by the elitism of Socrates and the egalitarianism of Protagoras. The present set of educational ideals embodied in western state education pay tribute to both and educational policy documents are stamped with both the authoritarian need to administer and control and the egalitarian wish to affirm the rights of the child and the innate drive to learn that lies at the heart of humanity (Bussey 2001). Here we see that a consensus has been negotiated and a compromise arrived at. Reading such documents is like performing an archaeological dig in which we meet merit and access, excellence and equity, the vocational and the intrinsic, performance and process, information and knowledge. These terms define the central concerns and processes of education, but depending on whether the writer is placed in the Socratic or Protagorian traditions, the intent and practical result is different.

The thrust of the argument is that the mythic roots of civilisations, their ancient 'wounds', actually generate much of the instrumental logic that orders our cultural institutions. Cornelius Castoriadis reminds us of this when he describes the social imaginary[2] the collective magma of humanity, as a set of forms.

> *"A form – an eidos as Plato would have said – means a set of determinations, a set of possibilities and impossibilities that are defined starting from the moment the form is posited." (Castoriadis 1997a: 103)*

Of the social imaginary itself he notes:

> *"Social imaginary signification brings into being things as these here things, posits them as being what they are – the what being posited by signification, which is indissociably principle of existence, principle of thought, principle of value, and principle of action" (Castoriadis 1997b: 313)*

The dualism we are exploring as a process of the social imaginary is a social form in Castoriadis' sense – it demarcates the possible from the impossible while setting limits on the probable and the preferable (Bell 1993). Form, draws on deep narratives that, as Sohail Inayatullah points out, are often unconscious to the actors (Inayatullah 2004: 66-67). These forms order our reality by limiting the possible and establishing the criteria for measuring present activity. Despite periods of hegemonic constraint these forms are never unitary (Hetherington 1997: 10), but contain within themselves the contradictions and tensions that, as Jaeger noted of the period of Greek democracy (Jaeger 1939/1965: 300), are the source of a societies' creative energy.

Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe point to the fact that such forms of hegemony are root-

ed in deeply held images, at once plural and indeterminate, that institute the social (Laclau 1992: 151). The definition of these forms is a field of contestation that constitutes the political. The twin poles of access and equity as represented by Socrates and Protagoras are in reality broken down. The political becomes a subjective process that concerns the ability to define. Hence Laclau and Mouffe assert, there can be no politics without hegemony.

> *"...politics as a practice of creation, reproduction and transformation of social relations cannot be located at a determinate level of the social, as the problem of the political is the problem of the institution of the social, that is, of the definition and articulation of social relations in a field crisscrossed with antagonisms." (Laclau 1992: 153)*

For Laclau and Mouffe it is the inner construction of the outer world that needs to be addressed when we are seeking to engage with the power of definition. This inner process is both richly inhabited by sign and signifier, but it is also paradoxically open and empty. Laclau sees this emptiness as the source of the force of any ideal (Laclau 2002: 125). Richard Slaughter captures this process of interpenetration in a modification of Ken Wilber's four quadrant model in which each quadrant (the inner, outer, collective and individual) is seen to fold into the other (Slaughter 2004 Image on: 142).

This leads to a theoretical sensitivity to the creative process of the social imaginary and also to the appreciation of the 'radical impossibility' of an end point to this process, be it a perfected democracy or a stable empire (Laclau 2002: 128). It is too temping to place constructions such as authority and egalitarianism in mutually exclusive camps (Laclau 1992). In fact they mutually interpenetrate one another. The naturalist's garden may not be the administrator's garden but they usually cohabit. Similarly, Socrates' life was spent in the vibrant intellectual world that was democratic Athens, he may have rejected it, but he also benefited from its vitality (James 2005).

CLA of the Ancient Stain

Laclau and Mouffe point to the problem of the institution of the social that takes place outside of the arena of the determinate. This is the arena of the symbolic in which collective 'mind' shapes and validates, and thus institutes, the real. This institution they see arising from the break down between the internal and external social world, a division which was in reality only a theoretical construct of nineteenth century Marxism as it focused on class relations (Laclau 1992: 151ff). One way to explore this arena of the political imaginary is to apply causal layered analysis (CLA) to the standoff between Socrates and Protagoras (Inayatullah 2004).

CLA is designed to unpack the social as it is constituted through the interplay of elements of the social imaginary. It begins with the area of the social Laclau and Mouffe call the determinate – that which is expressed through discourse and social process in the objective external world. The surface of this expression is the day-to-day *litany* that we hear in the mouths of politicians, read in headlines and see on the evening news. This is the unreflective disconnected social space that can be so easily manipulated by the powerful, the media and politicians. Below this level is the social-institutional that describes how society, or any organisation, functions as a *system*. There are two other areas that CLA interrogates and these are the layers of social reality that are not directly accessible on the external level. They constitute the deeper processes of social ordering around which society orients itself, instituting new forms of social relations as the narrative strands gain ascendency or loose ground to emergent alternatives. These are firstly the layer of *world-view* and discourse. This is constituted by the civilisational and hinges on ideology and discourse as a process for constituting the real and defining both the possible and that which is of value. Beneath this sits the *mythic-metaphoric* which represents the deep images, archetypes, memories and unconscious urges that drive and energise social expression.

The following table offers an analysis of the standoff between Socrates and Protagoras.

Both figures take the form of an ideal type. The point is to reveal strands in the present that are recognisable as referents in the ongoing process of social ordering. In this sense CLA acts as an epistemic map that exposes what we might call the psycho-social DNA of a component of the current social and political order.

	Socrates	**Protagoras**
Litany	Individual against the collective Noble Soul/Secular Saint Martyr to human pettiness and ignorance Vision always at risk of succumbing to the dark **Access** a mark of socio-economic status **Equity** inimical to Freedom Only the Great are Free Everyone has their place	Individual as part of the collective Nobility gained from Context Freedom always threatened by elitist aspirations of a minority **Access** for all Freedom = Responsibility **Equity** guarantees freedom
System	Totalitarian/benevolent Dictatorship Plato's Guardians Hierarchy & Order Central control Individualism and merit **Access** is earned, it is a privilege Wise Rule the Mob **Equity** threatens social stability and creativity	Participatory democracy Policy determined by consensus Flat structure Strong Community **Access** is a right Wisdom is a collective attribute **Equity** underpins social justice
World-View	Culture is the badge of the Rulers Knowledge is power-over Security comes from strength of Ruler The Mob is Irrational/Nature is Irrational Wisdom is transcendent – **accessed** by the Sage Hard work should be rewarded Knowledge is unitary - absolute Priesthood of Privilege God measure of all things **Equity** is irrational, it is not supported by reality	Culture is universal – it is our birthright Knowledge is 'Power-with' Security comes from the Collective The desire to control is irrational All Knowledge is within – **access** by education Collective endeavour bears collective results Knowledge is partial-evolving Community of Learners 'Man' the Measure of all things **Equity** is rational, it creates a just reality
Myth-Metaphor	Delphic Oracle voice of transcendent knowledge	Prometheus gives the tools for our self development

Such a schema provides an overview of some of the characteristics of both positions, although it is incomplete and partial and cannot be closed. As we are looking at the Greeks I sought out Greek-specific imagery for the mythic. The purpose of CLA is to expose the cultural, historical and epistemological roots at work in a specific context and offer an ontology of the social.

Four Educational Futures

Through the use of CLA we begin to understand how various definitions of access and equity inform specific systemic and individual responses to the future. Here four differing forms of schooling are presented (Bussey 2004) as ideal types in order to lay the foundations for our exploration of the concepts of access and equity as they function in each setting. The focus here is the emergent context. The typology offered draws upon current and emerging educational practice and spans a range of possible educational settings.

Fortress school is explored as the dominant short-term possibility with recognisable features and clear roots in the Socratic-elitist tradition. It is already present in many ways today and, as was noted at the opening of this paper, can be heard in the rhetoric of neoliberal policy. This model simply draws the present into the future as social division increases in response to the negative social, cultural and economic trends of a triumphal globalisation. The stresses inherent in such an historical process will increase all forms of social inequality and build a sense of isolation and antagonism into elite educational systems.

The multicultural school is considered as a future possibility in decline, many features have been trialled in educational systems in an ad hoc manner and are now the object of a sustained critique from conservative pedagogues, social commentators and politicians. Such schools can be seen to have roots in the Protagorian humanist tradition as they privilege culture as a birthright, access as a necessary ingredient for social solidarity and renewal and community over vested interest. Future decline of this type can be attributed in a large measure to the fact that multicultural principles are being forced into systemic contexts which are a direct product of elitist managerial practice and theory.

Virtual schools are a source of much excitement and speculation. They are much less immanent than either the fortress or multicultural school, both of which adopt as unproblematic many of the assumptions at the root of this type. There is an implicit elitism in the virtual revolution in general and in much thinking about virtual schooling in particular. This schooling therefore is linked to the Socratic tradition with its confidence in knowledge systems, its inherent virtual versus real world dualism and its insensitivity to the socio-economics of access and thus tacit acquiescence to a gated community of learners.

The eco-school is another emergent possibility. The ideology and idealism for such a possible future is certainly present today but such schools exist in many ways beyond the current construction of the real. They will have a deep commitment to sustainable social action which privileges community over isolated individual, responsibility over freedom, and participation over control. Many themes are present today in educational discourse yet the social structures needed to support them are rudimentary. They are strongly linked to the Protagorian tradition in that they value the collective as an extension of the individual, participatory engagement with questions of social and environmental concern, and learning as an ongoing collective engagement with personal and social reality. Yet they have the potential to move beyond humanism by affirming spirituality as a form of social action that has strongly integrative properties and the capacity to engage deeply with the forces that maintain the current imaginary institution of the real.

A CLA of Educational Futures

In applying the four educational futures sketched above to concepts of access and equity we find that a range of possible meanings emerge. The fortress-school model with its

emphasis on fear and intensification is a form of educational authoritarianism that currently dominates neoliberal thinking. It owes a strong debt to the authoritarianism of Socrates as indicated by the **Socrates+** at the bottom of its column. Rooted in our present it colonises the future through the propagation of a strongly hegemonic image of immanent loss of social, cultural and economic coherence in the face of a host of threatening 'unknowns'. Access here becomes a right and equity is the result of personal merit.

Multicultural schools offer a less authoritarian response to the current social and educational climate. Such schools will contest the dominant fortress school for some time and may emerge again to shape a positive learning culture. This future is currently in retreat as aspiring multicultural schools are being forced into line by new legislation. Essentially they owe their roots to the idealism of the welfare state and also to liberal-humanist education. They are softly authoritarian, in that the welfare state was highly interventionist and centralised, yet they owe their intellectual roots to a humanist faith in the human beings' inherent curiosity and goodness, hence they are categorised as Protagoras-. Access in such a context is deemed relatively unproblematic, the door is always seen to be open and all are welcome. A raft of policy actions are offered to facilitate entry (ie there is an appreciation of structural barriers to access) and equity is defined as a right with considerable attention given to social forces of exclusion and the role of structure in the definition and maintenance of the real.

	Fortress School	**Multicultural School**	**Virtual School**	**Eco-School**
Litany	Schooling is out of Control, Survival of the Fittest	New 3 R's, Child as Global Citizen, Life is Complex	World full of Winners and Losers, Losers aren't on line	Learning and Living go hand in hand, we make our Reality
Systems Perspective	More Testing, Pressurise Teachers and Students for Excellence Schools of Merit	Centralised management, Smart Schools are flexible, Schools sell	Business/Government Mediate virtual world, Speed and Flexibility, Teachers as technicians	Decentralise, local communities define learning, "Capital" redefined
World-View	Effective Management, Discipline	Plurality, Tolerance, Complexity	Individual Chooses Destiny	Unity amidst Diversity
Myth/ Metaphor	Schools are Knowledge Factories **Socrates +**	Global Village **Protagoras -**	Global Brain **Socrates -**	Eco-Commons of Gaia **Protagoras +**

The virtual school, for all its claims to inclusivity, is highly selective. It has a systems view of knowledge and little real interest in the student as a learner, focusing instead on the student as a part of an information-generating web. It is softly authoritarian in that it is less interested in power and control than in the generation of knowledge as the new form of capital. Hence it receives a Socrates- classification. Access in this context is also deemed unproblematic however there is little appreciation of the structural impediments to access and therefore the solution is simply one of money and skill. Equity is also a non-issue as the assumption is that all are equal on line. Gender, ethnicity and the like become invisible and therefore no longer inhibit the educational process.

The eco-school on the other hand values the student as an individual. Such schools will have a self-imposed charter to act as social change agents and will seek to strengthen community and sustainable praxis. Proto-typical eco-schools exist today although they account for a small fraction of the total educational system. They are usually holistic and even spiritual in orientation (Milojevic 2005), seeking to heal the psychic and cultural wounds inflicted on the western psyche by the hyper-rationalism of modernity (Palmer 1983/1993). They often tend to perpetuate the contemporary obsession with individualism and ego-identity, yet though their educational philosophies are diverse, they are all premised on the belief in the essential goodness of humans, and as such are classified as Protagoras+. Access in this context is a right that must be actioned through a shift in consciousness arrived at via a break with the modernist emphasis on utilitarian, neoliberal and individualist values. Equity too must be fought for, as it cannot simply be legislated but must be seen as a process not an end in itself.

Defining the Real

If we look at the level of myth and metaphor we come to understand the power of the deep image to frame the working realities of schools. Access and equity are seen to mean quite different things when placed in the context of their root myths. In the fortress school access is seen as a non-issue, the door in such schools is always open: all one needs do is enter. Similarly equity is defined as the result of hard work. In this context all are equal in the competition of life and thus we can all be winners. The fortress school is blind to the social processes that enable some while disabling others. Schools, defined as knowledge factories, are places of hard work and require constant scrutiny to run effectively.

In the multicultural school all are welcome. Access here is also unproblematic as there are many pathways in the global village leading to the school door. Equity hinges on ones' command of the knowledge economy and the embracing of and tolerance for difference which is a hallmark of the emerging global reality. Students are consumers and effectively earn knowledge shares through their own merit. Furthermore, such schools are sensitive to social processes that offer differential opportunity to students and seek to mitigate against such imbalances through an open door policy.

Virtual schools also find the concept of access unproblematic as they construct it in terms of access to information technology. In this setting money solves all problems and the only losers are those unable to log on. Social activism thus becomes a question of getting a computer into every home and computer banks into every classroom. For the global brain the construction of knowledge is unproblematic and equity is constructed as the freeing of the individual from their social and corporeal identity in cyberspace, where we are all equal.

In the eco-school we find access is defined as the extent to which we are able to free ourselves from external authority and construct pathways to learning via community. Equity in this context hinges on both the acknowledgement of the inherent worth of the individual and also on an appreciation of their social and ecological embeddedness. Education in the context of the global commons is a community resource that builds on empowerment.

The power to define the language that governs educational ideals such as access and equity is key to the control and maintenance of

social processes. The neoliberal ascendency of the past decade has successfully corralled education into the discourse of the fortress school thus making it the most likely future. In colonising the future this discourse draws on the rhetoric, aspirations and processes of the multicultural, virtual and eco schools in order to forge a consensus of sorts, yet there is less and less interest in consensus as neoliberal politicians, academics and media successfully manipulate the litany of fear and anxiety.

It is the potential of the future to strike fear into the populace that is exploited by conservative governments with an eye on the State's bank balance and the next election. Capital is narrowly defined as GNP and community is regarded as a resource to be exploited. Here we find the power of litany used to draw on the ancient fears of populations all too willing to trade security in the present for preferable futures for their children. Thus, as Lewis Mumford observed many years ago, the irrational becomes the rational, and all social processes are subjected to the 'ideology of the machine' (Mumford 1934/1986: 132).

Towards a Wild History

Futures analysis however, uncovers the rich range of myths that hold a place in the social imagination, and it is from this arena that alternatives to the present can emerge. When we redefine, we begin to transform the forms that maintain and order reality. Tobin Hart maps this movement when he links it to both the emergence of new categories and new self-definitions:

> "To transform is to go beyond current form. This means growth, creation, and evolution, an expansion of consciousness. When education serves transformation, it helps to take us beyond the mould of categories, the current limits of social structure, the pull of cultural conditioning, and the box of self-definition..." (Hart 2001: 12)

Philip Wexler also links it to the emergence of a living history. The educational gaze, shaken from its ahistorical blindness becomes alive. This coming back to life of learning and being is rooted in our sense of self and community. Wexler observes that:

> "If we need a 'wild' hunger to quench our ontological thirst, a dialogue with place that creates wholeness that we feel as ecstasy, then we also need a 'wild' history to satisfy our being in time. This is an active, living, remembered history and not a facticized accumulation of dead, inert otherness." (Wexler 2000: 143)

Critical futures offers such a wild history in which the human engagement with the continuum of past, present and future brings us alive to the context of our being and the potential of our life to actively co-create the future we wish for our children. It is in this discovery of agency that the dissolution of the present neoliberal hegemony is to be found.

The Politics of Fear and Hope

The potential for any reconstruction of the social lies in our ability to rediscover agency. It is important to realise that this fragile concept is caught (one might say bound) perpetually by a range of fears and drawn forward by an, often less clearly defined, range of hopes. Popular politics and the media are adept at manipulating the fears and hopes that are deeply rooted in all social constructions of the real.

To map our hopes and fears requires us to define the context that gives rise to these because once again, each context is situated within its own social construction. If you were to ask what does Socrates fear? You might answer, ignorance or freedom or perhaps, equality. For Protagoras the answer would be different, perhaps elitism or instrumentalism or radical individualism. At one level the answer is academic yet at another, deeply profound, as these iconic figures represent something of our reality today. They have a mythic power and authority that defines a set of human aspirations and concerns.

To better understand how definitions of access and equity are informed by social constructions of fear and hope we need to return to our four typologies all of which are anchored in present value systems and cultural processes

that stretch out into the future for 'radical' fulfilment. In this future the fortress school is an embattled school. It focuses on the individual whose future is paradoxically the hope of the social. It fears the loss of freedom in the name of equality and sees learning as the building of armour so that the 'educated' adult can battle through life. The future for the fortress school is dark and menacing.

Multicultural schools of tomorrow will fear fragmentation and the loss of coherence. They distrust competition and seek to balance the individual with the collective by acknowledging diversity. Those fighting for such schools will hope for a global world in which all have access to the benefits of education and can therefore contribute to the global village. The virtual school on the other hand will hope to get the entire world on line and fears luddites and the rediscovery of the body and relationship as the core of meaning.

Finally the eco-school will fear technology and its ability to define reality. Those developing such schools will hope that individuals rediscover the cosmos and community and thus reinstate meaningful relating into the learning and living equation. Such schools offer a vision of the sacred in nature (as opposed to the end of nature) and of the unique place humans have within this. Technology in such a context will be both human and artificial and will weave seamlessly into learning and culture.

The power of fear as a tool for maintaining social order cannot be under-estimated, yet it can also act as a goad to positive social engagement. We have all experienced the politics of fear, as terror both in its fundamentalist and state sanctioned forms, defines a whole set of current social relations. Yet it is in hope, the source of inspiration, that we find the power to transform the social. The politics of hope and fear need to be actively explored in order to redefine the current context. Hope here is of particular relevance.

Mary Zournazi sees hope as both a personal and social force that can effectively deal with the alienation and apathy that characterises the present neoliberal hegemony. She emphasizes, however, that in the dominant political climate hope has been redefined, or constrained. There is, she says, a new context in which hope acts as a negative social force. Here social order is reduced to minimal or impoverished settings in which, "for the benefit of our security and belonging, we evoke a hope that ignores the suffering of others, ...[and]... create a hope based on fear" (Zournazi 2002: 15).

Hope however can be much more, and Zournazi underscores this:

> "Hope can be what sustains life in the face of despair, and yet it is not simply the desire for things to come, or the betterment of life. It is the drive or energy that embeds us in the world – in the ecology of life, ethics and politics." (Zournazi 2002: 14-15)

In this context access and equity can link up with both personal and social aspirations that affirm human relationship and underscore a social commitment to justice and an ethical engagement with the powerful interest groups that benefit from maintaining a social imaginary that is divisive and exploitative. By exploring hope and fear and filtering concepts such as access and equity through this lens we develop more subtle and more robust understandings and strategies.

Implications for Access and Equity

To engage the causal strands that underpin current thinking on access and equity will require a shift in awareness and practice. These concepts are embedded in constructions of social reality and therefore cannot be simply dealt with in the abstract. This is the problem alluded to by thinkers such as Castoriadis, Laclau and Mouffe. To deal with access and equity outside of the question of context is to base the analysis on a 'radical insufficiency' (Laclau 1992: 151) that dooms attempts to legislate social justice in all its forms to failure.

We need to challenge the rules confining the definition of access and equity to narrow and instrumental policy processes. To do this we must realise that new rules need new roots

(Myth/Metaphor) and that these roots may lie outside conventional wisdom and cultural conditioning. This is the possibility alluded to above as the 'third space' that generates new stories and draws on new cultural and civilisational imaginings. Humanism itself expresses the ideals at the heart of current thinking on access and equity, yet provides no capacity building structures to frame a redefinition of the discourse. Neohumanism provides a 'third space', human technology for reframing discourse on access and equity and also affirms the contemplative and spiritual ground for an engagement with human consciousness and the ethical and subjective roots of meaning. What emerges then is a new map and the processes outlined in the various layers of the causal analyses provided above act as sets of bearings in this process.

The central problem with any analysis of hegemony is that it usually remains in the realm of the theoretical and often is forced to use the terms and tools of the dominant knowledge system (Cahill 2004). At present the neoliberal attack, described in the opening of this paper, on the social-democratic traditions that have been the hallmark of Australian society for several generations is dominating the intellectual, moral and economic landscape that in turn defines the possible in education. To go beyond Sandra Taylor's critique of such an attack (Taylor 2005) and to define new possibilities for the social will require us to clarify the causal roots of the neoliberal position. Only then can we actually begin thinking and acting in open-ended ways to create alternatives to the dominant system. Furthermore, when dealing with access and equity we must recognise that they are the products of specific civilisational historical, social, economic and political processes.

How education engages with access and equity this century will be determined by how the interplay between the various contested educational futures is resolved. There are important and irreconcilable positions too that must be embraced in the movement towards greater access and equity in its most socially just context. For instance, there will always be a tension between the concept of freedom and that of equality. Similarly, there is a necessary tension between an individual's identity and their communal context, between biography and history, agency and structure. Such tensions are the source of the creative energy that defines social processes. They are politically charged by virtue of the fact that ideology seeks to define, maintain and control the construction of the real and what constitutes the valid

The redefinition of access and equity hinge on our ability as individuals and groups to re-engage with alternative images of the social in order to activate memories, traditions and dreams founded on a trust in human agency. Only when we turn our back on the long shadow of Socrates, and his disdain of the commonplace and ordinariness of the human, will we be able to realise how much he (we) lost when he chose death over life.

Correspondence

Marcus Bussey
MBussey@usc.edu.au
Box 879
Maleny
Queensland
Australia 4552

Notes

1. We need to remember that 'all' meant all citizens – Athenian Greece, even at its most enlightened still had slaves (helots) and a large disenfranchised 'alien' population. Even so, both slaves and 'aliens' were given an education according to need and demonstrated ability.
2. "The symbolic orders of all societies have their actual centre of meaning in a world which is not merely perceived or rationally constructed, but rather in an imagined referential world, an imaginary. From it, society creates the interpretations and explanations which give it a unified meaning" (Honneth 1986) 70.

References

Apple, M. 2003. *The State and the Politics of Knowledge*. London/New York: Falmer.

Bell, W. 1993. "Bringing the good back in: Values, objectivity and the future." *International Social Science Journal*. August. 137: 333-347.

Bussey, M. 2001. "Sustainable Education: Policy in Search of a New Language." *Journal of Futures Studies*. 6(12): 71-88.

___ 2004. "Educational Scenario Building: CLA as a tool for unpacking educational futures." In S. Inayatullah (ed.). *The Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) Reader: Theory and Case Studies of an Integrative and Transformative Methodology*. Taipei, Taiwan: Tamkang University Press.

Cahill, D. 2004. "Getting the Government off our Backs?: The Ruling Class and New Trends in the State's Management of Dissent." In N. Hollier (ed.). *Ruling Australia: The Power, Privilege & Politics of the New Ruling Class*. Pp. 70-86. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing.

Calasso, R. 1993. *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (T. Parks. Trans.). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Castoriadis, C. 1997a. "Anthropology, Philosophy, Politics." *Thesis Eleven*. May. 49: 99-116.

____ 1997b. *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Connell, R. W. 2004. "Moloch Mutates: Global Capitalism and the Evolution of the Australian Ruling Class 1977-2002." In N. Hollier (ed.). *Ruling Australia: The Power, Privilege and Politics of the New Ruling Class*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing.

Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin.

Hart, T. 2001. *From Information to Transformation: Education for the Evolution of Consciousness*. New York: Peter Lang.

Hetherington, K. 1997. *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering*. London & New York: Routledge.

Honneth, A. 1986. "Rescuing the Revolution with an Ontology: On Cornelius Castoriadis' Theory of Society." *Thesis Eleven*. 14: 62-78.

Illich, I. 1971. *Deschooling Society*. London: Pelican.

Inayatullah, S. (ed.). 2004. *The Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) Reader: Theory and Case Studies of an Integrative and Transformative Methodology*. Taipei, Taiwan: Tamkang University Press.

Jaeger, W. 1939/1965. *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture Volume* 1 (G. Highet. Trans.). New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

James, C. L. R. 2005. Every Cook Can Govern: A Study of Democracy in Ancient Greece. In D. Roussopoulos, & Benello, C. George (ed.). *Participatory Democracy: Prospects for Democratizing Democracy*. Pp. 332-347. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. 1992. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.

_____ 2002. "Hope, Passion, Politics". In M. Zournazi (ed.). *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Pp. 122-148. Sydney: Pluto Press.

Meadmore, D. 2004. "The rise and rise of testing: how does this shape identity?" In B. Burnett, Meadmore, D., & Tait, G. (ed.). *New Questions for Contemporary Teachers: Taking a Socio-Cultural Approach to Education*. Pp. 25-39. Sydney: Pearson Education Australia.

Milojevic, I. 2005. "Critical Spirituality as a Resource for Fostering Critical Pedagogy." *Journal of Futures Studie*. 9(3): 1-16.

Mumford, L. 1934/1986. *The Future of Technics and Civilisation*. London: Freedom Press.

Nakagawa, Y. 2000. *Education for Awakening: An Eastern Approach to Holistic Education*. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.

Palmer, P. 1983/1993. *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Postman, N., & Weingartner, Charles. 1969. *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. New York: Delta Books.

Pusey, M. 1991. *Economic Rationalism: A Nation Building State Changes its Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Queensland Government. 2005. *Queensland*

Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework. Brisbane: Department of Education and the Arts.

Sardar, Z. 1989. "Against the Common Man: Authoritarianism and the Greek Intellectual Heritage." *Muslim World Book Review*. 9(2): 3-15.

Scott, J. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Slaughter, R. A. 2004. *Futures Beyond Dystopia: Creating Social Foresight*. London & New York: Routledge/Falmer.

Soja, E. W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell.

Stone, I. F. 1989. *The Trial of Socrates*. New York: Anchor.

Tait, G. 2004. "What is the relationship between social governance and schooling?" In B. Burnett, Meadmore, D., & Tait, G. (ed.). *New Questions for Contemporary Teachers: Taking a Socio-Cultural Approach to Education*. Pp. 13-25. Sydney: Pearson Education Australia.

Taylor, S. 2005. "Education - Private Consumption or Public Good." *Green: the magazine of the Australian Greens*. Spring. 17: 8.

Wexler, P. 2000. *Mystical Society: An Emerging Social Vision*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Zournazi, M. 2002. *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*. Sydney: Pluto Press.