

Dwelling and creative imagination in Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology: Returning to the poetic space of education and learning

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ABSTRACT

In response to the so-called crisis in contemporary education in the institutions of higher learning (USA)—the encroachment of corporatism and pervasion of standardization—there is a move to offset this dominance by reconceiving the university in terms of an intimate space of dwelling in learning and education. In light of this moribund condition in education, I address the following concerns: How should educators approach the 'space' of learning in the new millennium with respect to the supposed 'new face' of education in higher learning? What implication will such changes to curriculum have on the 'context' of learning? Will the context of learning now need to be reconceptualized, and if it is, what effects will this have on students and educators? Herein I consider the contributions that the philosopher Gaston Bachelard's phenomenological ontology of space, dwelling, and the creative imagination might make to the formulation of rejoinders to these crucial questions and concerns, which offer the reader a reconceived view of the space of learning that is radically at odds with our contemporary conceptions that might be linked with social efficiency ideology.

KEYWORDS

Phenomenology; curriculum; standardization; higher learning

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In response to the so-called crisis in contemporary education in the institutions of higher learning, e.g. the encroachment of corporatism and pervasion of standardization, we have encountered many viable and inspirational responses by curriculum theorists and philosophers of education such as Pinar (2011), Smith (2011), and Maxwell (2012). These thinkers have stressed that higher education is moving, and continues to move, farther away from Humbolt's inspirational idea of the university as a place of deep, sustained meditative study as opposed to a place, or *space*, of research. We find this in Pinar's exploration of 'study *not* curriculum,' Smith's exploration of Eastern forms of wisdom, and Maxwell's intriguing notion of 'wisdom-inquiry' being integrated into the curriculum to offset the dominance of what he terms 'knowledge-inquiry.' In relation to the university, or better, learning, conceived in terms of a *space of dwelling in education*, I draw the reader's attention to the fact that in Attic Greek, $\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ has a distinct meaning that sets it off from the term $\epsilon\theta\omicron\varsigma$, and yet both are often erroneously transliterated as 'ethos': the latter indicates 'learned, practiced, and habituated behaviors' while the former, in a more primordial and original rendering, intimates one's intimate space of 'dwelling, of abode, with others,' be that in the agora, the temple, or when gathered around the hearth's fire. All of these examples have a distinct and unique notion of 'space' attached to them. There is also a unique space ($\eta\theta\omicron\varsigma$) that is proper to education, and it too indicates an intimate mode of dwelling with *others*. It is this mode of *dwelling in learning*, within the context

or space of the classroom, or perhaps more correctly, the *space of learning*, that I address in this essay. For this 'space' and 'dwelling' in higher education is now under siege—i.e. the space of the educational experience is being up-rooted. For the future of higher education, if such authors as Bradley, Seidman, and Painchaud (2012) have their way, might be characterized by the bleak and destitute condition of what I term throughout as *ontological, estrangement* in the context of learning. This condition is indeed what Dreyfus and Kelly (2011) define as an affect of *nihilism*.

Bradley et al. (2012) seek to drastically reduce class-time in the universities, which they believe is an ineffective way to structure learning in order to 'deliver' an education. Thus, their proposed Three-Year Integrated Competency-Based Model (ICBM) for higher learning eliminates one complete year of course work. Their critique of contemporary pedagogy in the university, when discussing the problems with 'classroom instruction,' or 'contact time,' centers exclusively on the didactic model for teaching—passive students to whom knowledge is transferred by the 'sage on the stage.' This is a disingenuous and reductive move on the part of the authors. They offer other ways that are supposedly more advantageous for authentic 'learning'—which is curiously described in terms resembling at once a behavioral and neurological model for storage, process, and effective retrieval. All of these alternative ways include the incorporation of Internet-based learning, i.e. creating *virtual spaces* for learning which they argue are more appealing to students and more effective in the transfer of information—learning as 'competency.' The authors also draw inspiration from the corporate model for organizing an effective business, and one does not need to perform an intricate analysis or de-construction of its language to recognize that the so-called 'themes' around which the models of learning are organized: *student as environment builder, as effective group/team member/ influencer and motivator, manager and leader, as strategic thinker and analyst*. These are terms with which every college business major is well acquainted. In education, according to Postman (2008), the problem is not the lack of information or knowledge our students have or do not have, i.e. it 'has nothing to do with insufficient information,' rather the 'problem lies elsewhere,' namely, in the loss of what he terms 'transcendent narrative' in our lives (p. 77), which is relatable to my theme of the 'existential' *space of human meaning*.

Based on the foregoing observations, I ask the following questions: What does this all say about the 'space' of learning in the new millennium with respect to the supposed 'new face' of education in higher learning? What implication will such changes to curriculum have on the context of learning? Will the context of learning now need to be reconceptualized, and if so, what effects will this have on students and educators? Importantly, what implication does the ICBM have for the future potential of students and educators to *dwell* in an authentic context of learning in community? Moving forward, I consider the contributions that the philosopher Gaston Bachelard's phenomenological ontology of space, dwelling, and the creative imagination might contribute to the formulation of rejoinders to these crucial questions and concerns. I hope to offer the reader a reconceived view of the space of learning that is radically at odds with our contemporary conceptions that might be linked with *social efficiency ideology*. I begin by briefly unpacking the ICBM for higher education as proposed by Bradley et al. (2012).

The ICBM for higher education: Clearing 'space' for a new curriculum

According to Bradley et al. (2012), the ICBM for higher education has three basic components or under-lying assumptions: (1) the elimination of 'seat time,' or 'contact time,' as the primary indicator of student learning and delivery of content; (2) the creation and establishment of competencies that allow for an integrated curriculum grounded in measurable learning outcomes; and (3) the designing and structuring of learning experiences that are inspired by the competency-based standards for learning. The model works off the premise that four-year Bachelor's degrees suffer from 'redundancy' in course content and this can be alleviated and at the same time bring a greater depth to and allow for greater coverage of material of the course content by eliminating unwanted academic 'waste' and accomplish this at a highly reduced cost to students, the parents of students,

and the university. As opposed to a traditional course load, the students would participate in what the authors conceive as ‘modules of learning,’ each of which are structured around essential skill-sets that must be demonstrated by students, all contained in what is called the ‘Program Competency reinforcement Plan’ (p. 50). The ICBM is also predicated on the claim that other three-year models for higher education, e.g. the Accelerated Model and the Prior-Skills/Experience Model suffer fatal flaws that the ICBM might overcome, and therefore prove more effective in readying students for the work-force while at the same time assuring that they possessed the level of skill or competency required of traditional four-year graduates of institutions of higher learning. The reader will note that I have chosen to focus on the ICBM because it egregiously bastardizes the notion of *ontological space* as conceived by Bachelard.

Prior to addressing what I term the ‘dissolution of the space of education,’ as related to the phenomenology of Bachelard, I present in brief the proposed plan for redesigning and reinventing the traditional notion of an educative community. The ICBM ‘entails active learning, is outcomes driven, and encourages student collaboration and cooperative work for maximum learning effectiveness. A *virtual collaborative environment* can extend the classroom through *time and space* and can facilitate the learning paradigm as well as the other *value-added dimensions*’ of the curriculum (Bradley et al. 2012, pp. 103–104, my emphasis). ‘Virtual’ here is not limited to cyberspace, but also includes the notion of *spaces not yet conceived or enacted* in contemporary education. The claim is that virtual learning environments are value-laden spaces of educative activity, and these spaces of learning can be extended through time and space in such a way as to enhance a collaborative atmosphere where teachers and students work together to assure that the competencies necessary for graduation are transferred to and acquired by students. The authors envision student cohorts moving through learning modules and state that this is an example of community building, for ‘student collaboration works for maximum learning effectiveness’ (ibid., p. 104). The cohorts are organized around the skill-sets of self-evaluation and peer auditing, both of which are ‘important for academic and employment success’ (ibid., p. 106). The ICBM stresses problem-based learning and collaborative learning, which comprise an *ethical virtual space* where ‘goals are pursued without competition’ (ibid., p. 111). Included in the notion of virtual learning are Web-based collaborative groups, which extend learning beyond the ‘walls and time frames by the kind of web-based virtual collaborative environments that are already in use in many distance education programs throughout higher education’ (ibid., p. 113), and this includes course management systems and Web 2.0 technologies such as social media networks, interactive blogs, and wikis.

‘Dwelling’ in the ICBM consists of dwelling inside the classroom, outside the classroom, dwelling in cyber space, and in virtual worlds. All of this with the purpose of creating dwelling communities (cohorts—groups) of learners who are ‘educated’ because they have mastered the competencies established for the various modules of study for degree. As related to the points I make about Bachelard’s phenomenology, what this bleakly indicates about *dwelling in learning* is as follows: (1) learning is re-defined as retention, retrieval, and the acquisition of skill-sets or ‘competencies.’ The authors are highly critical of the didactic method of transfer, but adopt an approach to education traceable to the Tyler (1950) rationale, i.e. pre-established benchmarks, toward which teachers (and ‘trained’ students) lead students. What is this if not for behavioral/cognitive manipulation? (2) With this notion of ‘learning’ grounded in a reductive epistemology, whether inside or outside the classroom, the *ontological* understanding of dwelling in a community of learners is absent; and (3) In the efforts to expand the world and dwelling space(s) of education for the purposes of efficient learning (grounded in *competency*), the ICBM obliterates ‘space’ in terms related to what I term *ontological space* (lived space). Thus, although the authors discuss alternatives for ‘contact time/seat time’ in the university, the following question is raised for phenomenology: What is the *ontological* relationship between these alternatives for human and educative interaction and our ‘lived experience’ of Being-with the *other-in-learning*? How do the alternatives enhance, hinder, or betray the sense of our potential to dwell authentically within the

onto- logical space of education? I argue that the phenomenological concern for 'lived space,' or *ontological space*, which refers to the proximity of our Being in relation to the Being of *others*, is ultimately at issue when responding to these important queries.

The ontological-immemorial space of human dwelling: What Bachelard's phenomenology teaches about being-well

Bachelard's phenomenology, which is referenced as 'topoanalysis,' ultimately reveals the ontological state of 'topophilia' (the love of space), which comes about through the phenomenological move of *bracketing* 'references to geometric spatial reality' in the attempt to examine the 'valorized space expressed in images of special well-being' (Smith, 1984, p. 120). Bachelard (1994) gives the reader a clear view of his practice of phenomenology in *The Poetics of Space*. There he seeks to wrest from concealment the 'essence' of dwelling in intimate spaces, and he looks to the most primordial instance of what he considers human dwelling sheltered in the poetic image of the house. As Bachelard formulates his grounding question, he simultaneously lays bare the phenomenological method for the reader:

Transcending our memories of all the houses in which we have found shelter, above and beyond all houses we have dreamed we lived in, can we isolate an intimate, concrete essence that would be a justification of the uncommon value of all of our images of protected intimacy? (p. 8)

This is not a process whereby we merely seek out a multitude of examples of places wherein we have dwelt that made us feel comfortable and safe from which we inductively 'generalize' conclusions. rather, phenomenology must go beyond generalization and mere description, 'in order to attain to the primary virtues, those that reveal an attachment that is naïve in some way to the primary function of inhabiting' (ibid., p. 4). Bachelard's phenomenology employs the term 'naïve' in the sense of referring to a primordial mode of inhabiting the world, which discloses the *ontological* structures unique to *giving form* to that world. By attending to the most powerful and primordial poetic images of dwelling, 'the phenomenologist makes the effort needed to seize upon the germ of the essential, sure, immediate well-being it encloses' (ibid., p. 4). Bachelard ultimately concludes that the essence, or ontological meaning-structure, of intimate dwelling, the value of 'all inhabited space ... bears the essence of the notion of home' (ibid., p. 5). It is through the 'creative imagination'—and more about this phenomenon below—which 'functions in this direction whenever the human being has found the slightest shelter,' that allows it to grasp the ontological truth of *felicitous space* (ibid., p. 5). For Bachelard, it is only through poems that 'the ultimate poetic depth of the space of the house' is made available to us (p. 6). And when we are in the *presence* of the essence of dwelling, 'the soul comes and inaugurates the form, dwells in it, takes pleasure in it' (ibid., xxii). A few words about ontological dwelling, or *ontological space*, are necessary at this point.

To grasp Bachelard's intricate phenomenology of 'space' and 'dwelling' it is necessary to understand the basic traits of this form of primordial space. Bachelard marks off *ontological space* from Cartesian space, or geometric space, which is located in a view of the *res extensa*, or more properly, the world of extended matter, i.e. the three dimensions of space. This idea of space is absolutely essential when attempting to create the 'geometric' space of the living room or kitchen; we indeed require measurements and floor plans in order to coordinate the placement and arrangement of furniture and appliances to 'fill the space' as it were in a manner that is convenient for our access. From a phenomenological and ontological perspective, the ICBM is more concerned with what Bachelard terms 'thematic space,' i.e. space as related to the position of objects within the dimensionality of 'four walls' (e.g. students inside and outside the classroom), which is a Cartesian understanding of space. The ICBM is more concerned with the productive 'use' of space than it is about *how* educators *inhabit* and *dwell* in *ontological space*. Even the use of the Internet, when speaking about 'cyber space,' is conceived in terms of thematic space (dimensionality), e.g. the computer is viewed as a tool or medium which 'bridges' the distance between two people, the same way the telephone was conceived many years prior to the Internet. In attempting to bridge or close



the gap in the 'space of learning,' the ICBM actually promotes the *alienation* of the students from their original and ontological mode of 'spatial dwelling. 'The desire to do away with distance is a fleeing in the face of the phenomenological understanding of the authentic 'lived experience' of space. We find the understanding of *ontological space* in Bachelard's philosophizing of the space of the house, as a metaphysical phenomenon, and in his poetizing of the creative imagination, as a form of dwelling within the poetic image and the primordial experience of education or learning this inspires.

Bachelard's (1994) phenomenology most importantly deals with the primordial power of the poetic image, which emerges after long sustained 'readings,' wherein the phenomenologist lives or dwells within the poet's art, the poet's image. Practicing a phenomenology of the imagination allows the reader to study the poetic image as it 'emerges into the consciousness as a direct product of the heart, soul, and being of man,' and in such moments of dwelling, the human being is 'apprehended in his [most primordial] reality' (p. xviii). Phenomenology allows Bachelard to explore the ontological realm that avoids reduction to objectifying forms of thinking, which are associated with psychology and psychoanalysis. It is also a form of philosophical dwelling that resists the split between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, for within such a dualist metaphysics there is but one and proper 'rational' way to deal with matter, namely, as a thing that persists through time, is extended in space, and is divisible. Phenomenology shows us that the body has a *secret life* that might be termed the 'dynamic life of the body,' which is irreducible to a mere material body that takes up space and is beholden to the mechanical, causal laws of the physical world. Bachelard (1991), for instance, makes the distinction between the *geometric hand* and the *dynamic hand*, this is not to merely indicate that one is static and the other is in motion. rather, it indicates the unique manner in which the *dynamic hand* dwells in *ontological space*, and in this existence the 'hand has its dreams too, and its own hypotheses. It helps us to come to know matter in its secret, inward parts' (p. 105). For example, when engaged, or dwelling, in the activity of kneading dough, there is a 'naïve chemistry,' as opposed to a 'natural geometry' at work, for when we 'mold, knead, and shape, there is no longer any geometry, nor any sharp edge or interruption,' and it is a 'rhythmic activity, whose precise, insistent rhythm takes possession of our whole body' (ibid., 105).

Thus, Bachelard makes a radical differentiation between the body's 'dynamic involvement' with its world in terms of *ontological space and dwelling* and its physical and mechanical involvements with the world. For example, to illustrate Bachelard's view of *ontological space* as related to education, I am *at-home* in the *dwelling space of learning* only when there is a close proximity between my Being and the Being of the student or students with whom I am sharing the space, or place, of learning. It is important to note that in this description the measurable or calculable distance that sets us apart is of no consequence. For I can be situated quite close to a student with whom I'm conversing—in Cartesian space—and yet be at an insurmountable *ontological distance* from that same student in terms of our educational experience instantiating a truly 'meaningful' and ontological connection between us. The 'space' which I share with the student's Being, as opposed to Cartesian space, represents for Bachelard the intangible, but nevertheless indisputable, *ontological distance* that highlights our original mode of Being-in-the-world, which we experience when dwelling within various situations of our concerned and solicitous involvement with the world and *others*. In this immersed form of understanding, 'place' is not reducible to 'position,' as in the positioning or arrangement of artifacts or objects in space. rather, place, as in a *place of ontological dwelling*, is always representative of a network of interconnected meanings that we share with *others*. This network of interconnected meanings that we share we might call the *world of our meaningful involvements*, which have the potential to be opened up to us through the interpretive, imaginative, and poetic activity that Bachelard's phenomenology inspires. However, we must resist the temptation to view the 'network of interconnected meanings' in terms of a web or integrated network of collected 'facts,' which provide a rational, atomistic, and isomorphic picture of the 'real,' external, and 'objective' world. Instead, this network of interconnected meanings emerges from out of ontological 'meaning structures,' which Bachelard (1994) terms 'concrete essences' (p. 9). These

'concrete essences' allow for other human beings and the entities with which we deal to show up, or *presence*, in meaningful ways. For Bachelard, this phenomenon occurs prior to, and is hence more primordial than, the emergence of any psychological, anthropological, or epistemological categories or paradigms.

So, when Bachelard (1994) poetizes the 'space' of the house within which we dwell, and in turn, dwells in us, in 'poetic' imagery, it must be understood in terms of a space or place comprised of the inhabiting practices of the imaginative and creative subject. This is related directly to what was introduced earlier as the primordial sense of *ηθος*, an *in-dwelling* within our world or home. 'Space that has been seized upon by the imagination,' claims Bachelard, 'cannot remain indifferent space subject to measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination'(p. xxxiii). For Bachelard, to become close in space and dwelling, to dwell in the most primordial way possible, is to learn to live *within* the poetic image, as we find in Rilke:

House, patch of meadow, oh evening light
 Suddenly you acquire an almost human face
 You are very near us, embracing and embraced. (ibid., p. 8)

The house poetized in this imagery is more than human, more than friend. rather it *is* the human being's original world, or place of safe dwelling, 'it maintains him through the storms of the heavens and those of life' (ibid., 8), in terms of an ontological power that centralizes, gathers, and integrates 'the thoughts, memories, and dreams for mankind,' and it 'allows him to dream in peace' (ibid., p. 7). It must be noted that unlike other phenomenological philosophers engaging in what Bachelard terms, 'hasty metaphysics,' such as Heidegger (1962) and Sartre (1995), Bachelard believes that the human's most original and primordial condition is actually the original state of *Being-at-home*, and not the reverse. This view runs counter to Heidegger's primordial state of *Dasein's not-Being-at-home-in-the-world* and Sartre's existential mode of *forlornness*, which is the primordial existential condition of *alienation* from both God and any intrinsic and *luminous* realm of values. According to Bachelard (1994), and here is one of his most radical and original contributions to Western phenomenology, prior to being 'cast into the world,' in terms of existential *thrownness*—which is an existential state of *ontological alienation* from the world and others—the human being is, in the most primordial manner of its existence (Being-in- the-world), always already *at-home* within the dwelling of the welcoming abode of the house, in terms of *being-well*. And it is 'being-well' that Bachelard claims is 'originally associated with being' (p. 8). It is only when the human is cast out, or 'thrown out, outside the being of the house' that it experiences the conditions 'in which the hostility of men and of the universe accumulates' (ibid., p. 8). So, this is a crucial point, which will be related to the forthcoming discussion on education: Bachelard believes this existential condition as described by Heidegger and Sartre represents a *secondary* metaphysical state and in addition that the conceptual structures and paradigms of psychology and epistemology, for example, have worked to occlude the *primary* ontological 'truth' that we are already *at-home-in-the- world*. Bachelard believes that it is to this primordial, ontological *mode-of-Being (being-well)* that we should strive to return, to relive, and dwell within through our immersion in the poetic image and flights of the creative imagination. For ultimately, the house shelters human solitude—*existential solitude*—and solitude for Bachelard (1969), as we find most perfectly lived and embodied in the child, harbors and shelters our most profound powers of creativity, for *solitude* is the ontological state of *being-well*.

Childhood knows unhappiness through men. In solitude, it can relax its aches. When the human world leaves him in peace, the child feels like the son of the cosmos. And thus, in his solitudes, from the moment he is master of his reveries, the child knows the happiness of dreaming which will later become the happiness of the poets. (p. 99)

According to Bachelard, reverie is nothing other than the unfolding of the creative imagination and is linked in an ontological manner to childhood and what I have termed *existential solitude*, for

in the solitude of the child 'we return to the lair of reveries, to reveries that have opened the world to us. It is reverie which makes us the first inhabitant of the world of solitude' (ibid., p. 102). Within the ontological *well-Being* provided by the dream-like reverie of the 'oneiric house,' we dwell in the *originary* solitude of the child, which the house shelters and preserves. Here 'we inhabit the world better because we inhabit it as the solitary child inhabits images' (ibid., p. 102). And this is related to the understanding of intimacy in dwelling, for the 'localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent than determination of dates' of accumulated facts or the most thoroughly conceived theory, and, we might even add to this list the seemingly best plans for our educational institutions (Bachelard, 1994, p. 8). Hence, we *learn* from phenomenology that we are in the *presence* of new and unique ways of imagining our Being-in-the-world when dwelling in the presence of the poetic image, which brings us into ontological proximity, in terms of *ontological space*, with the *oneiric* house, the dwelling that allows us to, in a safe and secure way, 'dream well' (p. 8). For as Gaudin (2005) states, Bachelard's phenomenology reveals and indeed teaches us that 'in *being*' there is an 'irresistible movement toward well-being' (p. xxvii). Bachelard (2005) shows us that when relating to the Being of the house through the power of the poetic image, which 'demonstrates repose of the being,' we are brought into the *presence* of our own Being, our ontological way of inhabiting (*in-dwelling*) the most intimate of all habitats, the house. For Bachelard, 'reverie illustrates a state of well-being' (p. 71).

To conclude this section, I return to the earlier discussion of the 'network of interconnected meanings' comprising the *world of ontological space* in order to consider the relationship of belonging between the human, house, and its various rooms. In addition, I explore the relationship between the house and the universe. Against Cartesian space, or the various divisions of the house into 'room-space,' the poetized relationship between the human and the cellar, attic, closets, bedrooms, etc., are relationships that poetically live in terms of the rooms proximity to the Being of the house, *as in-dwelling*, where the experience in reverie, or wakeful dream, of the various rooms approaches 'the immemorial' (ibid., p. 10). When dwelling in the house in terms of human dwelling in *ontological space*, Bachelard tells us that the 'moments of confined, simple, shut-in space are experiences of heartwarming space, of a space that does not seek to become extended' (ibid., p. 10). The attic, for example, if viewed and experienced from a Cartesian perspective, seems as if it lacks enough space to move about in, or feels too cold to inhabit without proper dress for warmth. However, in poetic reverie, through the flights of the creative imagination, 'recaptured through daydreams, it is hard to say through what syncretism the attic is at once small and large, warm and cool always comforting' (ibid., p. 10), because in this instance the meaning structure is organized in terms of a 'concrete essence,' i.e. around the *ontological* structure of *being-well*. In poetic terms, the house and its rooms are irreducible to 'geometric forms,' for when conceived in terms of *ontological space* 'inhabited space transcends geometric space' (ibid., p. 47). For although a geometric object would appear to defy any anthropomorphic metaphors or allusions, whenever it is clarified and idealized in the poetic image, a 'transposition to the human plane takes place,' a transfiguration occurs, and 'the house is considered a space for cheer and intimacy' (ibid., p. 48). It is also the case that the house we inhabit is set within nature, or the dynamic unfolding of *physis*, and there is also, between the house and universe, a relationship rooted in *ontological space*. For Bachelard, the house mirrors the human existential condition, and the 'house's virtues of protection and resistance are transposed into human virtues' (ibid., 46). Bachelard claims that the metaphysics in which the human is 'cast into the world ... mediate[s] concretely upon the house that is cast into the hurricane, defying the anger of heaven itself' (ibid., p. 46). The house, in such poetically transfigured moments, inspires the human by teaching it the responsibility of Being-in-the-world as a maker and creator of the world 'in spite of the world' (ibid., p. 47).

The space of learning and the creative imagination: Bachelard, education, and imaginative dwelling

Having elucidated what it is to authentically dwell in the *ontological space* of the house and what it means to learn of our *Being-well* in the *presence* of the Being or ‘concrete essence’ of the house, which shelters most originally our *existential solitude*, a revelation first made possible because of the inspiration drawn from poetic imagery, I now consider the following question: What is it to *dwell* authentically in the creative imagination, in the poetic image, and what might the immersion in poetic reverie intimate about education, about an original sense of *dwelling in learning*? My initial rejoinder is that if we follow Bachelard into his philosophy of the imagination, we find that the dynamic process of dwelling in poetry is in fact a communicative process, where we commingle, communicate, and commune intimately with the poet while at once growing and developing in terms of learning something new about ourselves. In Bachelard, when dwelling in the poetic image a process of learning or education unfolds; a process of *formation* and *transformation* to one’s soul or Being occurs. This process is indeed linked to the ancient Greek understanding of *poiesis*, which for Bachelard indicates that there is a making, a creating, a sense of bringing something new into existence when dwelling in the creative imagination. To begin, Bachelard’s ‘pedagogy’ might be grasped in terms of a renewed approach to philosophical inquiry that, as opposed to imposing rigid and indelible *a priori* categories upon the phenomena it wishes to interrogate, is attuned in advance by and to the unique ‘address’ of the phenomena it seeks to study. In essence, philosophy allows the world to *dictate* its method of inquiry. Bachelard (1968) urges philosophers to ‘break with the ambition of finding a single, fixed point of view for judging the totality of a science as vast and as changing as physics’ (p. 10). Philosophy needs to be open to the ever-changing nature of phenomena, listening for their address occurring in and out of a multiplicity of voices, speaking with manifold tongues. This notion of authentic inquiry is present to Bachelard’s early work in the philosophy of science and this approach to and view of inquiry does not change when he moves to the ontology of the imagination. For Bachelard, poetry always dictated the method of approach, and the method best suited, of course, is phenomenology (Gaudin, 2005). As the paper progresses, the reader will note that such a view of inquiry advocated by Bachelard is opposed to ‘learning’ as defined by Bradley et al. (2012), which is reducible to skills, abilities, knowledge acquisition, and most importantly, ‘competencies.’

Bachelard (1968) offers a different and highly unique view of education, which I develop in relation to the space of learning and the form of dwelling that is proper to it. His view of education is decidedly ontological in nature as it deals with *human transcendence*. As stated, in Bachelard’s earlier writings relating to epistemology and the *New Scientific Mind*, he is already forging a unique notion of philosophy, with its own proper ‘space’ and locale. Philosophy, as he conceives it, is a viable practice for inquiry, and, as stated, the nature of the unfolding of that inquiry is decidedly ‘pedagogic’ in nature, for it is a view to learning that focused on the thinker’s attunement to education and the pedagogic task as an *open-ended process*. In essence, then, education might be conceived as a process of renewed inquiry. It is possible to state that for Bachelard, as will be shown when discussing the educative nature of reverie and the creative imagination (poetic imagery), education is essentially a life-long process of encountering ‘new experience,’ and for Bachelard, ‘new experience,’ like both philosophy and education, ‘says *no* to old experience, otherwise we are quite evidently not up against a new experience at all’ (p. 9). Gaudin (2005) echoes these sentiments when writing that Bachelard believes that the pedagogue needs to be attuned to the fact that education, in its essence, should be highlighted by ‘living thought’ that is represented most authentically by its ‘*shifting character*,’ and for Bachelard, ‘this is the *sine qua non* of the modern educator’ (p. xxxiii). Although Bachelard (1968) believes it is the mistake ‘of general education to establish the inflexible, one-way relationship of teacher to pupil,’ he would never endorse the notion of the reduction of pedagogue to the role of ‘guide on the side,’ because there is, in the space of authentic education, an undeniable intimacy between teacher and learner, between poet and reader, and vice versa: ‘The fundamental principle of *pedagogy*,’ writes Bachelard, ‘is as follows: *He who is taught must teach ...*

An education that one receives without transmitting it develops minds without dynamism, without self-criticism' (p. 244). I continue this line of thought when moving into the realm of poetic dwelling in the imagination and images.

On my reading, what is called Bachelard's 'Copernican revolution in Imagination' has several key advancements to thinking or philosophizing the imagination as linked with ontology, and this view takes him beyond Sartre's (1972) unique interpretation of the imagination: (1) there is a break with a dependence on psychology and psychoanalysis to explain the so-called 'deep meaning' of images; the image in nocturnal dreams is (a) *not* the most primordial form of imagery we experience and is (b) *irreducible* to the workings of the unconscious, the Id, or the libido. It is not psychotic or neurotic complexes that explain or give life to poetic images, rather it is the inverse, complexes get their initial life force from the poetic image, which, for Bachelard, resides in the 'in-between' zone, dwelling between the human being's unconscious and rational states of mind—as opposed to a sexual origin, images are rather intellectual in nature (Gaudin, 2005); and (2) there is a break with traditional esthetic theory and critique, which view the poetic image in terms of a symbol/metaphor, which points away from itself in order to acquire its meaning. rather, the poetic image for Bachelard is not esthetic at all in terms of formalist, expressionist, realist, or postmodern esthetic views. This is because it is *not* properly an 'object of esthetics,' beyond this, it is *not* an object at all in terms of being conceptualized in terms of a *mental representation* brought to stand in a rational explanation. Instead, the poetic image lives at a primordial level, and, as Smith (1984) states, it 'contributes to psychological well-being through its dynamism,' and this is because 'such activity restores being to its full potential' (p. 104), and it is possible to state that, 'subjective being is determined by the dynamic imagination' (ibid., p. 97), which is due to the image's ontological origin, in terms of representing a potential new beginning (ibid., p. 104). With respect to the understanding of the *Copernican Revolution in the Imagination*, Bachelard (2005) is clear that 'images can no longer be explained by their objective TRAITS, but by their subjective MEANINGS' (p. 14), and this 'revolution' understands an order of things contrary to the popular view, wherein we have,

dream before reality
 nightmare before tragedy
 fright before the monster
 nausea before the fall. (ibid., p. 14)

This indicates that we are primordially attuned by the poetic image prior to our perception of the experience, for Bachelard locates 'the image not only prior to thought, before narrative, but also before any emotion' (ibid., p. 14). It is the case that Bachelard has the tendency to allow his metaphysics to border, at times, on the mystical. With this most difficult notion of the image harboring within it a power that is prior to emotion or perception he means the following: If the poet employs the image of a 'frightful situation,' it is not a direct, objective description of a *frightful situation* or encounter. rather, the image, in its most primordial ontological state, already harbors within it the 'essence' of fear by stirring 'the fundamental dynamic imagination,' and so holds the power to attune us and put us in a 'fright situation' (ibid., p. 14). In a sense, any and all so-called 'frightful' situations are already posterior to and dependent upon the 'essence' of fear that the original poetic image harbors and *reverberates*. Bachelard (2005) finds these sentiments in D'Annunzio's words, '*The richest events occur in us long before the soul perceives them. And, when we begin to open our eyes to the visible, we have long since committed ourselves to the invisible*' (p. 16). As related to the theme of this paper, the so-called 'invisible' powers unfolding in the image hold an educative function, for as Bachelard claims, we are already 'educated through reverie before being educated by experience, if experience follows as confirmation of its reveries' (ibid., p. 16).

Bachelard states that the notion of symbol is 'too intellectual' (ibid., 14) to relate to either the image or the imagination, and here we have arrived at a critique of formal education. Traditional or conservative forms of 'instrumentalism' in education will fall into the trap of wrongly 'rationalizing'

the poetic image in the effort to understand it, classify it, and relate it to an end or ultimate meaning. In doing so, it bastardizes the poetic image's ontological potential. According to Bachelard (1994), educators must be receptive to the fact that poetry, in its primitive and primordial emergence, 'must always be accompanied by the creation of a new language,' which is bound up with the concomitant danger that it 'may well be hampered by the language that has already been learned' (p. 100). In the extreme, in the institutions of learning, 'poetic reverie' would inevitably 'turn into scholarly reverie, that is to say, into the reverie learned in the classroom. We must rid ourselves of books and teachers if we are to rediscover poetic primitivity (ibid., p. 101). of course, Bachelard is speaking for effect here, what he means to indicate, as Smith (1984) draws our attention to, is that primal poetry, and this emerges through the phenomenological inquiry, 'discovers that being cannot be limited to external reality, to that which can be conceptually designated' (p. 99). For example, when swept away within and by the poetic image of flight, this cannot be limited or reduced the 're-presentation' of one or another winged creature (the re-presentation of the physical wing in the imagery), for this would already be a move to conceptualize and intellectualize the image, to codify it and reify it in terms that betray its Being, its ontological life force. To begin to conceive of the educative aspect of dwelling in the poetic image, I draw the reader's attention to Bachelard's view of his phenomenology as 'dynamology,' wherein, as Smith argues, it is 'an expansion of phenomenology to include the description of the subject's dynamic relationship with the world and the inner of transformation such a relationship can bring about' (p. 107), and this relationship, it is possible to state, is grounded in a *dwelling with images in learning*.

Bachelard (1994) distinguishes between the *formal*, *material*, and *dynamic* imagination, but for the purpose of this paper I focus on the 'creative imagination,' which, in a poetic sense, changes the way we understand ourselves and the world, because it allows us to envision a new reality: 'Imagination is not, as its etymology would suggest, the faculty of forming images of reality; it is rather the faculty of forming images which go beyond reality, which *sing* reality' (p. 15). This indicates that images transcend reality, and this notion of *transcendence*, in various manifestations, is ultimately educative. Bachelard (1969) informs us that dreams (*reve*) are not the same as reveries (*reverie*), just as dreams (*songe*) are not the equivalent of daydreams (*songerie*). 'Then,' Bachelard states, 'by using the division of the psyche into *animus* and *anima*,' it is possible to classify reverie as 'a manifestation of the *anima*' (pp. 29–30). *Anima* is opposed to the masculine *animus*, which is linked to system and order, for 'reverie,' as Bachelard tells us, 'is linked with the *feminine*,' with all that is creative—'an image received in the *anima* puts us in a state of continuous reverie' (ibid., p. 65). It is possible to link reveries and daydreams to the creative imagination, which is 'active' as opposed to the dream, which is actually a phenomenon when the unconscious subject is in a passive and receptive state, open to suggestion and manipulation. When dreaming at night, as opposed to 'daydreaming,' we undergo a perceptual experience on a pure unconscious level. With this understanding, if we consider Freud's understanding of the dream, as the unconscious unfolding of our involvements with the material world or the residue of material reality, there is not and cannot be an involved subjective form of poetic, or creative, activity. And, for Bachelard, in reverie, as opposed to dreaming, there is a crucial involvement with the waking subject, and Bachelard indicates this involvement within his philosophizing of the *dreamer's cogito*, or the daydreamers' attuned and 'active' state-of-mind (ibid., pp. 146–170). In addition, the Freudian interpretation of dreams locates a material origin of the dream, upon which its images and symbols are dependent for their life, and these images lend themselves to psychological explanations and not phenomenological description.

Reverie, as *daydreaming*, is a reflexive activity and process of deep subjective involvement, for reverie 'is an oneiric activity in which the glimmer of consciousness subsists,' which is to say that the daydreamer is present to his/her daydream, and 'even when reverie gives the impression of a flight out of the real, out of time and place, the dreamer of reverie knows that it is he who is absenting himself' (p. 150). This is why reverie holds the potential for transcendence, self-development, and self-fulfillment, and hence perhaps the most pure and original educative experience we can

undergo. reverie is an original mediating 'poetic' and 'creative' force between human and world, however not conceived as *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, but rather human subject within the world of its ontological dwelling. Smith (1984) eloquently elucidates this relationship between daydreamer and world:

For the daydreamer, be he poet or reader, is conscious both of his own subjective being and of the subjectively viewed world, to the point that one is an enhancement of and confirmation of the other... Where objectivity requires the subject to accommodate itself rationally organized physical reality, resulting in the separation between subject and object, self-aware reverie accommodates the world to subjective reality, thus transcending the subject-object opposition without destroying the separate identity of the subject. (p. 127)

And so in this *in-dwelling* in reverie, the subject holds the potential for growth, and development and at one acquires or inherits the potential to change the world, by learning something 'new' about his/ her relation to both the self and world. This is traced to the original power of poetic language, which is linked to the *function of unreality* at work in the image. For Bachelard (2005), this is the equivalent of the 'potential' for change through *poetic transfiguration*. However, in everyday states of consciousness we lose sight of the potential for *transfiguration* through poetry because the presence of reality, 'with all its force and its terrestrial matter,' imposes itself so forcefully on us that it is 'easy to forget the unconscious impulses, the oneiric forces ceaselessly overflowing into conscious life' (p. 13). As stated, Bachelard's phenomenology seeks to remind us of this forgotten phenomenon. In the creative imagination there is a break with reality and the immediate, for as Bachelard states, 'The new thought and new poetry require a rupture and conversion' (ibid., p. 15). Whereas the tradition believes imagination is the 'faculty of *forming* images,' as we find in Locke's empiricism and Croce's idealism, imagination is 'rather the faculty of *deforming* the images offered by perception, of freeing ourselves from the immediate images' (ibid., p. 19). Poetry, when it is authentic, never merely translates life, rather it opens the possibility for a new life, because 'the poem is essentially an *aspiration to new images*,' which is linked to the 'essential need for *newness* that characterizes the human psyche' (ibid., p. 20), as this manifests as human *transcendence*. Herein lies the 'double function' of the poetic image *as* educative medium to at once 'create a different meaning and to invoke a different reverie' (ibid., p. 26).

The imagination 'creates images, but above all it creates a world which opens anew with each image' (Smith, 1984, p. xlviii), imagination ceaselessly 'reaches beyond what is given; it magnifies and deepens, it gathers the whole world into a simple image and the whole subject within its reverie' (ibid., p. xlix). The language of poetry is not a symbolic language of signs and signifiers organized into a tight and immutable grammar, it is rather the original voice of the cosmos. Smith observes, 'language is not only a source of meaning,' when conceived in its intimate relation to the poet and his/her reverie, 'it is also a source of being. The opening of the world by *logos* is at the same time the creation of the world' (ibid., p. xlii). For Bachelard (1969), the poet resists confusing 'the language of meaning with poetic language,' for translating one into the other 'could be no more than a poor trade,' rather the 'poet's exploit at the summit of his cosmic reverie is to constitute a cosmos from the word,' in the *world of the word* (p. 187). So radically novel is the poet's language, 'above customary language,' that indeed 'the language it speaks is so new that correlations between past and present can no longer be usefully considered,' the world and the cosmos have indeed changed for us (Bachelard, 1994, p. xxix). Through language, which inspires the mediating force of the poetic image, in the counter-striving relationship between the subject and his/ her world, an *idealized doubling occurs*, and immediately a 'particular cosmos forms around a particular image,' and this occurs as 'soon as the poet gives the image a destiny of grandeur' (ibid., p. 176). As the poet poetizes his/her imagery it gives 'the real object its imaginary double, its idealized double,' and this 'idealized double is immediately idealizing, and it is thus that a universe is born from an expanding image' (ibid., p. 176). For the poet tells us not about how things *are* but rather, through the clarifying lens of his/her art, intimates how things might *be* or *become* in the future.

Gaudin (2005) states that 'man realizes himself only by reaching beyond himself,' and this *reaching beyond* is the human being's ontological predisposition for *transcendence*, and this is what poetic images inspire, and in fact, first make possible (p. xlix). What this indicates is that the poet and reader, in and through their participation in the image, one channeling its force and communicating it, the other being drawn into the vortex of its creative energy, the ontological potential for the subject to go beyond itself opens. In and through participation (dwelling) in the poetic image he/she *becomes something other*. The continued upsurge of the creative human life is most powerfully understood through participating and dwelling in the poetic image, which 'reverberates' within the soul. As stated, for Bachelard (2005), the creative imagination and the language of the poet do not work to 'formulate images of reality,' rather it is the poet's unique 'faculty of forming images which [go] beyond reality' that is important (p. 15). This for Bachelard is representative of poetry's power of tapping into and releasing a 'super human faculty,' and a 'man is a man insofar as he is a superman, A man must be defined by the tendencies which impel him to go beyond the *human condition*' (ibid., p. 16). The potential for *transcendence* must be awakened in us, and this occurs because of the 'reverberation' we experience when participating in the poet's image, enraptured by his/her language, which brings forth an image that is *variational* in nature and never reducible to conceptual language that would be *constitutive*. According to Bachelard (1994), it is due to the radical newness of the language, through 'the brilliance of the image,' because of 'its novelty and its action, [that] the poetic image has an entity and dynamism of its own' (p. 84). When enraptured by the image, it reverberates within us and sets our strings, in song, moving in sympathetic vibration, we are moving along within the sway and oscillation of the poetic image.

Reverberation, states Smith (1984), 'refers to the images awakening of sentimental surface experience, which in turn stirs archetypal echoes' (pp. 120–121), which, as Bachelard (1994) tells us, in a duplicitous sense, touches our mind (*Geist*) and soul (*Seele*). Poetic images emerge from the depths of Being's wellspring and the 'outpourings of the mind' are transfigured into 'profundities of the soul' (p. xxiii). reverberation, according to Bachelard, in line with human *transcendence*, induces a change to our Being as through the poet's being (ibid., p. xxii). reverberation sets in motion a veritable awakening of poetic creation,' and 'by going *immediately* beyond psychology and psychoanalysis, we feel the power of a single poetic image, we feel the poetic power rising naively within us ... it becomes a new being in language, expressing us by making us what it expresses' (ibid., p. xxiii). To approach the phenomenology of images is to at once 'explore their power of trans-subjectivity. They *reverberate* in the reader's consciousness and lead him to create anew while communicating with the poet' (Gaudin, 2005, p. xli). And it is here that we come to understand the profound communicative aspects of poetry, which beckons the participation of a multiplicity of readers. Here there is the potential for *transcendence* at a communal level, at a level that is at once subjective and trans-subjective. Because of poetry's power to speak to humanity from out of the original and primordial depths of Being, it inspires a conversation between poet and his/her readers.

Ultimately, it is poetry's potential to engender human *transcendence* that represents the true educative power of the creative imagination. However, it is not enough to merely derive felicitous emotions from the poet's images, rather there involves a long and arduous training antecedent to authentically dwelling in the imagination, and for Bachelard, this is the process of reading and rereading the poems and poets that speak most deeply and powerfully to us. Poetic reverie, according to Gaudin, 'far from being a complacent drifting of the self, is a discipline acquired through long hours of reading and writing' (ibid., p. xxviii), and here we might say a dwelling in sustained and meditative study, which is the very opposite of calculative thought. The creative imagination calls for the 'constant practice of "*surveillance de soi*,"' which might be thought of as a process of intense, rigorous, and renewed self-examination, which might be likened to a form of Socratic *care for the soul* (ibid., p. xxviii). 'Images,' as Gaudin points out, 'reveal nothing to the lazy dreamer' or learner for that matter (ibid., p. xxvii).

What Bachelard teaches about dwelling in learning: Returning to the authentic space of education

Enlightened and informed by Bachelard's ontology of the creative imagination, I return to the ICBM for higher education. The conclusion of this paper is concerned with allowing Bachelard's phenomenology speak to us about education in the hopes of experiencing a 'reverberation' in the work that might inspire the *reconceptualized-enactment* of learning in a mode of dwelling perhaps best suited for it. The reader will note that the problem that I am addressing in education/curriculum is one that has been a concern for both philosophers of education and curriculum theorists. It is located in the overarching concern with the so-called 'loss or forgetting' of ontological questions in education and the privileging of epistemological concerns, e.g. even Spencer, although greatly concerned with morality in the curriculum, ultimately reduces education to now famous question concerning *what knowledge is of most value?* (Weber, 1960). I suggest that there are valuable things we can learn *about learning* that Bachelard's unique view of philosophy and phenomenology intimate, which relate to learning as an intimate and ontological mode of human dwelling. There were already hints of this notion in the fore-going analysis of dwelling in the house and world by means of the creative imagination in communion with the poet and his/her images. This form of poetic learning distilled from Bachelard runs counter to and is radically opposed to the notion of learning that the ICBM endorses that is linked directly to the student's readiness for graduating from the three-year Bachelor's program, which is preparatory for his/her entrance into society as a productive and contributory member of the work force. With this in mind, Gaudin (2005) reminds us that if we approach learning and education from the perspective of Bachelard's philosophy and phenomenology we must avoid such views and practices that reify our thinking 'into a system divorced from its "formation,"' for in such views linked with *social efficiency* there runs the ever-present danger of stultifying or even 'paralyzing discovery' (p. xxi). I claim that it is the ontological sense of *discovery*—which the reader will recall is the hallmark of the poetic image's power to inspire human *transcendence*—that defines an authentic education.

As we have already seen, it is the reader's relationship with the poet and the participation within his or her ontologically inspired imagery that abolishes the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy that is embraced in much of standardized education driven by *social efficiency*. Poetry for Bachelard is instantly and at once a metaphysical phenomenon, for poetics of the world 'should give us both a view of the world and the secret of a soul, a being of objects at one and the same time' (Bachelard as quoted in Jones, 1991, p. 92). And this is what Jones' calls Bachelard's 'subversive humanism,' which is precisely the 'desire to abolish the frontiers of the internal and external worlds'(ibid., p. 92). Poetry sets up the dialectic between concept and image, wherein 'we experience the changing tensions of subject and object, the shifting and breaching of their familiar frontiers' (ibid., p. 92). Immediately, based on these remarks and the foregoing analysis, education as inspired by Bachelard might be envisaged as the movement between our conceptualizing the world and our poetizing of the world, and this process is open-ended and ever-renewed through our participation in poetic images that stir the imagination to ever greater heights of creativity, which in turn affords us greater powers of creative *conceptualization*. Because as opposed to merely acquiring skills or internalizing knowledge, poetry puts us in connection with the most primordial aspects of our dwelling, which contributes to the growth of our souls in ways that defy the logic of the syllogism, observable behaviors, and criteria for establishing 'competency' in education.

Learning, for Bachelard, if we are authentically attuned to the unfolding of phenomena, is bound up with the sense of uncertainty that accompanies moments of disruption to our long familiar thought patterns, because it represents the potential shattering of our current view of things, for in reverie, as Jones (1991) reminds us, accompanying, and indeed because of, the reverberation of the image within our soul and imagination there occurs a 'break with the immediate' (p. 96), which opens the potential for bringing something new, something never before seen or experienced into existence. Poetry, if we draw an analogy between it and learning, as indeed it is a most primordial mode of *being-educated*, 'is specifically "surprising,"' and the newness and

radical nature of its images 'are therefore unpredictable' (ibid., p. xxxi). This is because, as we have seen, the poetic image emerges from a form of creative language that 'is always a little above the language of signification' (ibid., p. xxvii). If learning is a process of growth and development, there can never be a moment when we have arrived at an end, at some pre-determined fixed point, or disposable benchmark, that demonstrates we have grasped the truth of the things into which we inquire and investigate. But, how does the notion of dwelling in learning in Bachelard relate specifically to the classroom, or the space of learning that the ICBM wants to drastically reduce and replace with other apparent modes of dwelling in learning, which might be understood in terms of peripatetic cohorts trundling their studies through the space of one or another module of academic learning?

The ICBM believes that it can stretch the boundaries of time and space by setting up learning communities outside the classroom to better maximize the so-called 'time-space continuum' of learning. Ultimately, it is possible to state that in order for a student in the ICBM to dwell 'authentically' (efficiently and effectively), he or she must 'understand how and be able to function as an effective team, group, and organizational leader' (p. 198). As intimated earlier, this is not indicative of what a dwelling in community, residing in the *habitat* of learning, would look like when viewed from Bachelard's phenomenological ontology. To move the so-called 'dwelling space' outside of the university is not to ensure in any way, shape, or form that learning will improve, because such a view ignores the original and poetic notion of *ontological space*. As stated, for Bachelard (1994), this notion of ontological 'space' is indeed the essence of and key to understanding all forms of human dwelling, which at root are grounded ontologically in '*felicitous space*' (p. xxxv), which 'bears the stamp of topophilia' (ibid., p. 12). To authentically dwell in learning, and to reiterate a point introduced earlier, one must understand that the poetic image manifests human existence in terms that are *variational* in nature, a mode of existence irreducible to the realm of the concept, which is *constitutive*. The latter codifies, reifies, and sets in place; the former opens the passage unto subjective liberation (*transcendence*) and transsubjectivity (*interpersonal relations*), which represents the potential for growth and learning in the community of *others*, and this is the dwelling associated with *existential spatiality*, the ontological proximity we share with *others*. Ultimately, this is the ontological relationship between the subject's Being and the Being of those with whom the subject dwells in learning.

To further elucidate these thoughts, learning associated with our creative/imaginative participation in poetic imagery has two interdependent components: a subjective component and a transsubjective component, which represents the *interpersonal* aspects of the poetic image. First, there occurs 'the *onset of the image* in an individual consciousness,' which Bachelard tells us restores 'the subjectivity of images' and allows us to measure 'their fullness, their strength,' and, importantly, to experience and intuit 'their transsubjectivity' (ibid., p. xix). Secondly, this indicates that our dwelling in the presence of the poetic image, in and through the creative imagination, grounded in a primordial-ontological realm, pushes us beyond ourselves in *human transcendence*, and transcendence always includes the intimate communion with *others* and the world. In line with what was already stated about pedagogy's link with philosophy, with its open-ended, ever-evolving components, in authentic education 'these subjectivities and trans-subjectivities cannot be determined once and for all' (ibid. p. xix). This communion with *others*, inspired by the image's poetic power, puts us in touch with what is 'immemorial' (ibid., p. 12). The ontological communication that we share with *others* and the poet cannot be reduced to a form of communication that is propositional in nature, which is either verifiable or falsifiable, able to be transmitted without distortion from teacher to student. This is because the understanding that accrues in such original moments of communicative learning is akin to whispering 'secrets' to those with whom we dwell in the communal context of poetry. According to Bachelard, all we can hope to 'communicate to others is an *orientation* towards what is secret without ever being able to tell the secret objectively. What is secret is never totally objectivity. In this respect, we orient oneirism but we do not accomplish it' (ibid., p. 13). Thus, there is a *directionality* here and an *orientation* to Being, i.e. poetry intimates the

proper relationship of the human to its primordial modes of dwelling, and this *ontologically inspired spatial* relationship can be experienced powerfully, but in no way can it be expressed with certainty, never can it be explained fully and quantified.

Education, inspired by Bachelard's phenomenological approach to poetry and the creative imagination, would demonstrate an acute awareness of and respect for the so-called 'content' of the curriculum, e.g. there would be a focus on not only *how* to 'read.' but as well the content of *what* is being 'read.' There would undoubtedly be a heavy focus on the humanities, i.e. literature and poetry that would be required, however, beyond this, a concern for the quality of content would be necessary in order to learn in the most rich and deep way possible. This concern is in no way reducible to 'academic content' as conceived by the *structure of the disciplines* movement, where students are viewed as neophyte scholars and taught the techniques and methods of the professionals in the various academic fields. rather, in line with Bachelard's (2005) phenomenology, this would represent the selection of poetry/literature that inspires the imagination in ways that facilitate the *transcendence* of students, revealing a 'new life' and 'new spirit,' opening the students' eyes to 'new types of vision' (p. 16). Ultimately, educators would seek out images that, like *education itself*, would allow students to 'put aside outworn knowledge, formal and allegorical mythologies that survive in education devoid of life and force (ibid., p. 16). Bachelard refers to images with such power as an invitation to the voyage (*L'invitation au voyage*), and with this notion, we might also envision authentic learning in terms related to the ontological themes of this essay, for with

this invitation we register, in our inner being, a gentle impulsion which shakes us, which sets in motion beneficent reverie, truly dynamic reverie. If the initial image is well chosen, it is an impulsion to a well-defined dream [daydream], to an imaginary life that will have real laws of successive images, really vital meaning. (ibid., p. 21)

Ultimately, when selecting poetic images, or the content of the curriculum, educators are searching out *those* images concerned with because they are inspired by the 'concrete essence' of existence. The ontological question that Bachelard poses to the poets might well be asked of contemporary educators, '*Tell me what your infinite is and I'll know the meaning of your universe: is it the infinite of the sea or the sky, is it the infinite of the earth's depths or of the pyre*' (ibid., p. 23, emphasis in original)? The selection of the content of study takes into consideration both the 'polyphonic' and 'polysemantic' aspects of poetic imagery: for if 'meanings become too profuse, it can fall into *wordplay*. If it restricts itself to a single meaning, it can fall into didacticism,' the 'true poet,' and we might say without distortion, the *true pedagogue* 'avoids both dangers' (ibid., p. 28). In this polyphonic and polysemantic movement that is poetic education, the poet both 'plays and teaches' (ibid., p. 28). This is because authentic ontological imagery *condenses infinite meanings* in the language of the poem and thus awakens in the learner the 'unconquerable desire to be reread' (ibid., p. 28). This is the educator's invitation to her students to come and dwell with the poet in his or her imagery, and, because of the depth of the poetry selected, 'we immediately have the impression that the second reading will tell more than the first. And the second reading—contrary to an *intellectual* reading—is slower than the first. It is contemplative' (ibid., p. 28). In essence, education might be conceived as a dwelling with the image and experiencing its profound potential for *meaning in excess*. For if human *transcendence* can be thought to represent the 'essence' of education, this *essence* is found in the '*imagined mobility*' of the human spirit that poetry inspires, for ontological *transcendence* is neither accomplished through didactic techniques nor does it occur by means of rational 'scientific' theories, i.e. the application of *calculative* knowledge to the problems of existence and education. For *transcendence* 'is not properly aroused by the description of reality,' rather the 'true voyage of the imagination is the voyage to the land, to the very domain of the imaginary' (ibid., p. 22).

In human *transcendence*, as in authentic education inspired by Bachelard's phenomenology, lies the potential, in communion with poetic images and reverie, to go beyond what are in the present moment when dwelling intimately within an ontological context that shelters and preserves the primordial capacity of human *transcendence*. For Bachelard (1969, 1994), to return to our earlier

thoughts, this is dwelling with our *solitude*. In such moments of attunement, we are not alone or separated off from things, rather we are at one with the universe (cosmos), prior to any structures of consciousness, prior to the formation of the ego. This is because our *poetic reveries* 'toward reveries of our childhood [*existential solitude*] introduce us to a being preconditional to our being, a whole perspective on the *antecedence of being*' (Bachelard, 1969, p. 108). In terms of *ontological space*, we are transported in reverie into close proximity to the 'being of cosmic childhood,' for in 'solitude it reappears in our reveries (ibid., p. 108). However, *Being-at-home* in the ontological experience of dwelling within the Being of childhood, which is primordial *being-well*, has been lost to us as adults and educators, for we are always more focused on ways to overcome what we perceive as *not-Being-at-home* in the world (recall that this represents a secondary metaphysical phenomenon, according to Bachelard) through the pursuit of rational strategies and scientific theories. In *social efficiency*, this manifests as the application of quantitative educational research to educational *praxis* in the curriculum. As a result, this mode of *being-well* that subtends *cosmic childhood* remains adumbrated. To the point, in the technical-instrumental age of standardization educators are deafened to the poet's song. In order to 'restore' or return to this primordial condition, this original space of childhood as *being-well*, following Bachelard, education must find that 'it is necessary to beautify' (ibid., p. 115), and this calls for the turn to poetry and the awakening of the creative imagination in students and educators alike:

In our dreams (*songes*) toward childhood, in the poems we would all want to write in order to make our original reveries live again, to give back the universe of happiness, childhood appears, in the very style of the psychology of the depths, like a real *archetype*, the archetype of simple happiness. (ibid., p. 123)

How different and humane such thoughts are when compared to the manner in which contemporary education conceives of the child, the learner, and the student—as the mere possessor of skill-sets and competencies. Where is the safety of *existential solitude*, which is the ontological space of *day-dreaming* in the contemporary standardized curriculum?

Authentic education, drawing inspiration from Bachelard is ultimately about creating a dwelling space within which the change to our Being, soul, and *orientation* to the world and *others* is nurtured, sheltered, and facilitated. Education rests in human *transcendence* and various modes of primordial 'poetic' attunement, e.g. *the solitude of the child* that we too can return to if we approach the poet and his or her poetry in the manner Bachelard recommends. This does not include psychological or cognitive theoretical explanations; this does not include formal and traditional esthetic critique; this does not include the Scientific Method or Metacognitive strategies that are applied to the various problems that we encounter either inside or outside the classroom. As we have seen, for Bachelard, such 'conceptual' approaches cannot touch or penetrate into the most original aspects of our Being. Gaudin (2005) drives home this point when stating, 'Pedagogy is an essential category of thought and not a mere application of the general principles of knowledge to the teaching of the ignorant' (p. xxv). Education might be said to 'educate itself' when it realizes that it is only through the 'continuous and collective process of error correction,' which, as the reader will recall, instantiates Bachelard's approach to philosophical thought, that it is 'in a constant state of pedagogy' (ibid., p. xxv). Gaudin's analysis includes the notion of pedagogy drawn from Bachelard's work in epistemology and the *New Scientific Mind*. I too have touched on Bachelard's (1968) re-definition of 'philosophy' for the new age, in terms of saying 'no' to all-encompassing definitions of the world captured in sure and certain knowledge. Philosophy must be open and 'capable of collecting together all shades of meaning' (p. 13). And this is precisely what poetry teaches us about an authentic education, because its imagery always resists being closed off in categorical explanations, for the image is always a force associated with *excess*. As Gaudin (2005) observes, 'Images are the sign of an *élan*—an indication of excess. Imagination always reaches beyond what is given; it magnifies and deepens, it gathers the whole world into a simple image and the whole subject within its reverie' (p. xlix).

With this in mind, it has been my primary focus to elucidate for the reader a form of educational dwelling that might be drawn from Bachelard's phenomenological ontology of the creative imagination and the poetic image. I have attempted to show that a new form of dwelling might be conceived, which is irreducible to dwelling in the traditional classroom, cyber-realms, and so-called 'virtual' communities of learning advocated in the ICBM and other standardized approaches to education driven by scientific instrumentalism for curriculum. I have attempted to show that authentic learning is about dwelling in terms of *ontological space*, i.e. the authentic space of subjective human *transcendence* and *transsubjective* inter-personal human relations, a 'space' of dwelling that is irreducible to the 'proximity' associated with the three-dimensions of Cartesian space. This is because it is intimately linked with a sense of *spirituality*, *creative intuition*, and the intangible ontological aspects of our existence that remain elusive, remained concealed from empirical modes of investigation, but are made available for appropriation through the practice of phenomenology. rather, than attempting to establish principles for education, or outlining the specific goals and aims of a poetic/ontological education, the reader will note that I have tried to inspire him/her to think, imagine, and *dwell* in a space beyond the four walls of the classroom, an *imaginative* space that Bachelard's phenomenology makes possible. Perhaps the attentive and careful reader or educator that is open to the power of both philosophical and poetic works, and who, like Bachelard, is prepared to devote 'long hours of reading and writing,' will have an understanding of an education that unfolds in terms of authentic discovery in the '*surveillance of de soi*' (Gaudin, 2005, p. xxvii). This surveillance of the soul *as* education occurs within moments of human *transcendence*, which is awakened through a dwelling in poetic imagery as guided and inspired by the pioneering work of Bachelard.

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