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CAN WE EDUCATE FOR THE NOT-YET? PHILOSOPHIES OF OPEN-ENDEDNESS AND THE RECOVERY OF STUDENT CURIOSITY

Abstract
Imaginative thinking often grows out of our innate sense of curiosity and wonder about the world. Children naturally wonder why things are the way they are and how things work as they do. But soon after entering school, students find themselves being taught in boring and uninspired ways which serve to kill their natural sense of wonder and curiosity. As a result, many students lose interest in school by their teenage years. Taking my cue from Ernst Bloch's future-oriented, process-based philosophy of "the not yet", this paper links the production of imaginative thinking with five pedagogical strategies that can hopefully help recover student curiosity and improve students' overall educational achievement. It will be argued that educating for "the not yet" is important for attaining better student learning outcomes and retention rates, as well as ensuring a more productive citizenry in the next generation.
Keywords: Imaginative thinking, Ernst Bloch, Curiosity, Openness, Pedagogy, Vision.

Será que podemos educar para o «ainda não»? Filosofias da abertura e a recuperação da curiosidade dos estudantes
Resumo

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O pensamento imaginativo surge frequentemente do nosso sentido inato de curiosidade e admiração pelo mundo. As crianças questionam-se naturalmente sobre o motivo pelo qual as coisas são como são e como funcionam da forma que funcionam. Mas, pouco depois de entrarem na escola, os alunos deparam-se com um ensino aborrecido e sem inspiração, que acaba por extinguir o seu sentido natural de admiração e curiosidade. Como resultado, muitos alunos perdem o interesse pela escola na adolescência. Inspirando-me na filosofia de Ernst Bloch, orientada para o futuro e baseada em processos, do «ainda não», este artigo associa a produção do pensamento imaginativo a cinco estratégias pedagógicas que, esperamos, possam ajudar a recuperar a curiosidade dos alunos e a melhorar o seu desempenho escolar global. Argumentar-se-á que educar para «o ainda não» é importante para alcançar melhores resultados de aprendizagem e taxas de retenção dos alunos, bem como para garantir uma cidadania mais produtiva na próxima geração.
Palavras-chave: Pensamento imaginativo, Ernst Bloch, Curiosidade, Abertura, Pedagogia, Visão.

Introduction: Ernst Bloch's Future-oriented perspective: "The Not Yet"

The focus of this paper will be Ernst Bloch's concept of the open-ended future. It will argue that this idea can be used in the field of pedagogy to motivate disenchanted students, as well as to encourage curiosity, open mindedness and new pathways for problem solving. After first explicating Bloch's view of "the not yet", this paper[2] will discuss how the concept of "the not-yet" involves a philosophy of open-endedness which can be seen to be applicable in the following five pedagogical strategies:

1. Understanding the tentative nature of scientific findings and human knowledge generally
2. Conceptualizing learning as an unfinished and open project
3. Developing open-mindedness: Following arguments where they lead
4. Approaching teaching and learning with a spirit of intellectual humility
5. Appreciating the essential mystery and wonder of the world as the fundamental starting point of education and inquiry.

Let us now consider Bloch's views. Ernst Bloch was a Marxist philosopher who stressed the "noch nicht" - the "not yet". This term designates that which is yet to come[3]. Bloch saw no reason to look back with nostalgia on the past as a static and

[2] This paper was first presented in December 2023 at the "Invention and Imagination" conference, held at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, NOVA University, Lisbon, Portugal. Thanks are due to audience members at this conference for their helpful comments on the presentation, and also to Professors Richard Grallo (Metropolitan College of New York) and Phil Washburn (New York University) for thoughtful responses to earlier drafts of this paper.

[3] Bloch discusses its role in the formation of the crucial emotion of hope, and based upon this, "dreams of a better life" in which people who have long endured dreary lives of exploitation and alienation would eventually reach the true dignity of humanity - to finally "walk with an upright gait". Bloch has long been (and perhaps still is)

unchanging source of tradition and wisdom. He wrote:

> Only with the farewell to the closed, static concept of being does the real dimension of hope open. Instead, the world is full of propensity towards something, tendency towards something, latency of something, and this intended something means fulfillment of the intending [4].

For Bloch, «There is this open dimension in people, and our dreams, plans, live within it»[5].

Bloch therefore speaks not of the unconscious memories buried in a repressed past, as Freud did with his new science of psychoanalysis, but rather of a future-oriented "not-yet-conscious" in the human mind that corresponds to the not-yet-become in the world. The open dimension is also in things, on their leading edge, where becoming is still possible[6].

Nina Cemiloglu summarizes this view by stating that for Bloch, human beings are in a continuous process of becoming. This means «they are as of yet unrealized possibilities…similarly the world is in a continuous process of becoming. Like humankind, it is unfinished, open and full of yet unrealized possibilities.[7]»Bloch writes that «expectation, hope, intention towards yet-unbecome possibility: this is not only a main characteristic of human consciousness but also a main characteristic of objective reality as a whole»[8].

Bloch as a Process Philosopher

There are clear similarities in Bloch's view here with other process-oriented thinkers like A.N. Whitehead, William James, Henri Bergson, and Robert Musil. Note that the concept of "the not yet" is conceptualized in Heidegger's future-oriented account of temporality also, and versions of process-oriented thought are present in Asian traditions as well – e.g., the Buddhist doctrine of "dependent origination". Process philosophy in fact has a long history. It is defined as follows in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*:

> Process philosophy is based on the premise that being is dynamic

considered a somewhat marginal figure in 20th Century Marxism, as his emphasis was not on what Marx considered the 'scientific' laws of historical materialism and economics (theories of surplus value, etc.), but rather on the inner, phenomenological world of daydreams, hope and imagination as the necessary preconditions for social change. He called this the emphasis on the 'warm stream' of Marxism rather than the 'cold stream'. However, this paper will not focus on Bloch's Marxist political views themselves.

[4] E. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* trans. N. Plaice, et al., Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press,1995, p. 18.

[5] Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, *op. cit.* p. 288.

[6] *Ibidem* 288. See also N.Cemiloglu, "'Flaschenpost' from the Past: The Critical Utopian Pedagogies of Ernst Bloch and Paulo Freire", *Ethos: Dialogues in Philosophy and Social Sciences*, July 2019, 12(2), p. 190.

[7] Cemiloglu, "Flaschenpost", *op. cit.* p. 190.

[8] *Ibid.* See Bloch, *The Principle of Hope, op.cit.*, p. 7.

> and that the dynamic nature of being should be the primary focus of any comprehensive philosophical account of reality and our place within it. Even though we experience our world and ourselves as continuously changing, Western metaphysics has long been obsessed with describing reality as an assembly of static individuals whose dynamic features are either taken to be mere appearances or ontologically secondary and derivative. For process philosophers the adventure of philosophy begins with a set of problems that traditional metaphysics marginalizes or even sidesteps altogether: what is dynamicity or *becoming*—if it is the way we experience reality, how should we interpret this metaphysically?[9]

Bloch's views are complex and his frame of reference wide-ranging, so he might have objected to this particular perhaps reductionist, classification of this thought. But he fits into the "process philosophy" category in his own unique way - his particular version is expressed in terms of "the not yet" with an emphatically optimistic, hopeful orientation towards the future and its potential for improvement over the past and the present. This perspective contrasts with, for example, that of Heidegger, whose conception of "the not-yet" is ultimately characterized by a stark emphasis on human finitude, and which also came to involve a nostalgic, radically conservative cultural pessimism. For Bloch, the future stands open before us. Everything we do is oriented in this future direction, anticipating that which is "not yet". How does our hopeful anticipation of this open future color the way we look at life? What will the future bring?

The 'Not- Yet' and the Tentative Nature of Knowledge (Strategy 1)

How can we educate our students for "the not-yet"? How can a perspective emphasizing an open-ended future help educators become more effective? As mentioned above, open ended-ness for Bloch is a fundamental aspect of the world itself. In light of this, Bloch criticized the traditional classroom with the instructor writing a litany of static unchanging facts on the blackboard that students must memorize and then quickly forget (resulting in an unimaginative, uninspiring educational experience)[10]. Of course, we have all been subject to this sort of boring approach in school and we all know how stifling and soul-crushing it is. We all have studied subjects in high school or college in which we had to memorize a bunch of "facts" which we quickly forgot right after taking the test. And we have met people who seem able to recall a great many disconnected 'facts' about any number of subjects, but who don't seem to have gained any wisdom from this knowledge or integrated the knowledge of these 'facts' into any sort of coherent, comprehensive worldview[11]. Bloch argued against this kind of superficial, fragmented and rote

[9] J. Seibt, «Process Philosophy», *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/process-philosophy.

[10] See Cemiloglu, «Flaschenpost», *op. cit.* p. 193

[11] See A. N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and other Essays,* The Free Press New York, 1967, p. 93.

learning approach to education, as well as the ethos of "the tyranny of the textbook", in which the teacher feels pressure to 'get through the material in the textbook' in time for the test, rather than being able to focus more slowly and deliberatively on the actual process of learning[12].

The topic of curiosity is important because the traditional model of education as "information transfer" has had a number of other very negative consequences for countless generations of students, and perhaps even for society at large. Young children exhibit a natural excitement and curiosity about everything in the world. And Bloch offers an inspiring account of childhood that is worth presenting here. For Bloch, *longing* is the most driving force in human life and this is particularly strong in childhood and adolescence. These times of life are thus oriented most emphatically towards the future. In Bloch's account of his own boyhood, he emphasizes his longing for adventures and freedom. He writes:

> The boy kidnaps himself and rides away on a fast horse into the safety of adventure.……The night is full of taverns and castles. There are weapons, fireplaces, men as tall as trees and no clock [13]

Bloch has argued that boys long for "adventures", «audacity, color, width and height»…[14]. At the Mannheim Fair, he watched mermaids, magicians, cowboys and men who swallowed and regurgitated frogs. The fair consisted only of "six rows of stalls", but it gave him an idea of "how big the world is"[15]). The harbor also gave him an idea of how big the world is because it was full of ships from distant countries. He loved talking to the sailors and listening to their stories. On the vast plains between the Rhine and the Neckar, Bloch and his friends used to take long walks and to act out imaginary adventures. Every stone and every tree could become the hero in a story. When they had tired themselves out, they felt the impact of the solitary landscape between the two rivers: «We were drawn into the beauty of trees, clouds, of the evening sky…» [16]

Also Heraclitus, «The learning of many things teacheth not understanding, else it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hekataios» (Fragment 16). See Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 134.

[12] *Ibid,* 193. Here Cemiloglu is discussing some themes from Bloch's *Padagogica,* 1971. Bloch's views here relate to his Marxist critique of education in capitalist societies. According to Cemiloglu, Bloch argued that the concept of "facts" is bound up with the "reification and commodification of knowledge in a capitalist society". There is for Bloch no true objectivity in so-called "facts" because the hidden...goal of conventional education under capitalism is "to preserve the status quo", i.e., "molding students into docile employees and consumers" (see ibid, pp. 192-194). However, as this paper is not about Bloch's explicitly Marxist perspective on education – we will instead apply Bloch's doctrine of "the not-yet" as a general conceptual framework through which to facilitate the recovery of student curiosity.

[13] Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung,* Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main, Verlag,1959, p. 23. As quoted/discussed in Nina Cemiloglu, «Between Marxism and Romanticism: Childhood and Education in the Works of Ernst Bloch» *Folkyor/Edebiyatn,* 2018, no. 94, 217-226.

[14] Bloch, *Prinzip Hoffnung*, *op. cit.* 1959, p. 29, as quoted/discussed in Cemiloglu., «Between Marxism and Romanticism», p. 219.

[15] Bloch, *Literarische Aufsatze*, 1965, reprint 1985, p. 405. See Cemiloglu «Between Marxism and Romanticism», p. 220.

[16] Bloch, *Spuren*,1930, p. 70 as discussed in Cemiloglu, *ibid*, p. 220. Cemiloglu' also offers the caveat here that

For Bloch, the essence of the world is the urge and energy to create…The child is thus motivated by curiosity and expectation. Bloch emphasizes the natural 'hunger' for knowledge and for new and novel experiences. In his account of childhood, Bloch focused on imagination and daydreams. Daydreams, far from being a waste of time, are "like windows through which we can see the…world of realizable possibility." Daydreams can help change our lives and the world we live in in a positive direction. Daydreams contain the seeds of utopia… [17] Bloch claimed that the young have an affinity to 'What Is Becoming'. They are themselves full of a "Not-Yet-Conscious" and a "Not-Yet-Become". [18] Bloch argued that "this Not-Yet-Conscious, Not-Yet-Clearly-Known, Not-Yet-Become connects youth with change". [19]

This sense of wonder and excitement is, again, unfortunately extinguished in many kids by the time they get to high school. Many promising students from all kinds of backgrounds - students who could possibly have been inspired to excel in school and make valuable contributions to the state of knowledge and society - have instead been bored to death and turned off to the whole enterprise, resulting in much wasted potential and lost opportunities. We submit that teaching and learning should also emphasize the open, unfinished and tentative nature of human knowledge, which in turn could motivate students to learn more about the subjects at hand and to try to envision new ways of solving problems. This increased level of motivation might also help improve the widespread retention deficits that plague many institutions of higher learning today.

What then is involved in the recognition of the tentative nature of human knowledge and how is this relevant to Bloch's more open-ended (and future-oriented) perspective? Explanation is often a temporary condition in the sciences, as new evidence might suggest different conclusions. Many scientific theories that were long thought true have now been incorporated and to some degree superseded by newer theories. Many of the results of Aristotle's biological investigations have since been found problematic. Newton's theories have been expanded, built upon and in some aspects superseded by Einstein's. So here we come back to the question just considered: were Aristotle and Newton's views simply 'wrong,' or rather were they necessary stepping-stones to what is now thought to be true, which itself may change later with new discoveries? Our current theories are the best explanations we can formulate at present, given all of what we know now, i.e., the most current state of our knowledge. The "not-yet" perspective reminds us that new information may always be discovered in the future. We should therefore always be prepared to revise our theories at any time, and even to envision new, more comprehensive, explanatory frameworks to better account for new data.

This raises other questions that have been debated in different contexts within

«like many thinkers of his generation, Bloch's ideas are gender biased: the 'child' appears to be identical with 'boy' in his works» p. 226. In 2025, some might think this problematic, but on the other hand, writers are products of their times and it might also be somewhat unfair to judge them too harshly by the standards of other, later times.

[17] N. Cemiloglu, «Between Marxism and Romanticism: Childhood and Education in the Works of Ernst Bloch» *op.cit.* p. 220.

[18] Bloch *Pädagogica*, *op.cit.* p. 55, see Cemiloglu, *ibid.*, 225.

[19] See Cemiloglu, 225.

contemporary epistemology and philosophy of science. If discovery is a continuously unfolding process, can some theories be truer than others? Are there degrees of truth, more closely approximating the truth, with truth discovered by approximation and the process of inquiry conducted by 'standing on the shoulders of giants'?

It appears that there are some objective truths that we can speak about (mathematical truths such as 2+2 = 4 have traditionally been presented as examples of objective truth). But what exactly makes a proposition true? Some philosophers have argued for a 'correspondence' theory of truth in which propositions are true if they correspond to the way the world actually is, while others argue for a 'coherence' theory in which propositions are true insofar as they cohere and integrate with other propositions within the relevant explanatory framework.

Science progresses through the continuous gathering of new evidence and changes in perspective. What might be some of these changes in perspective? One involves cultivating the humility to believe that there appears to be no theory that is absolutely and eternally "right", but rather that some theories and answers are shown to be more or less right than others, and that we can only hope over time to more comprehensively approximate the truth (or at least how it is currently conceived). This is how we move forward in our understanding of the world's mysteries. There is no need to be (or prove that one is) completely "right" all the time because basically no one is right in any sort of final, absolute sense.

Note that this view is not to be confused for or conflated with a relativism that concludes "there is no truth" or that "no one can know the truth". It is not arguing that truth is merely a matter of subjective opinion or personal preference, or that it varies all over the map depending on time and place. It is rather that discovery is a continuous and open process, and that the answers to life's questions are most often not something fixed in solid, fixed unchangeable stone. We must always be open to receiving new information every day and possibly changing our perspectives in light of new data. Moreover, this process should be seen as an exciting challenge and a necessary part of a larger, open adventure in inquiry, rather than a frustrating experience in which we continuously must attempt to overcome a seemingly never-ending series of roadblocks.

Conceptualizing Teaching and Learning as an Open, Unfinished Process (Strategy 2)

If teaching and learning are seen as open, unfinished and continuous processes, how can recognizing this motivate students to learn more? One of the destructive tendencies of a 'test-oriented' educational culture is its myopic focus on finding the right answer, with this constituting the end of the inquiry, even though foundational questions may yet still remain. Bloch as a process-oriented thinker went so far as arguing that reality is not made up of 'facts', but rather of 'processes[20]': He writes:

[20] See Cemiloglu, 'Flaschenpost…", p. 194.

> Nothing could be altered in accordance with wishes if the world were closed, full of fixed, even perfected, facts. Instead of these there are simply processes, i.e., dynamic relationships, in which 'the Become' has not completely triumphed[21].

The question whether 'facts' exist as actual 'things' that make up the contents of the world has a long tradition in analytic philosophy (i.e., the field of ontology). And of course, one might justifiably take issue here with Bloch's pronouncement here. For example, one might convincingly argue that it is an unalterable, incontrovertible fact that the inauguration of King Charles III occurred in Westminster Abbey in London, England, on May 6, 2023. However, I believe Bloch has a valid point here nonetheless - in mathematics, for example, merely finding the solution to a problem (although this is what is stressed in most educational settings) is not the only thing that is important. While it is clearly necessary for students to learn how to find the solution to the problem, teachers should also be encouraging students, after finding the solution, to try to better understand this problem-solving process and its applications - what if this state of affairs holds or that? [22] How can the reasoning used in solving this specific problem be extrapolated and applied to other situations? Why is x the solution and not y? Tunnel-vision directing students only to finding the answers to prescribed problems may stifle a larger curiosity and a more far-reaching line of inquiry about the subject matter.

What exactly are the aims of education, and at what point can these aims be considered achieved? Consider the following interesting topic posed by Atli Hardarson: «Are educational aims objectives that can be attained, reached or completed?» Hardarson distinguishes between some aims that are "objectives that can be reached or completed" (which he calls "closed") and those "open aims that are ideals that we work towards, although the tasks cannot be completed".[23] Regarding the latter, Hardarson asks:

> When has a student understood gravity? When she has learned to do simple calculations based on Newton's formula? Is able to explain how massive objects affect space-time? Has mastered the concepts used to describe black holes? Knows what the long search for the Higgs-Boson was all about? Can participate in debates about the differences between gravity and other fundamental forces of nature?

Hardarson concludes: «understanding gravity is an endeavor which, arguably, cannot be completed». [24] The more one understands this open- ended aspect of inquiry and the more one studies the subject in question, e.g., gravity, the more one learns about it. Focusing only on the closed aims, e.g., finding the specific answer to a particular prescribed test question, can in its own paradoxical way, function to effectively shut down the learning process itself. The laser focus on finding

[21] *Ibid.* See Bloch, *The Principle of Hope,* p. 196.

[22] See E. Knuth, «Fostering Mathematical Curiosity» in *Mathematics Teacher*, 95(2), 2002, pp. 126-130.

[23] A. Hardarson, «Aims of Education: How to Resist the Temptation of Technocratic Models», *Journal of the Philosophy of Education,* vol. 51, no 1, 2017, p. 65.

[24] *Ibid.*

right answers can thus stunt the questioning of deeper assumptions about the subject, with the student thus missing out on some of the more far-reaching aims of the educational process.

Open-Endedness and Open-Mindedness: Following the Arguments Where They Lead (Strategy 3)

The considerations above also shed light on the notion of learning as a disinterested search for knowledge. According to Aristotle, «all men desire to know».[25] But if one desires knowledge then one should be prepared to accept the conclusions of relevant scientific investigations, even if such conclusions contradict one's previously held assumptions[26]. The goal of scientific and philosophical inquiry is not the confirmation of our preexisting biases and convictions. All views, even deeply held ones, are subject to revision in light of new information – and of course, new information coming to light is always possible given the fundamentally open nature of reality.

In the scientific method, theories or hypotheses are formulated to explain or account for the 'facts' that have been heretofore discovered. If new facts are discovered by way of experiment which the theory cannot explain or which somehow call it into question, the theory or hypothesis will have to be amended or discarded, as facts cannot just be ignored or cherry picked in order to fit into previously held theories. New and innovative ways of thinking may sometimes be required to envision and conceptualize new hypotheses and more comprehensive explanatory frameworks.

But is such disinterestedness even totally possible? F.H. Bradley said: «Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct; but to find these reasons is no less an instinct»[27]. This echoes Hume's famous argument that reason is but the slave of the passions. Is disinterestedness impossible and even if so, should it still exist as an ideal to be striven for?

Thomas Kelly in his paper "Following the Argument Where it Leads" directly examines this philosophic ideal of disinterestedness in detail. Kelly discusses the this philosophic ideal as follows:

> Even if it is conceded for the sake of the argument that everyone will inevitably fall short when it comes to "following the argument where it leads", that alone has no tendency to show that this putative ideal—however exactly we should understand it—is not a genuine one. Among other things, even if all of us will inevitably fall short of the relevant standard, it might nevertheless be possible to do a better or worse job of approaching or approximating it. Indeed, it would be surprising if this were not the case. That is a familiar point about ideals, and one which I take to apply to norms of belief no less than to norms of behavior.[28]

[25] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Book 1, Part 1, page 1.

[26] See T. Kelly, «Following the Argument Where it Leads», *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, vol. 154, no. 1, pp. 105-124.

[27] F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, l969, p. 169.

[28] T. Kelly, «Following the Argument Where it Leads» in *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for*

However, developing and embracing this sort of open-minded, process-oriented perspective is not as easy as it might seem. There are complicated psychological reasons why open-endedness is difficult for many to sustain. We know that people may hold on to the correctness of their views and theories because of personal pride, stubbornness or the 'sunk-cost' fallacy. But there are deeper psychological mechanisms at work here as well. There is evidence from social psychology that our brains seek closure in the face of open questions and that people are naturally uncomfortable with situations left unfinished or ambiguous. They want tentative situations resolved and open cases closed, now rather than later. Situations that are left unfinished are anxiety producing for many, and therefore people will naturally resist the "reality as process" view. [29]

This "ambiguity intolerance" can lead to a tendency towards selective perception, which can shut down inquiry and impede scientific (and other sorts of) progress[30]. In this connection, Richard Grallo, clarifying a point from Bernard Lonergan, discusses "process bias" as "a systematic exclusion of further relevant questions and insights on a particular topic" and writes further that this might actually constitute a "flight from understanding".[31] Such "process bias" may originate due to a number of psychological motivations, including "intolerance of uncertainty, a demand for immediate answers, an unwillingness to suspend judgment as evidence is gathered", etc.[32] Given its clear relevance to contemporary political discourse and the dangers therein, an increasingly large body of work is currently being initiated on this and related topics.[33] Bloch is in my view correct in his insistence upon the open-ended nature of reality and the need for us to do justice to this in our thinking, teaching and research. But this mindset is not easy to maintain nor does it come naturally to us. We have to work to resist the natural psychological tendencies that may impede it.

Educating for 'The Not-Yet' and the Place of Intellectual Humility (Strategy 4)

Becoming an effective educator requires humility and a willingness to change one's mind. For example, admitting 'I don't know' to student questions, or changing one's mind after considering the available evidence, is not necessarily a shortcoming or a sign of incompetence, but rather an honest stance that also ideally can constitute an invitation for more sustained reflection. Bloch also argued «teachers and students should regard knowledge as being in process and developing.»[34] According to Cemiloglu, "Bloch has urged teachers and lecturers not to assume or pretend to know everything there is to know in their fields of study."[35] What are some actual practical ways of conveying this humbler theoretical stance to students? This question has also

Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition, vol. 154, no. 1, pp. 105-124.

[29] See Kruglanski, Arie, and Webster, Donna, «Motivated Closing of the Mind: Seizing and Freezing», *Psychological Review*, 103:2 (1996), 263-83.

[30] Quassim Cassam, *Vices of the Mind: From the Intellectual to the Political,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2019.

[31] R. Grallo, «Questioning as a Cognitive Process» *Symposium* XVI (1), (2009) p. 17

[32] *Ibidem*, ibid, p. 19

[33] See Q. Cassam, *Vices of the Mind, op. cit.*

[34] See Cemiloglu, «Flaschenpost», *op. cit.* p. 194

[35] *Ibid.*

been taken up in the educational literature, e.g., Michael Chalukian's *Pedagogy of Curiosity:*

> The teacher plays a vital role as a model for collaborative humility. He or she must rethink the traditional role of the content expert and answer giver…. evolving into a facilitator of student exploration, inquiry, and discovery. To encourage and illustrate this concept a teacher can:
> • ask questions to understand and challenge students thinking and conclusions.
> • say "I am not sure. How can we find out?"
> • admit confusion and mistakes
> • acknowledge the vulnerability in being unsure and not knowing in the class and
> group setting.
> • reason and think aloud with groups and in class discussions[36].

One way of viewing this is that Chalukian is offering practical advice regarding how instructors can help create, in Heidegger's term, a 'clearing' (or the opening up of an intellectual space) for the recovery of student curiosity. Chalukian is advocating for the instructor stepping back from the traditional teaching mode of actively imparting information to passive students. He suggests framing the classroom environment more as an open space for the shared process of collaboration and exploration, in the face of what is for all of us as learners, a (still) mysterious world. The teacher is therefore stepping back from 'teaching' and is now encouraging and facilitating the deeper pedagogical process that Heidegger famously referred to as 'letting learn'[37].

One might argue, however, that the above viewpoint implies a lessening of instructor authority. After all, instructors have spent a lifetime studying and learning about a subject and in most cases know much more about it than the students. Otherwise, why should students listen to and respect their instructor? But this objection rather misses the point. Generally, these bullet points above offer practical suggestions on how to encourage a more curious and inspirational classroom, instead of offering a top-down, boring (and perhaps even pointless) educational experience, where information is often presented, memorized in rote fashion and quickly forgotten.

Another objection might be raised here to the whole topic of this paper, as some might consider the entire issue of rekindling student curiosity a problem for "privileged" classrooms only. Students from poor, underserved populations might not have the time or wherewithal to "wonder about the world" because they must first deal with more pressing questions of economic survival, desperate living conditions, etc. While there is some truth to this, a number of important artists, scientists, writers, inventors, philosophers, etc., have come from very humble beginnings. Moreover, many students from privileged backgrounds, though perhaps better prepared academically, often lack curiosity themselves and are motivated more

[36] M. Chalukian, *Pedagogy of Curiosity,* Scholarworks, UMass Boston, 2015.
[37] M.Heidegger *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. G. Gray, New York, Harper & Row, 1968, p. 15

by receiving good grades than by a genuine desire to know. Such students may end up as competent, well-paid professionals, but not necessarily as innovators who will push the needle forward in any significant sense, and the world needs these original thinkers even more. The problem of ineffective, boring pedagogy is therefore a problem across the board.

Education and the Fundamental Mysteriousness of the World (Strategy 5)

At the end of an academic course, students should be left wanting to learn more about the subject, realizing that there is still much they have yet to learn. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said the starting points for religion are awe, wonder and mystery.[38] It is the same for science, philosophy and art as well. Thus, Whitehead wrote of "romance" as the starting point of educational inquiry, and we also can refer here to the famous quote attributed to W.B. Yeats - «Education is not the filling of a bucket but the lighting of a spark». As we have seen, one major problem is that education has traditionally been conceived as "information transfer" (See Freire, Bloch and others). The current emphasis on testing and assessment seems to accept this assumption, and focuses on means towards more effective information transfer. Education certainly involves acquiring factual information, but this is perhaps not its most important aspect. So much more about this world remains unknown than known. Teachers are only human themselves and obviously do not know all (or most or even many) of the answers. And ironically, many instructors themselves can sometimes get lost in the mechanics of their job (paper grading, publication deadlines, committee work, department meetings, etc.) and lose sight of that which motivated them to pursue graduate study and a career in education in the first place. We therefore submit that recovering a sense of humility in the face of the world's mysteries (and the constant unfolding of our knowledge still to come) needs to be more universally communicated by instructors – not as an obstacle or a depressing roadblock to student learning, but rather as an active stimulus enjoining and motivating a more future-oriented spirit of curiosity, collaborative inquiry and wonder within a likeminded community of learners.

Conclusion

Leveled-down, uninspired pedagogical approaches like rote memorization and teaching to the test have often had the unfortunate consequence of discouraging imagination and curiosity in the classroom. Ernst Bloch's conception of "the not-yet" can be applied through the pedagogical strategies 1-5 above to help recover and/or sustain the wonder and curiosity in students that are a crucial part of effective education. This improved motivation in the classroom will help achieve an important goal – graduating better educated students who can more effectively envision new

[38] See A. J. Heschel, *Between God and Man,* The Free Press, New York, 1967.

ways to solve problems. Thus "educating for the not-yet" can help ensure a more productive citizenry in the long run.

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