

# **Teaching for Uncertainty**

***Through a Metamodern Education Full of Wonder***

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# Abstract

***Teaching for uncertainty through a metamodern education full of wonder, by Nicolaas Ploegman.***

Wonder interrupts the everydayness of our lives and sensitises us on an existential level to what it means to know, act, and be. Thus wonder opens us up to endless new possibilities to connect with the world and our Selves and has us stay flexible and versatile in the face of the uncertain. Wonder is not an educational frill. It lies at the heart of learning as it allows and urges a student to think and engage with the world and her Self on a more meaningful level.

Whilst the idea of an education full of wonder is promising, its practice and the consciousness guiding that practice are complex. This thesis determines the outlines of a pedagogy and practice of wonder in Dutch higher education. An education full of wonder suggests a pluralistic pedagogy and practice of playful and open-ended interruptions that immerse students in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge. Wonder-full education recommends an inclusive pedagogy and practice that does not try to balance or harmonise opposites. It is precisely in the gap that separates and binds opposites that new and authentic meaning can emerge, and novel and thought-provoking ways of knowing, acting, and being can come into the world.

The idea of wonder-full education is developed through poietic inquiry. A creative type of inquiry that transcends the rational by letting new meaning unfold out of itself and thus bring forth the new. A type of inquiry that embodies wonder and wonder-full education.

# Acknowledgements

This project would not have begun without me wondering what a doctoral study could do for me at an age when one usually starts thinking about retirement. I felt a touch of thoughtlessness creeping into my professional and personal life. It is time to push me beyond my comfort zone once more. It is time to again plunge into newness. Liverpool turned out to be the right choice. Stimulating discussions and a liberal dose of library time opened me up to engage in and with my educational practice in new and meaningful ways.

The COVID pandemic disrupted the project, which ultimately fortified the idea in me that our educational practice needs new ways to help students flourish in an inherently uncertain world. But it was not only COVID-19 that interfered with the flow of my thesis. To study is to get lost. An adage that, in my case, lived up to its potential. The more I read, the less I knew, the more confusing the problem got, and the more I felt trapped in a bad version of the cliché of the studier who ended up knowing nothing. The turning point was when I started to understand that not-knowing offers me the opportunity to be open to the new and unforeseen. Not-knowing is to be(come) aware of and take in the infinite potentiality of the world I live in and with.

I want to thank my primary supervisor Dr Gough and secondary supervisor Dr Edwards for accepting nothing less than excellence from me. They inspired and encouraged me to think—not thoughtlessly engage with the world I live in and with. They opened my eyes to the idea of a thesis as a philosophical inquiry. They allowed me time and space to get lost. To live the potential instead of calculating definites. I feel fortunate they were my supervisors. Finally, a thank you to my friends, colleagues and family for supporting me spiritually, intellectually and physically. The talks, the walks, and the lovingly prepared student food have been highly appreciated.

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# Introduction

## *When we shake hands.*

The ability to create and tell stories, and believe in them, is a powerful tool to establish ourselves in the world, interact with each other, and justify our actions. Through stories, we construct meaning in our lives. This thesis is such a story. A story about creating a new kind of education that can help students flourish in the inherently uncertain world they live in and with.

The story begins at a business school that is part of a Dutch university of applied sciences. The school is government-funded and caters to around 10,000 students in 23 full-time and part-time Bachelors and Masters programmes. In the Netherlands, the relationship between higher education institutions and the government is contractual (Paradeise et al., 2009). A relationship that is policy-driven and in which self-regulation of the institutions is at the forefront, and in which the focus is on output rather than input. Whereas enforcing institutional autonomy can easily lead to strengthening institutional management at the expense of academic freedom (Paradeise et al., 2009), the business school in this story chooses not to take this path. To realise the agreed output, the executive board of the business school, like many Dutch institutions of higher education (Kleijnen et al. 2009), cultivates a culture of participation and consensus, emphasising capabilities like risk-taking, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Staff development and self-management are the primary means to achieve goals. By creating a learning organisation (Biddle & Stewart, 2015; Bolden et al., 2015; Senge, 2006), the school aims to tap into its staff's commitment and capacity to learn as staff members essentially forge the business school. As a learning organisation, the business school has a flat organisational structure. Leadership is not confined to the top but fostered at all organisational levels of the business school, and self-managed teams are in the lead. Teams in which all members contribute their knowledge and share their expertise, and in which a culture of mutual trust, ownership, genuine empowerment, collaboration and partnership is fostered to ensure that its members get and stay involved. The

executive board is convinced that the ones closest to the students are in the best position to determine what is needed. Individual teams are enveloped in fluid collaboration networks to ensure that this strategy works for the whole business school. In these networks, walls between silos are breached by having teams work as multi-disciplinary entities on shared challenges. This is done to capitalise on knowledge in the best way possible and for the benefit of value alignment between the different teams, as value alignment is fundamental for the business school to advance and flourish (Branson, 2008). The business school has translated the output it has committed to in a twofold mission: transform students and transform the local community it is embedded. In other words, the school wants to educate the business professional of the future and help change society. To accomplish this mission, the school actively engages with government, business, and civil society partners.

For two reasons, this business school makes an exciting setting for this thesis. First, the school recognises it needs to step up its ambitions and change its practice if it is going to stay meaningful to its students and society. Second, its executive board wants its lecturers and researchers to rewrite the school's existing educational narrative or add a new paragraph to it.

The school intends to innovate its education because the students and the world it is supposed to help develop are evolving faster than its education. For one, the demographics of the school are changing. Cultural diversity and social-economic backgrounds of its students are growing, like the differences in what these students want for their education and what they can do. These changes make the student population itself a significant factor of uncertainty. Also, the world in which the school is embedded is changing. Economic, business, and leadership models are constantly challenged and replaced. The business school no longer aims to teach traditional business and leadership models. It shifts away from Milton Friedman's model of unbridled free-market capitalism (Friedman, 1970). It moves towards economic models which strive for a more equitable and sustainable economy and prize value creation and long-term purpose over value extraction and short-termism. For example the doughnut economy model for sustainable development combining

the concept of planetary boundaries with the complementary concept of social boundaries (Raworth, 2017). This model, for example, is incorporated by the city of Amsterdam into their strategy to create a city where people and the planet can thrive (Doughnut Economics Action Lab, 2020). The shift towards these new models only ups the demand for its students' creative and innovative capabilities as they need to become pioneers—agents of change—capable of re-envisioning the nature of business.

The school, though, is not successfully challenging and guiding every student to complete their educational programme. Too many students leave the school without their diplomas. Students complain that the educational system itself is unintentionally contributing to inequality. The executive board finds that this can and must change as it is the school's social task to offer education that fits the needs, talents, and motivation of every student and that will help them to cope with what the world demands of them. The board, therefore, concludes that if the school is to stay successful at educating students that can deal with an uncertain world and become the agents of change that the world needs them to be, education itself needs to change. The board calls upon its lecturers and researchers to rewrite the existing educational narrative.

The innovation process is envisioned and designed as a bottom-up process without a definite blueprint and only a few primary guidelines. For one, the learning programmes are envisioned as inclusive learning communities in which every student is seen and acknowledged for the unique human being she is and that offer safe spaces for a student's self-development. Communities that offer equal opportunities whilst tuning into varying backgrounds, personal situations, ambitions, motives, and talents and that challenge everyone to perform at their highest level and obtain a solid foundation for the future job market. Communities in which lecturers, field professionals, and students together shape the learning environment that enables the student to become a critical professional. A professional that does not blindly follow the wisdom of the crowd. Second, the board's guidelines state that the improved educational practice should solve real-life problems and contain fixed qualifications that clearly show a student what is expected of her.



I am one of the staff members whose professional responsibility is challenged by the executive board to help make the business school future-proof again. For over twenty-five years, I worked at this business school, and in these years, I have gained extensive experience with this school and its people. I started as a manager of administrative affairs, became a lecturer, then a programme director and finally a research lecturer. I call this business school home—my school and its students matter to me. Therefore, I feel responsible for taking up the board's call to action. What better way than to put my doctoral thesis in the service of this challenge to innovate my school's educational practice?

My history with and my position at this school influences the narrative of this thesis. If I had constructed the narrative as a manager and director, it would have revolved around efficiency, accountability and performability issues—it would be about realising and safeguarding output targets. If I had composed the narrative as a starting teacher, its primary focus would have been on curating the ideal Body of Knowledge and Skills (BOKS) and finding the best didactical approach to teach it to my students. Now in my later years, I pick up on different things, which is not to say that the managerial perspective and the worries of the starting teacher do not matter. They do. But when I talk with my students, it is no longer the technics of education that catch and hold my attention. Instead, I am captivated by their struggle to keep up with the demands an ever-changing world makes. I am fascinated by the battles they fight with a system that disregards their expectations, hopes, and dreams and the reluctance they feel to leap into the unknown and put themselves at risk because they miss a purpose to do so that is meaningful to them. The impactful conversations are not about knowing stuff. Instead, they revolve around students wondering what it is to be a human being and a professional that matters. Questions like 'Who am I?' and 'Why does it matter that I exist?' and not so much 'What do I know?' seem to have the power to transform.

These questions not only have an impact on my students. They also have an impact on me as a teacher and a researcher. These existential questions induce me to create an education that helps my student to find ways of becoming a human being

that matters to herself and the world she lives in and with<sup>1</sup>. Instead of an education that only focuses on helping my student become a professional that matters to the world. An education that is about being as much as it is about knowing and acting—an education that addresses the epistemic as well as the ontological. Working from the assumption that wonder is what sensitises a student on an existential level to her Self and the world, this thesis is a story about wonder-full education. Wonder-full education is a new way of learning and teaching that propels a student beyond the limitations of logic and reason, which restrict her connectedness to the world she lives in and with. Wonder-full education helps her to experience what it is to be(come). That is, wonder-full education does not do away with logic and reason but opens the student up to the potentiality of what lies beyond these principles. It opens a student up to the infinite potentiality of what it means to exist. It opens her up to endless new possibilities to connect with the world she lives in and with and her Self and has her stay flexible and versatile in the face of the unknown. Wonder-full education playfully and in an open-ended way interrupts, interferes, and discontinues the everydayness of a student's life, so she can become a unique individual that creates new and meaningful work that matters to her Self and the world she lives in and with. Wonder-full education urges a student to engage with paradoxes that call her to contemplate and suspend her thinking and acting whilst simultaneously exciting her to think and act. Wonder-full education defines things whilst staying undefined and completes things whilst staying open-ended. It is an education that does not have her try and balance or pave over these paradoxes but live the dilemmas they create as it is precisely in the gap that separates and binds opposites that new and authentic ways of knowing, acting, and being emerge. It is an education that questions what a student knows, how she acts, and, more importantly, who she is and why it matters that she exists. It does so because it is ultimately from her being that a student gets the will, the courage, and the inner compass to engage with an inherently uncertain world and flourish in the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Reflexive note: From here on, I will refrain from using the plural pronoun students. Using the plural makes it easy to (unwillingly) lose sight of the singular human being that is the student. It makes it easy to lose sight of this exceptional individual's unique experiences as a valuable source of her learning—which is what wonder-full education is about.

Ultimately, wonder-full education is an education that has a student care for her Self and the world she lives in and with.

What is wonderfully orthodox about this new way of teaching and learning is the relationship it fosters between a student and her teachers. A relationship built on responsibility and trust. A relationship in which teachers and student care for, and sometimes even carry each other despite evidence from the past that suggests that they might not be capable of having such a relationship. A relationship that heeds Nicolai Hartmann's advice to always be in love and perpetually perplexed—to appreciate the imperfect and bewildering world in all its rich complexity without sophisticated intellectualistic and moralistic schemes (Cicovacki, 2014). A relationship that echoes Hannah Arendt's *amor mundi* (Di Paolantonio, 2019) but without her political agenda. A relationship that resonates with Emmanuel Levinas' idea that student and teacher are each other's irreplaceable other (Biesta, 2017) but without absolute claims that call them into responsibility. A reciprocal relationship that Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Reynolds, 2002) beautifully captures in the metaphor of the handshake: When we shake hands, our two hands start alternating in the function of touching and being touched. Which hand then is touching, and which hand is being touched? Which hand is teaching, and which hand is learning? Who is calling who into being responsible?

Stories about wonder often touch upon the philosophical. But this thesis is more than a philosophical story. It provides an empirical potentiality as it furnishes valuable and sustainable resources for action. This empirical potentiality is important because the need for action triggered this thesis. It is also important because the ideas offered in this thesis need to convince its audience as these ideas hold out against some of the prevailing ideas in today's higher education. And nothing is more convincing for a business school than functional practicality. Finally, it is important to know that this thesis and its audience are set in a metamodern context. This context implies that this thesis is not meant to be the next grand story. It is not meant to be the blueprint of blueprints. It is meant as the beginning of a series of short-lived stories that show local realities told by a pluralistic crowd of storytellers in

open-ended ways. Stories, though, that still have the power to change our educational practice.

Who, then, is the audience of this thesis? Whom am I trying to convince to embrace a different kind of education? Who is the pluralistic crowd of storytellers I try to reach? That audience consists of the lecturers and researchers tasked by the executive board to innovate education. However, I add the student to the audience. More often than not, research papers, vision documents, and strategy scenarios do not reach the student. But the ideas that are discussed in them very much concern her. Not incorporating the student as a part of this thesis' audience makes the executive board's idea of a community of learning rather meaningless. Suppose I can convince this audience that my story has merit and entices them to start telling their wonder-full stories. In that case, it will convince the executive board of the business school to adopt this new way of learning and teaching. Simultaneously, when told and retold, the story can start to spread to other parts of the university of applied sciences and beyond and can start changing educational practices.

Writing this story about wonder-full took work. How to articulate something that resists being reduced to abstract concepts and predictable outcomes, as wonder does? How to find words for something that, at times, is as incomprehensible and inexpressible as wonder is? How to deal with the fact that this story can leave the student and her teachers empty-handed because we need to get many things right if we want it to succeed? And then there is also the question of trustworthiness. How can an audience give credence to the work of a biased researcher who undermines the traditional logic of research by privileging aporias over resolutions, ongoing thinking over definite thoughts, the ephemeral over the certain, and the affective over the rational<sup>2</sup>? How can an author trust the impact of his work when the meaning of what he writes not so much depends on his intentions but on the audience's reception instead? How? By shaking hands! Using that simple Merleau-Ponty-style gesture that embodies the will to meet, listen, and hear each other's thoughts,

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<sup>2</sup> Reflexive note: Attia and Edge (2017), Koro-Ljungberg (2008, 2010, 2016), Probst and Berenson (2013), Richardson (2000) and Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) tell me that validity and credibility are impossible to achieve in an ephemeral and fluid social reality. All we can aspire for is a reflexive stance in the many realities that can never be fully known or copied because of their short-lived and transitory nature. That is, clarifying thoughts, deliberations, biases and anxieties at every step.

speculations, prejudices and angsts. Embracing that disarming gesture that interrupts knowing, acting, and being through the touch of the other. Adopting that defenceless gesture that signals a loss of power and privilege. Using that touching gesture in which we can feel the concentrated reality that resides in a wordless meeting of hands. Shaking hands, at first, might be awkward and uncomfortable, even provocative, and is very likely to interrupt, surprise and confuse. Nevertheless, it serves an important purpose. How will we otherwise find the simple and quiet words that write stories that can inspire others to pick up on them and start writing theirs?

# Chapter 1: Opening

*To flourish in and with an inherently uncertain world.*

## 1.1 Outline

In this chapter, I argue that helping a student flourish in and with an uncertain world is a meaningful and worthwhile task of higher education. I will discuss how we teach for certainty to show that teaching for uncertainty is meaningful, and I will hypothesise that wonder unlocks teaching for uncertainty—it is the key to helping a student flourish in and with an uncertain world.

More than twenty-five years in higher education have shaped my understanding of being a student. I have learned that being a student<sup>3</sup> is not the easy undertaking nor the straightforward path to success we advertise it to be. The world of a student is a challenging place where meaning is inherently fluid and ambiguous, and everything and everyone is doubted. A place in constant flux and where a tiny virus can change how we learn and teach overnight. An ephemeral place where today's knowledge and skills are already outdated by the time a student graduates. A precarious place where even a booming economy leaves her without the certainty of a regular job if the job she is training for exists when she finishes her education. At times, living in such an uncertain world is a scary and unsettling experience. As teachers, we are to help a student navigate and prosper in such a world, but we often only seem to add to her stress levels by facing her with contradictory demands. We urge her to think outside the box whilst boxing her in with a strict set of competencies and predefined learning outcomes. We call upon her to become an innovative and independent professional whilst pressing her to conform to cultural and educational stereotypes. We demand her full attention whilst ignoring the social reality that encases her in many mutually exclusive networks that constantly test her loyalties. We count on her to be an ardent student whilst discounting that life pushes her into the role of a

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<sup>3</sup> Reflexive note: Although I know every student to be a unique individual—experiencing education in her very own way—I believe many a student will recognise herself in my account.

provider because of the lack of study funding—sometimes even being a caretaker for a brother, sister or parent. We teach a student that her future is solvable in the here and now—we teach for certainty—but in doing so, we rob her of the power of possibilities, and thus we replace joyous apprehension with hard intentions and, ultimately, with disappointment. As educators, we build a place of learning around the idea of critical thought that has a student struggle with uncertainty—the world is not a given and to earn her degree, a student needs to take a critical stand towards that world. Nevertheless, we gift her a world where the outcomes she might reach are already set. We project the idea that school is the only place where learning can take place and that how we have shaped education is the only way to prepare her to become a capable professional. Nevertheless, knowledge and skills are more and more found outside academia. A student finds her answers in YouTube tutorials and TED talks, an infinite source of knowledge that often makes her classes seem limited and uninspiring in comparison. Also, as a working student, her workplace is rife with learning opportunities and content that her educators often ignore as a source of learning. Furthermore, the tangled web of social relations and dependencies a student is encased in offers multiple other ways for her to understand what it means to exist. These are existential sources of learning that her educators again find challenging to include in the exclusive place of learning they have built.

Pondering these many layers of what it means to be a student and the misconceptions that seem to exist back and forth between teacher and student, I question if today's educational practice lives up to its full potential. Does teaching lead to learning? Is learning different from knowing? Should education be something more? Should it be something different? Answering these questions will help make new sense of today's educational practice and will help innovate it.

## **1.2 *Education and uncertainty***

Education is a teleological practice formed by its purpose. Without direction, education remains infertile. Given the uncertain world's impact on a student, helping her to flourish in an uncertain world constitutes a valuable purpose, especially when

traditional education fails to do so. Barnett (2012) inspired me to take up the idea of human flourishing with his argument that education should help a student flourish as an authentic human being amid uncertainty. Biesta (2010b, 2017) cemented the idea with his argument that education should offer spaces and places for a student to flourish.

What it is to help a student flourish can be approached from different angles. It is possible to look at a student's flourishing through a subjective lens in which her flourishing depends on her attitude or state of being, such as happiness, pleasure or desires. It is also possible to look at a student's flourishing through an objective lens in which her flourishing is constituted by objective things like knowledge, skills, and achievements—things that can be seen as independent of a student's subjective attitude towards them. And then, there is the holistic lens that combines the subjective and objective, and that expresses a student's flourishing in terms of the ability: to live the good life (de Ruyter, 2007); to live a meaningful, autonomous life filled with rich experiences (D'Olimpio, 2020); to flourish overall as a human being (Kristjansson, 2019); to do good things whilst having a positive attitude towards those things (Moore, 2020); or to understand not only who one is but also what one is (Pedersen, 2020). What connects the different variants of flourishing in the holistic approach is that they share the idea that education is to prepare a student to live in and with the world. A student's life should be meaningful to herself and the world she lives in and with. What connects these variants is that they want a student to be fully aware of her potentiality and not only of the path her educators have chosen for her. To flourish, in these variants, entails actions that transcend what simply being happy can contain or merely feeling well can achieve. Actions that urge a student to explore her desires for what is desirable for the world she lives in and with<sup>4</sup>. That is, she does not simply wait for good things to happen to her but does good things for herself and others. To flourish in these variants happens in the here and now. To flourish is not simply the outcome of her education. It is something that happens to her whilst she is studying. It is also something that not only happens within her

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<sup>4</sup> Reflexive note: To emphasise this intricate and interwoven relationship between the student and the world, I will use the term to live in and with the world throughout this thesis.



formal education—learning is not the exclusive domain of educational institutions. Given how I have come to understand my student, the holistic approach speaks to me. Based on my experiences, I know that the different elements these authors address concern my student and have her concerned. For me, therefore, a student who flourishes in the world is a student that can realise her Self in a way that matters to herself and the world she lives in and with—a student that thrives, and not merely survives, in meaningful ways.

As I connect flourishing with flourishing in an uncertain world, how do I understand uncertainty? Uncertainty has always been a part of human existence. The desire for certainty is one of the reasons education exists. However, the dynamics of uncertainty have changed, as uncertainty is continuously formed by and embedded in a specific historical, cultural, political, economic and social context (Nowotny, 2016). So what defines uncertainty in today's world, and why does it call for a change in the educational practice? Is uncertainty an epistemological problem waiting to be solved or an ontological state that is independent of what we do or do not know? To answer these questions, I will show how contemporary philosophers address the matter. However, before I do so, remember that renderings of the uncertain world cannot be but imitations—only an Ersatz of the real thing—and quickly become empty shells, losing their significance (van den Akker et al., 2017). So, when making sense of the ideas of these thinkers, it helps to sensitise their thoughts and descriptions by infusing them with personal experiences of uncertainty.

Zygmunt Bauman (2000, 2009) characterises today's world as complex and chaotic. Liquid modernity, he calls it, where anomalies are the norm, meaning is constantly in flux and open-ended, and a student needs to improvise and adapt at a moment's notice—very much like living the life of today's digital nomads. Such a life seems carefree, but it is precarious because it leaves a student with little security to build her hopes and dreams. Furthermore, while her liaisons with others and the world are casual and comfortable, her support networks are disturbingly fickle. Because she is over-saturated with information, knowledge is no longer a lasting possession for her. On the contrary, solidified knowledge reduces her ability to take in and up the new (Bauman, 2009). Therefore, Bauman urges teachers to help a student

develop an art of living with uncertainty and stay open to the new, the unforeseen, and the unprecedented. Ronald Barnett (2009, 2012) describes the world a student lives in and with as super-complex and super-ambiguous. For him, the world harbours so many different, incompatible and ever-changing realities that interpreting and resolving them is impossible. Consumer trend-watchers Mason et al. (2015) see a profoundly fragmented world that is more diverse and varied than ever. A world, however, where its citizens share a surprisingly uniform and collective mindset of ever-rising expectations, making them almost impossible to please, let alone delight. Floridi (2014, 2015) also outlines a fragmented yet hyper-connected world. A world in which information is rampant and abundant instead of scarce. A world in which the lines between reality and virtuality blur and fluid networks replace the primacy of solid binary relations—the onlife he calls it. The onlife affects how a student identifies herself, how she socialises, how she describes reality, and how she interacts with that reality. Old conceptual frameworks—traditional educational approaches—to tackle these novel and unfamiliar situations are no longer helpful. A good example is given by Ess (2015). Studying privacy and the use of social media, he observes “a shift from the modern Western emphases on the Self as primarily rational, individual, and thereby an ethically autonomous moral agent towards greater (and classically “Eastern” and pre-modern) emphasis on the Self as primarily emotive, and relational” (Ess, 2015, p. 98). Members of social media platforms willingly and enthusiastically share information that was once considered private, yet in exchange, they freely and readily embrace a form of self-censorship—to like and be liked is the norm. Otherwise, you are out. Compare this with the expectations a student has to meet in her classroom. Her teachers approach her as a rational, autonomous and private individual and expect her to be critical of the contributions she and her peers make. A telling example of old frameworks that no longer fit and that rather confuse than clarify.

As I argued earlier, higher education is there to help a student deal with the uncertain world she lives in and with and cope with the ever-present shifts and incompatibilities that take place in her life. Looking at the education we have built, we constantly bring her into situations of uncertainty. She needs to take a critical

stance towards what we expose her to—so she can learn. Dealing with uncertainty is at the heart of being a critical and intellectually mature student. It is a core competency at the business school in this thesis. So why do many thinkers mentioned above opt for a new approach to education? To answer this question, I will look at how we currently prepare a student for the fluid, ambiguous, fragmented, and hyper-connected onlife reality she lives in and with.

### **1.3 Teaching for certainty**

A central belief in education at the business school that features in this thesis, and education in general, is that a student's life must be made productive. Not being productive does not do for a business professional—for any professional—which kind of makes sense for a university with applied sciences in its name. Not only do we believe that a student's life must be made productive, but we also believe that we can make it productive if only we put enough energy and effort into it. Running it as a machine, we<sup>5</sup> think, helps in that endeavour. Hence the academic language is one of efficiency, accountability, and performability. The focus is on realising production targets (Biesta, 2009a, 2013, 2015; Lum, 2003, 2014; Masschelein & Simons, 2008, 2010). We believe that by helping a student reduce uncertainty, she can become a proficient business professional that can grow the economy. To help her reduce uncertainty, we design and execute her education as an epistemological project—we design it as a project of knowing and acting (Barnett, 2009, 2012). A project in which we educate the knowledge worker society demands. A project firmly based on four key principles that underlie Western education (Reiss, 1982; Cicovacki, 2014). We tell a student that everything in the world is ordered and structured (the principle of order). Because of that, she can know the world, which is the basis for solving problems (the principle of knowability). We urge her to behave self-restrainedly and systematically and methodologically apply reason and logic to solve problems (the principle of self-control and mastery). If she complies with these rules, she is

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<sup>5</sup> Reflexive note: We, in this case, are restricted to the managerial levels of the school. Colleagues on the work floor do not seem to think it is a good idea. This observation is confirmed by Paradeise et al. (2009) in their comparative analyses of university governance in Western Europe.

rewarded with a degree. However, if she does not comply, she is punished by expulsion (the principle of reciprocity). We teach a student that through practical experimentation and rationally sourced knowledge, the uncertain world is hers to predict, shape, and control. Even if this means reducing the reality she lives in and with to the point when all substance and meaning are lost. Largely unaware of this reducibility trap, the student thinks she only has to break challenges down into units, categorise and name them, capture them into a net of statistics, and narrate them in a linear fashion, and the world is hers to control. To sum it up, we teach for certainty. We have the student deal with uncertainty by reducing it, and with success, I might add. The work field the business school acknowledges that in their feedback.

Not to skate on thin ice, we also carefully design and execute how we teach for certainty. We have the student work with different modes of knowledge (Nowotny et al., 2001). As an academic, we have her build broad concepts and frameworks and work with theoretical knowledge. As a business professional, we have her solve specific real-life problems—we have her work with creative knowledge and skills that call for imagination. Her study programme thus fuses the impartial pursuit of knowledge with practical skills, as institutions of higher education all over the world do (Egetenmeyer et al., 2019; Sin et al., 2019). We also urge the student to adopt different perspectives regarding knowing and acting. When dealing with hard sciences, we ask her to adopt a positivist perspective—reality exists outside of her. That is how she discovers the laws of physics. When dealing with social sciences, in contrast, we urge her to take a constructivist perspective—meaning is fabricated by interacting with the world she lives in and with. Hence she constructs “multiple contradictory, but equally valid accounts of the world” (Gray, 2014, p. 20) on which she can base her business ideas and models. Finally, we envision education as a triple helix in which students, teachers, and society co-create knowledge whilst contributing to society. Thus the student benefits from the access to knowledge and skills that more and more are located outside her campus (MacGregor et al., 2010), whilst the outside benefits from her.

Such a varied approach to knowledge should help the student cope with the many uncertainties she faces. Paradoxically, the opposite is true. It leads to new turmoil (Nowotny, 2016). Uncertainty surges because the more partners the student works with, the more intractable processes become, as she has to manage more needs and expectations, whilst the demand for (ex-ante) assurances that come with external funding infringes on her academic freedom. All the while, society's growing demand for creativity leads to a new kind of anxiety which Daker et al. (2018) and Ren et al. (2021) call creative anxiety. Barnett (2009, 2012) notices that the epistemological gap cannot be bridged in a super-complex and super-ambiguous world. Knowledge and skills always will lag. They need time to adjust to the new conditions, but by then, the world has already changed again—the world recedes from the student as she approaches it. In a dynamic (onlife) network, it is impossible to freeze-frame constantly emerging patterns. The moment the student tries, she is shut out. So she keeps up as best as possible, but the solutions she designs are never perfect. They will always be slightly out of sync with reality and invariably have unintended consequences. Even more so, what she thinks to be the final answer—to be the all-explaining scheme—turns out to be only one of many prospects (Green & Gary, 2016). Once the student reaches a solution, new and more profound problems arise and thus (the feeling of) uncertainty increases. Approached from a different angle, trying to colonise the future is futile, as Facer (2016) describes today's educational attempts to solve the problems of the future. The possibilities of future transformations exceed the constraints of the present. Even more so, a super-complex and super-fluid world transcends what can be captured, understood, or expressed by a rational language of knowledge, however subtle that language might be and how creative and imaginative the student is. Some things remain ineffable (Barnett, 2009, 2012). Hartmann argues that there is no total overlap between the real and the rational (Cicovacki, 2014). There are aspects of her existence that the student cannot know rationally, and just because logic refutes the existence of these aspects, it does not mean that they do not exist. There are ways of knowing besides reason, for example, the perceptual, the intuitive, and the emotional, and there are things that, even then, remain inexplicable and inexpressible.

Overall, education as an epistemological project can only resolve some uncertainty the student faces. To teach for certainty has its limits. The reality the student lives in and with is too fluid and ambiguous. Thinkers like Bauman (2000, 2009), Barnett (2009, 2012), Biesta (2014, 2017), Dall’Alba and Barnacle (2007) and Green and Gary (2016), therefore, choose a different path. Besides being an epistemological project of knowing and acting, they argue, education needs to be(come) an ontological project of being. This idea is an exciting path. However, it is also a path the teachers and students might not readily accept at the business school in this thesis, as the epistemological project is all they have known thus far.

#### **1.4 Teaching for uncertainty**

Because knowledge and skills cannot eliminate uncertainty, the student's being is fundamentally challenged by uncertainty (Barnett, 2009). From her being, she gets the will, the courage, and the inner compass to engage with uncertainty—her being sparks, nurtures, and directs her will to learn (Barnett, 2007). Only when the student knows what kind of human being and business professional she wants to be, knowledge and skills can start to make sense. Only then do they become meaningful tools—have a place to come home to. Therefore, education should be a project of being.

If the will-to-learn is lacking, education becomes an almost impossible project. Unless the student has a will-to-learn, Barnett (2007) argues, she “cannot carry herself forward, cannot press herself forward, cannot come successfully into new pedagogical situations” (Barnett, 2007, p. 16). What, then, is this will-to-learn? Is it the will-to-power we have come across when discussing teaching for certainty? The will that has the student categorise, analyse, and control the world she lives in and with? The will that calls on her intellect to provide a motive for action? Or is it something more or something altogether different?

The answer to these questions can be found in what is at stake regarding the will-to-learn. For Barnett, “through the will, one has a care (to use a term of Heidegger’s) for something or other” (Barnett, 2007, p. 19). For Biesta, it is about “having a

concern for the world, of caring for the world, and perhaps even of carrying the world” (Biesta, 2017, p. 33). What makes the will-to-care different from the will-to-power is that care enables one to enter spaces of ambiguity without the ambition or the need to control them (Green & Gary, 2016)<sup>6</sup>. To care for allows the student to become receptive to whatever uncertainty has to tell her and get to know and feel uncertainty’s unlimited potentiality. To care for something or someone is to let herself be interrupted by that something or someone—to open herself up to the new and unforeseen and to transcend fixed ways of knowing and doing. To care for might even help her realise that “what is intelligible to our mind is but a thin surface of the profoundly undisclosed” (Heschel, 1977, p. 6). Not having to control the world allows the student to let go of the anxieties that come with futilely trying to master uncertainty—to let those anxieties gently dissolve so the world can intimately and wholly reveal itself to her. Not having to control the world might induce the student to no longer hide behind commands from others, the safety of a calculating and controlling mind, and the security of logic and reason (Rubenstein, 2008).

Education as a project of being goes deeper than education as a project of knowing and acting. Imagine what happens if we invite the student to sit with the world without grasping at it, without attempting to dominate it. Imagine what might happen if she can allow her Self to be interrupted by whatever emerges. It would ground the student in a completely different way in the world she lives in and with. Imagine what happens if we urge the student to let go of engaging with the world in an I-it mode and instead have her enter an I-you mode with that world. It would bring her into a completely different relationship with that world. In an I-it mode, she is bound to enter into an exclusive relationship with the world in which she is the dominant factor and where the world, and the people in it, are but things amongst things (Erlich, 2020)—things for her to master and control. In an I-you mode, she might be able to enter into an inclusive relationship with the world. A relationship that puts her Self, the world, and the people in it, in an exposed and vulnerable position. But a position

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<sup>6</sup> Reflexive note: Discussing Bauman’s liquid modernity Green and Gary argue that caring enables an “openness to the overflowing emergence of Being” (2016, p. 58), which they think is a prerequisite to living in a state of perpetual emergence which is liquid modernity.

that also opens her up to endless new possibilities to connect with the world and her Self.

### **1.5 Wonder-full education**

Education has a purpose: to help a student flourish in an inherently uncertain world on both a professional and personal level. Therein lies the value—the meaning—of being an educator. For education to help a student flourish, it needs to be more than a project of knowing and acting. It also needs to be a project of being. Knowing and acting cannot eliminate uncertainty. Uncertainty fundamentally challenges the student's being—from her being she derives the will and the inner compass to engage with uncertainty.

Inspired by Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger (two renowned philosophers whose ideas greatly influenced Dutch higher education), I think that wonder can unlock such a project of being. By interrupting the everydayness of a student's life, wonder sensitises her on an existential level to what it means to be. By triggering a response of care, wonder opens up a clearing in which a student can let her being's being emerge without the pressure to shape and control the outcome of the process to predefined specifics and results. Wonder shows a student endless possibilities to connect to the world and be her Self and thus enables her to bring the new and unforeseen into that world. I, therefore, believe that an education full of wonder will help a student flourish in an uncertain world. This idea translates into the following research question that guides this thesis:

*'How can wonder-full education help a student in higher education flourish in and with an uncertain world?'*

Answering this question contributes to the knowledge base of higher education by providing practitioners with a new way of seeing and talking about education. It furnishes a new perspective on how education might work, what education might work for, and how education can be bettered in the everyday practice of teaching.



That is, it provides a new perspective on the ontology, axiology, and praxeology of education. It does so by questioning the technical and rational view of education, questioning the purpose of education as teaching knowledge and skills, and questioning that education should be practised as a problem-based endeavour.

## **1.6 Summary of chapters**

To establish the how of wonder-full education, I will work on the what of an education full of wonder: 'What is wonder?' and 'What constitutes wonder-full education?' In this first chapter, I explain the problem under study. In chapter two, I describe the theoretical perspective and research methodology that frame the question under study. I adopt a metamodern stance. Wonder-full education, and the research leading up to it, play out in a reality that oscillates between modern commitment and postmodern detachment. A reality in which we purposely commit ourselves to an impossible possibility without trying to harmonise or pave over differences. In chapter three, I introduce wonder, establishing the educational importance of wonder from a theoretical perspective. In chapter four, I explore practices of wonder-driven education to find practical footholds for an education full of wonder. I will then translate the earlier findings into practice in chapters five and six. I will use the two guidelines the executive board gives to direct the innovation of its education as anchor points: (1) inclusive learning communities and; (2) fixed qualifications with personalised learning pathways to reach them. In chapter five, I will formulate a pedagogy of wonder that underwrites the practice of wonder-full education, and in chapter six, I will describe the wonder-full practice itself. Finally, in chapter seven, I summarise the concept of wonder-full education. I show how I intend to have the ideas impact the educational practice of the business school that set the innovation challenge, the university of applied sciences it is part of, and higher education in general.

What excites me working on wonder-full education is captured beautifully by Rainer Rilke:

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. (Rilke, 1954, pp. 34-35)

# Chapter 2: A Metamodern Perspective

*Atemporality and displacement as a way of being.*

## 2.1 Outline

Discussions about education eventually touch upon the debate between modern and postmodern education, and how we position ourselves in this debate influences how we perceive an education full of wonder. As modernists, we are likely to see sense in education as an epistemological project, so why invest in wonder-full education? As postmodernists, sensing the senselessness of the world, we probably have no use for wonder-full education. In this chapter, I explore modernism, postmodernism and liquid modernism to argue that metamodernism is a more meaningful perspective when addressing how wonder-full education can help a student flourish in an inherently uncertain world. I will also discuss the implications of a metamodern perspective on the research methodology underpinning this thesis.

## 2.2 *The modern, postmodern and liquid modern*

Two perspectives dominate how we look at education: modernism and postmodernism. Modernists chase after perfection. They move towards a splendid vision on the horizon by thoroughly examining every aspect of their existence, from commerce to philosophy, to find what holds back their progress and replace that with what can push them forward. Modernism affirms the power to create, improve, and reshape the world through practical experimentation and scientific knowledge. It fits education as an epistemological project. Modernism professes a will-to-power (Noroozi, 2019; Reiss, 1982; Stone, 2006). Postmodernism is a reaction to modernism and rejects sweeping visions and grand narratives. Instead, it accentuates variation, ambivalence and fragmentation. Where modernists see ambivalence and fragmentation as threats, postmodernists view them as opportunities for choice. Where modernists believe in diving deep—analysing a subject to its core—postmodernists are less concerned about a subject's depths—

instead, they surf the multiple waves it creates. Where modernists are optimistic about the future, postmodernists are cynical. To be a modernist means to embrace a Parmenidean ontology of being, in which reality is composed of clearly formed and stable entities with identifiable properties that words, symbols and concepts can represent. To be a postmodernist is to embody a Heraclitean ontology of becoming that emphasises ambiguity and constant change (Gray, 2018). The modernist is orientated towards outcomes and solid end-states, whilst the postmodernist is drawn towards change. Today's universities, authors like Bloland (2005), Lum (2003, 2014), Milliken (2004), and Paradeise et al. (2009) argue, very much are modern projects populated by postmodern students (Kline, 2012).

Zygmunt Bauman (2000, 2009) tries to solve this conundrum by adopting a liquid modern perspective. We have met Bauman already in chapter one, where he charges teachers to help a student be(come) versatile and flexible in the face of the overwhelming temporality of the world she lives in and with. He urges teachers to show the student that uncertainty and ambiguity harbour enticing and exciting prospects. In traditional modernity, to be modern meant to achieve perfection. In liquid modernity, it means to improve the world without a fixed end goal. Although postmodernism echoes the chaotic and transitory state of being, Bauman rejects it because of its cynical and mocking nature—the world needs believers in progress, not cynics. Its people still look for something to hold on to, search for meaning, and definitely need their problems taken seriously. Therefore, a calculative modern attitude is necessary, albeit such an attitude must be based on a new paradigm: the uncertainty and ambivalence that characterises today's world.

For several reasons, I question Bauman's liquid modernism. First, my classroom is filled with cynics. Not addressing and incorporating postmodern cynicism feels like only working with half the picture. Second, I question whether a student is a liquid modern individual who designs her destiny free from the rigid social order that surrounds her and is free and willing to change held beliefs and values constantly. Bauman's liquid modern sobriquet tourist, I think, does not match her life. The modern alias pilgrim seems more befitting for a student. Her destination, routes and travel companions stay surprisingly fixed, even if she gets side-tracked every step of

the way. In all likelihood, she will spend her four years at university sticking with the programme she signed up for and the friends she made during the introduction week. For her, qualifying for a degree is not about freeing herself from the fixed requirements, rules, and restrictions her university imposes upon her. The educational frameworks she is trapped in amplify solidity as the condition to conform to—existing academic ways of knowing, acting, and being tend to lead to solid outcomes (Green & Gary, 2016; Sarid, 2017). Moreover, where solid patterns give way, self-chosen new ones often replace them. With her brain already hardwired to react negatively to uncertainty (Nowotny, 2016), the student is prone to cling to the few things she can influence, preferably creating fixed boundaries between herself and the unknown and uncertain. A reaction, I think, that only emphasises the anxiety and lack of agency on her side. This powerlessness leads me to the third concern with Bauman's liquid modernity. Bauman places the responsibility for resolving problems that arise from living in and with an uncertain world on the student's shoulders as he sees her as an individual who knows the consequences of her choices and accepts it as her moral duty to behave bravely and responsibly with her freedom of choice (Green & Gary, 2016; Sarid, 2017). Quite a burden for a young student to bear. Too heavy a burden. Where are her teachers in all this?

### **2.3 *The metamodern***

Two art philosophers, Vermeulen and van den Akker (2010, 2015), offer me a perspective that helps transcend the limitations in Bauman's work. Vermeulen and van den Akker demonstrate that the modern and postmodern moments have passed, and a new era has begun. Together with a growing number of authors, they label it the metamodern (Abramson, 2015; Baciú et al., 2015; Flueraş, 2012; James & Seshagiri, 2014; Kilicoglu & Kilicoglu, 2020; Koutselini, 1997; Piro, 2018; Turner, 2011; Yousef, 2017). They define metamodernism as a structure of feeling that describes the cultural logic of today's globalist society. A structure of feeling that wonder-fully reflects the era the student lives in and with. An era that is pervaded with contradictions and simmering tensions and is characterised by oscillation rather than synthesis, harmony, and reconciliation. The term structure of feeling indicates

that metamodernism should be viewed as a sentiment that cannot be reduced to its elements. Instead, it rather narrates the whole of the experience. The mood—the tone—of metamodernism can clearly be observed in art, as art can express itself eloquently and clearly through its mysterious existence. Epistemologically, metamodernism is situated with modernism and postmodernism. Ontologically, it is situated between modernism and postmodernism, and historically, it is situated beyond modernism and postmodernism. Whereas modernism implies order and postmodernism implies disorder, metamodernism is neither ordered nor disordered. The metamodernist oscillates between enthusiasm and irony, hope and despair, purity and plurality, and construction and deconstruction. Essentially, the metamodernist is without a future and place to call home as she pursues a horizon that is forever retreating. One of her most affecting strategies is “the wilful self-deceit to believe in—or identify with, or solve—something in spite of itself ” (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010, p. 6). The metamodernist keeps looking for answers and solutions but never expects fully to find them. Although the metamodernist might care for completion, she knows it to be an illusion. To stay partially undefined is the best way for her to keep in touch with the reality she lives in and with.

The metamodernists utilise irony and pluralism to counter modern aspirations, while the postmodernists employ them to cancel them out. The metamodernist is no longer the calculating modernist who stops looking once answers are found, nor the cynical postmodernist who will not even attempt to look—she commits her Self, even if it is to an impossible possibility. To the postmodernist, grand narratives are suspect because they aim at some universal truth that cannot and does not exist because of the fractured nature of reality. To the metamodernist, narratives, again, become instrumental. Not on a grand scale to generate and keep alive universal truths but on a local scale (Abramson, 2015) to tell personal stories of continuity and revolution (James & Seshagiri, 2014) and relate experiences about what it means to live in and with the world.

The essence of metamodernism is to work with the contradicting modern and postmodern feelings and challenges we encounter in our life rather than trying to perform some balancing act or paving contradictions over. In the metamodern, we

live the dilemma of “a modern desire for sense and a postmodern doubt about the sense of it all” (Vermeulen and van den Akker, 2010, p. 6). It is not about trying to combine the best of both worlds. It is not about trying to “absorb contrast into harmony”, as Furlani (2007, p. 158) asserts but to engage with its tensions and conflicts—resisting the urge to integrate and instead willing the tension to interrupt our thinking and acting. To dare and be a scientist striving for poetic elegance and an artist not afraid of assuming a quest for truth (Turner, 2011). To be metamodern is not to break with (post)modern attitudes and techniques or to reprocess them or balance them out. Instead, we blend and shift them towards new positions and horizons, deliberately making atemporality and displacement a way of being in and with the world, even if we are told it is impossible to do so. Inspired by the artists who first enacted the metamodern, we adopt an attitude that states that what we create may seem silly, stupid, or a copy of what has been done before. But it still is an earnest attempt at our being in and with the world (van den Akker et al., 2017). In the metamodern, we grasp that we can simultaneously be ironic and sincere and do not have to be afraid or ashamed to be so. We fathom that contradictions resonate with a sensibility that allows and helps one to live an impossible possibility and flourish in the process. We dare to live to be a copy but without an original, boldly embracing a futureless future.

Wonder-full education, seen from a metamodern perspective, is as much a project of knowing and acting as it is a project of being. The challenge is that oscillating patterns of knowing, acting, and being are inherently irregular and unpredictable. Outcomes cannot be planned and are open-ended. We can try and plot a course, but we should prepare for interruptions and, as they come, value them as an opportunity to discover the new, the unforeseen, and the unprecedented. Therefore, we are well advised to build learning spaces that accommodate the student to build new schemes and constantly renew them. To build spaces where anomalies are the norm rather than the exception and that are innately paradoxical and open-ended.

## **2.4 A metamodern research methodology**

The metamodern perspective of living in and with the world has consequences for a story of wonder-full education. It implies that it never is going to mature into a grand story but can only be the beginning of a series of short-lived stories that show local realities and that will be told by a pluralistic crowd of storytellers in a way that is “essayistic rather than scientific, rhizomatic rather than linear, and open-ended instead of closed” (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010, p. 2). That is a series of stories that nevertheless can change our educational practice.

To create a story that inspires the student and her teachers to take up their wonder-full beginnings, the research that grounds this thesis must be based on a metamodern methodology. As the field of metamodern research is only starting to emerge, not much is entrusted to paper yet. Kilicoglu and Kilicoglu (2020) have accepted the challenge. By comparing existing methodologies with the metamodern paradigm, they argue that a metamodern methodology should be a mixed-method approach, which benefits from both the quantitative and qualitative paradigm, whilst it is up to the researcher to maintain a balance between the different approaches. I have several reservations when it comes to their ideas. First, Vermeulen and van den Akker explicitly argue against performing balancing acts. Second, multiple strategies do not guarantee a plurality of feelings—more methods and techniques, even interdisciplinary ones, do not necessarily introduce different voices into the debate. Thirdly, if I want educationalists to take metamodern research seriously as an emerging field of study, it needs to be more than just an addendum to existing mixed-method approaches—it needs to stand on its own feet. It needs to be more than a re-arrangement of existing methodologies and techniques. Springgay et al. (2005) summarise my thoughts beautifully when they tell me the mood of this new method should be one of “a loss, a shift, or a rupture where in absence, new courses of action unfold” (2005, p. 897). A positive mood, as loss is easily mistaken for something negative. Loss, shifts, and ruptures, as I interpret them, are fundamental notions for a metamodern research methodology. By disrupting meaning, they create new and unforeseen openings. To create ruptures is not about creating empty spaces. To create ruptures is not about tearing ungainly holes in the fabric of



life. It is about creating new spaces for fresh and novel encounters. Ruptures make the need for new meaning tactile, seen, and felt (Springgay et al., 2005; Phelan & Rogoff, 2001). Furthermore, the loss of something pristine and valuable keeps reminding me that living inquiry is difficult to do—it is not something to take lightly.

In my interpretation of a metamodern methodology, I will put less emphasis on form and devote more attention to the plurality of feeling when gathering, developing, and communicating ideas on wonder-full education. My interpretation starts with what Kincheloe (2001) describes as bricolage. Bricolage is a concept initially developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss that recombines and reuses knowledge from diverse backgrounds to create new ideas. At first, I was hesitant because bricolage can easily lead to superficial work—knowing a lot but nothing well. What convinced me was Kincheloe's observation that "bricolage understands that the frontiers of knowledge work rest in the liminal zones where disciplines collide" (2001, p. 689). In the gap that separates and binds opposites, new ways of knowing, acting, and being emerge. This fittingly describes what I am trying to accomplish, as my work is a new field of studies where different views come together, oscillate, and collide in a very metamodern way (Campbell, 2018; Squire, 2019). As a bricoleur, I perform what Snyder (2019) calls an integrative literature review. Such a review aims not to prove existing models but to combine perspectives and insights from diverse disciplines into possible models. An integrative review engages with fluid novel ideas and concepts to create the beginnings of a new theoretical model rather than review old ones. As wonder is very much a lived experience, I will also include an element of autoethnography in my work. As wonder is very much a lived experience, I will also include an element of autoethnography in my work. At times, I will write in a self-referential style. I will refer autobiographically to my own lived experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In my interpretation of a metamodern methodology, I will adopt an attitude and composure of getting lost and engage in poietic writing when composing my account of an education full of wonder.

Trueit (2005) defines poietic writing as the type of inquiry that aims to bring into being something that did not exist before by creating meaning in a creative process

that goes beyond the rational. Poietic writing is a dynamic and creative way to transcend the traditional research paradigm in which representations all too easily become the real thing and start controlling my research and reflexive inquiry— isolating me from the world in which what I try to describe emerges and evolves. By viewing a kaleidoscope of interconnections and co-constructions between me and the world I live in and with, poietic writing helps me create the new and unprecedented rather than rework what already exists. Knowles (2020) and Trueit (2005) trace the concept of poietic writing back to the later work of Heidegger, who defines it in terms of the blooming of the blossom and the coming-out of a butterfly from a cocoon—threshold occasions in which one thing becomes another, unfolding out of itself. As a poietic writer, I am expected to rebel, if only against my failures. To embrace instability of form as a way to catch ever-dynamic patterns and to go beyond reason and logic, which are but mimetic forms of thought. Poiesis can be performed, like the poets of old who told their stories before an active, interfering, and even competing audience. A way of storytelling in which I can see myself in my audience, and the audience can see itself in me. But poiesis can also be practised as a “retiring into oneself, reaching oneself, living with oneself, being sufficient to oneself” (Trueit, 2005, p. 188). It can be practised as a reflective and contemplative practice in which my Self quietly looks inwards and outwards.

Getting lost is a concept developed by Patti Lather in which a researcher accepts the loss of authority, expertise, and even innocence as a way to experience the emergent—as with loss, getting lost creates attractive spaces for me to dwell in. In broken spaces (Schultz & Legg, 2020) and in ruins (Lather, 2007), the new, the unforeseen, and even the unprecedented can appear. New meaning can emerge when lost amongst the ruins of old knowing, acting, and being. Loss creates a clearing, a *Lichtung*, as Heidegger puts it (Stone, 2006), in which we can find our authentic being’s being. Something that is best done in solitude and silence. Later in this thesis, we will meet others who disagree, but I feel that Heidegger’s solitary *Lichtung* is the place to conceive my thesis. It allows me to linger in the possible—in what-ifs (Lewis, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017)—and not-yet transform the potential into solid outcomes. It allows me to fully experience the power of “the potentiality of

thought when released from the overall logic of learning” (Lewis, 2017, p. 300). A dialogue at this stage of my work too easily ensnares me in repeating what already has been solidified into abstractions and general concepts (Stone, 2016). Being lost for a while—experiencing a loss of authority—exposes my vulnerability. It keeps me from being too comfortable and sure of myself and forces me to question novel ways of moving forward (Childers, 2008; Fotheringham, 2013)<sup>7</sup>. Once this thesis has come into the world, a *Lichtung* of solitude will no longer suffice. In chapter seven, therefore, I will address how this study of wonder-full education then advances into its next phase.

## **2.5 Food for thought**

As a metamodern poietic writer, who gets lost and finds himself, only to lose himself again, I adopt a dynamic, self-organising, and non-linear process of creating. A process of creating in which I let the new emerge from vague apprehensions, repeatedly interrupted by the fluid plurality of feeling. An ongoing oscillating process that helps me to resonate with what is happening in the world I live in and with. A process that aims at bringing forth the new rather than overly critiquing the existing. Because by excessively critiquing the authors I encounter, I unnecessarily limit my and their being in the world of wonder-full education. A sentiment beautifully explained by Rainer Rilke in his letters to a young poet:

With nothing can one approach a work of art so little as with critical words: they always come down to more or less happy misunderstandings. Things are not all so comprehensible and expressible as one would mostly have us believe: most events are inexpressible, taking place in a realm which no word has ever entered, and more inexpressible than all else are works of art, mysterious existences, the life of which, while ours passes away, endures. (Rilke, 1954, p. 17)

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<sup>7</sup> Reflexive note: For me, the trick is to move on very slowly, from getting lost to getting found. If I too hurriedly sacrifice the moment of getting lost, I will transform the experience of getting lost into a means to an end—into an instrument of control—precisely not what the metaphor is about.

# Chapter 3: The Importance of Wonder

*A state of prolonged not-knowing.*

## 3.1 Outline

Being well into my sixties, the one thing I have learned about wonder is that it is peculiar. It occupies a unique place in the minds and hearts of humankind. It inspires great works of art, produces remarkable science, and inflames love. On a personal level, we probably use the word to describe all kinds of experiences and situations. We wonder why chocolate is so hard to resist, how to structure a compelling argument, where to go on our next holiday, and wonder at the mystery of life when gazing up at the stars at night. At times we know what to expect from it. Then again, it is an utterly unsettling experience that leaves one hanging without a clue, albeit we feel with every fibre of our body that the world just has changed. Sometimes we see it coming, only to strike out of the blue the next time it comes around. To wonder is a bewildering feeling that often leaves one lost for words. Even looking it up in our trusted Merriam-Webster does not provide definite answers. Webster connects it to a host of feelings like curiosity, doubt, surprise, awe, and admiration, often caused by something beautiful or mysterious. Wonder seems to come in many different guises and a perplexing blend of emotional and cognitive experiences. Before putting wonder into education to help a student flourish in an uncertain world, it is good to know what exactly we are dealing with.

I will explore and analyse wonder from a theoretical perspective in this chapter. What is wonder? What is the difference between curiosity, wonder and other adjacent feelings? What spaces are likely to induce wonder to emerge, and what possible challenges does wonder pose for an education full of wonder? Is wonder a source of meaning, or is it only a source of inspiration? Can there even be meaning in wonder if it leaves one lost for words?

There are many different views to be found on the topic of wonder. Too many to incorporate into one doctoral thesis. My choice of philosophers, therefore, is guided

by several considerations. For one, wonder is embedded in specific historical, cultural, economic, and social contexts that we must grasp when discussing it. Philosophers are children of their time who cannot simply be transplanted into the here and now (Russell, 2004), especially since we humans tend to collectively forget the world as it once was—generational amnesia Fisher (2021) calls it. This makes it quite impossible to reconstruct what sense wonder made to philosophers of old and our ancestors. I can try to feel what Baruch Spinoza hints at with his ideas of wonder as a pause or what René Descartes tried to express when claiming wonder is the first of all passions. But I am not a citizen of the Dutch Republic and, therefore, will never be able to sense the depths and meaning of Spinoza's and Descartes' statements. Words also are time-bound. In classic Greek, wonder meant what we now understand as scientific curiosity (Stone, 2006), as there was no separate Greek word for scientific curiosity at that time. The word the Greeks used for curiosity was akin to what we associate with being nosy—prying into the affairs of others.

Therefore, I will restrict my research to philosophers and thinkers with whom we still share a living link. This is not to say those earlier thinkers are of no interest. I will discuss their ideas through the critiques of modern-time sages when needed. As the philosopher to open the exploration of wonder, I choose Martin Heidegger. I have defined wonder-full education as a project of being, and Heidegger's work revolves around being<sup>8</sup>, which makes him a natural point of departure. Even more so, one of his greatest students and critic is Hannah Arendt, whose work has directly influenced the vision behind Dutch higher education and thus offers a living link to the here and now<sup>9</sup>. To bring the discussion about wonder-full education into the twenty-first century, I introduce a group of wonder-thinkers led by Finn Thorbjørn Hansen and

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<sup>8</sup> Reflexive note: Heidegger inspires me not only because he seeks openness and receptivity towards being in and with the world but also because he brings into contact Western and non-Western ideas, as shown by Duane Elgin (2009). This is an idea I relate to on a personal level. As a youngster, I read *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* by Gary Zukav (1978). Not that I even grasp the beginnings of quantum mechanics, but the idea that Eastern philosophies and Western sciences have unexpected similarities has stayed with me ever since.

<sup>9</sup> Reflexive note: What makes Heidegger and Arendt even more inspiring for me is that they also were lovers and stayed friends for life. A Nazi and a Jewess working together, what an inspiring example of wonder's wonder. As incomprehensible as their relationship was, so was their work. Only through the works of others and reading up on their references over and over did Heidegger's and Arendt's wonder-full work slowly begin to make sense to me. For my understanding of Heidegger, I am deeply indebted to Boone (2016), Dukic (2015), Knowles (2020), Malpas (2006), Noroozi (2017, 2019), O'Shiel (2017), Stone (2006), and Talat & Chang (2019), and for Arendt, the credits go to Berding (2021), Di Paolantonio (2019), Helleloid (2005), Nixon (2020), and Walsh (2011). An understanding, I have to say, that is still very much a work in progress.

Anders Schinkel. The group includes associates like Marina Bazhydai, Vasco D’Agnese, Mario Di Paolantonio, David Erlich, Michaela Frunza, Andrew Gilbert, Jacky van der Goor, Yannis Hadzigeorgiou, Genevieve Lloyd, Joseph Moore, Laura D’Olimpio, Jan Pedersen, and Sophia Vasalou, and authors whose work they often reference to, like Kieran Egan, Ronald Hepburn, Laura-Lee Kearns, Martha Nussbaum, Paul Opdal, Howard Parson, Dennis Quin, May-Jane Rubenstein, Patrick Sherry, Nathalie Sinclair, Les Todres, Cornelis Verhoeven, and Haydn Washington<sup>10</sup>. Whereas Heidegger and Arendt do not concern themselves specifically with wonder in the context of education, the group led by Hansen and Schinkel is directly involved in introducing wonder into modern-day (higher) education.

### **3.2 Wonder, that what makes us think**

For Heidegger, wonder is the first beginning (Dukic, 2015). That is, wonder is the first beginning for thinking the most thought-provoking (Hodge, 2015; Noroozi, 2017), which Heidegger deems the essence of our being in and with the world. Wonder achieves thinking the most thought-provoking by interrupting our being in the world and making the unquestioned questionable and the ordinary and familiar strange (Malpas, 2006). Wonder does not need the unusual or extraordinary, “it is an attunement in which one finds even the usual to be extraordinary” (Stone, 2006, p. 213). Wonder interrupts one from taking things and one’s being in the world for granted. “Wonder opens up a space, a clearing [a *Lichtung*] in which beings reveal their be-ing” (Stone, 2006, p. 213). It creates a mood<sup>11</sup> of total receptivity to what constitutes our *Dasein* (existence), so the world can intimately and wholly reveal itself. In this clearing and mood of *Gelassenheit* (being there), we can begin to care for our authentic being by questioning our existence and looking at what is unique

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<sup>10</sup> Reflexive note: This group of close associates share a common background, that of a Continental Northern European setting, which makes it easier to exchange, borrow, recycle, and reinvent ideas back and forth as The Netherlands is part of this region.

<sup>11</sup> Reflexive note: Moods are not emotions, but they do share a relationship. Moods run deeper than emotions—“moods are the tectonic plates that make the various emotional shakes and quakes possible in any given situation” (O’Shiel, 2017, p. 1575). Freeman and Elpidorou (2015) follow a similar path. Moods are the background against which emotions arise. Moods open up the possibilities of making emotional connections. They are a necessary prerequisite for emotions to surface. Because to have emotions, we need a world that already matters to us.

about our situation as human beings (Malpas, 2006; Noroozi, 2019). In this clearing, we can begin to escape the everydayness of our being in the world and start striving towards authenticity, which, according to Heidegger, is the primordial state of what it means to be in the world. A process that Heidegger links to being patient—not being in a hurry to assimilate the wondrous into already-established thoughts. Heidegger worries that we have come to mistake curiosity for wonder, whilst they are two completely different things (Stone, 2006). Curiosity has “no interest in wondering to the point of not understanding” (Heidegger, 1927/2010, p. 166). Curiosity also lacks the ability to stand still in the presence of the wondrous. It is greedily restless. It is always searching for the new and has one see the future as something that already should be in place if only it would hurry<sup>12</sup>. To expedite the future, we obsess over the practical and the efficient. We revert to the safety of the already proven. We fall back on solidified abstractions and general concepts. When curious, we lodge our Selves deeper and deeper within the confines of our calculative mind trying to solve a puzzling phenomenon, whereas when wondering, we remain with the inexplicable (Rubenstein, 2008). In other words, curiosity creates a fixation with the epistemic that closes our ontological openness towards the world and who we are. Curiosity is the thief of wonder (Stone, 2006). It has one overlook the wondrous mysteries in life that cannot be understood by a calculative mind. By denying such mysteries, we self-sabotage our full being in and with the world and our sense of belonging to that world. Wonder is not about knowledge but rather about transforming modes of knowing and creating new and authentic ways of questioning, thinking, and being, as Noroozi (2017) elegantly sums Heidegger up. Furthermore, wonder needs time and educational practices that do not rush things.

Arendt, like Heidegger, argues that wonder is what makes one think. However, Arendt’s thinking is very different from what we might have come to understand as thinking—knowing. Thinking and knowing, Arendt explains, have “two altogether different concerns, meaning in the first category, and cognition in the second” (Arendt, 1978, pp. 19-20). Whereas wonder is concerned with meaning, curiosity is

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<sup>12</sup> Reflexive note: As a teacher, I often complain about the hurried restlessness I witness in my classroom. For example, when a student does not think a project through but picks the first solution that presents itself and builds her world around it. But am I not guilty of that same shortcoming because I want instant classroom results? I want my student to process everything I have cramped into my lectures in the two hours we have.

concerned with knowledge. Although knowledge has the power to (re)create the world for the better, it also keeps one imprisoned in the limitations of logical patterns and principles. It undermines our connectedness to the world we live in and with, and thus we are denied the existential experience of what it is to be(come). Obsessed with analysing and quantifying, we not only lose the unplanned and unpredictable quality of being but worse, we also lose the ability and means ever to receive it (Di Paolantonio, 2019). Wonder saves one from the kind of thoughtlessness “that abstract the world away” (Arendt, 1998, p. 171). It protects against the paralysis of thinking. By kickstarting our thinking, wonder helps break the mould and create new beginnings that are meaningful to our Selves and the world we live in and with. I use the word kickstart to highlight that, according to Arendt, wonder is an external event. It is not something we can summon up by ourselves. The question does not arise out of our own experience but “is asked from the outside” (Arendt, 1978, p. 166) by the otherness of the other. Wonder is something that essentially befalls one. It dislodges one from the prejudice of everyday familiarities and ruptures established relations with the world. Like Heideggerian wonder, Arendtian wonder does not need the extraordinary to experience a state of being in which it is not our knowing and not our intentionality that directs our awareness but rather our being in and with the world (Walsh, 2011). Seen from that perspective, wonder is rather an experience of not-knowing than of knowing—an intermission in mental activity, as Lloyd (2020) describes it. To wonder is to allow our Selves to open up to everyday things losing their self-evidence—letting the ordinary become extraordinary and calling into being something that did not exist before (Arendt, 2006). Wonder is an open and unpredictable process in which we allow ourselves to “examine whatever happens to come to pass”, Arendt (1978, p. 5) argues. However, expect the process to be indefinite. Wonder opens up a longing for meaning that never will be fulfilled. It is a quest without end, as “what begins in wonder ends in perplexity and hence leads back to wonder” (Arendt, 1978, pp. 165–166).

Heidegger and Arendt show that wonder can prevent a student from self-sabotaging her existence in the world by opening her up to radically new and unprecedented



qualities of being. Wonder is what makes her think. Wonder has her see new meaning, which is a prerequisite for flourishing in an uncertain world.

### **3.3 *Wonder as lived experience***

Heidegger and Arendt have clear ideas about what wonder is and not. Although they warn against the dangers of conceptual representations, their ideas on wonder remain abstractions constructed by philosophical minds in the domain of the cognitive. How do contemporary thinkers pick up on the subject? Two things stand out: Wonder is conceived of as a fluid and ambiguous concept, and wonder essentially is lived experience.

For Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, Anders Schinkel, and companions, wonder comes in a multitude of guises that as much shade off into each other as they oppose each other. Wonder can be evoked by people, things, situations—even wonder itself—but it cannot be predicted. Wonder, it seems, takes people where it wants people to be. It might strike when absentmindedly walking our dog in the park, at home watching Netflix, at a bar having drinks with friends, or in a scientific laboratory doing research. There also seems to be no distinct barrier between the feeling that triggers wonder and the wondering feeling itself. Instead, wonder is a recursive process involving positive feedback loops (Pedersen, 2015). Some people are highly susceptible to wonder. Others it passes by, leaving only the faintest of impressions. However, in either case, we need to attune ourselves to the wondrous. We need to open our Selves up to it—we need to be receptive to its call—for wonder to disclose the new and unforeseen, which takes time—wonder cannot be hurried (Hansen, 2015). Wonder is not an abstraction but a manifestation of lived experience (van Manen, 2014; Verhoeven, 1967). It is personal in that what we have come to know and feel about the world is through direct involvement in our everyday affairs rather than through conceptual representations and abstractions constructed by others. It is personal as it demands a response of care (Moore, 2020; Schinkel, 2021).

Wonder can be a paradoxical experience. It calls to contemplate and suspend thinking and acting whilst simultaneously exciting one to think and act—to be

receptive and constructive at once. It pilots people deeper and deeper into the unknown, yet it simultaneously leads them to an understanding they previously did not have. It signals “we have reached the limits of our present understanding, and that things may be different from how they look” (Opdal, 2001, p. 332)—an understanding that communicates a “heightened awareness that one’s knowledge is incomplete or mistaken” (Quin, 2002, p. 18ff). It indicates the dawn of a new, more profound or encompassing meaning (van de Goor et al., 2020). Furthermore, whilst wonder might not change the world itself, it does change how we perceive the world we live in and with. That is if we allow it to emerge—if we open our Selves up to it and listen to it.

Wonder is an unaspiring experience. It finds pleasure and comfort in the familiar, although in a way that defamiliarises it. Suddenly something ordinary becomes extraordinary—the usual becomes unusual (Parsons, 1969). Wonder does not need the extraordinary to wonder at—it does not need to “tread new territory” (Parson, 1969, p. 85). Of course, we can also become curious about something familiar, but curiosity constantly searches for new facts. It searches for something that we do not know (yet). Wonder “does not seek new ground but changes the ground under one’s feet” (Fisher, 1998, p. 19). What essentially gives the experience of wonder the quality of wondrousness is a sense of sharp novelty in awareness and meaning. That is when we feel a spark of excitement leap across the gap between our Selves and the world we live in and with (Parsons, 1969). The sharpness, however, wears off with increasing familiarity (Fisher, 1998).

Wonder is an interruptive experience. “Wonder interrupts our ordinary path of thinking and action” (D’Agnese, 2020, p. 28) and “has its elemental existence in surprise” (Fisher, 1998, p. 19). Wonder halts the flow of time and thus extends the present (Schinkel, 2020b). Suddenly we find ourselves alone with the object of our wonder. Everything else somehow falls away—is forgotten (Hepburn, 1980). Our mind becomes so filled with the wondrous phenomenon that it cannot entertain any other thought. Confounded, people find themselves in a state of puzzlement, which at first leaves them speechless and immobilised. They are lost (for words and meaning). A state of *aporia* in which “one’s self is temporarily bracketed” (Schinkel,

2020b, p. 23) and in which we are “maximally aware of the value of the object, and only minimally aware, if at all, of its relationships to our own plans” (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 54-55). At that point, wonder can best be described as a state of not-knowing—an intermission in mental activity (Lloyd, 2020). Wonderstruck, our attention is caught by something surprising, puzzling, or even mystifying, yet worthy of our attention (Schinkel, 2017, 2020b). We feel wonder is consequential even before we know whether it is of use to us—the first of all passions (Carlsen & Sandelands, 2015). When struck by wonder, we first become silent and still. We experience a silence, however brief, that creates a reflective distance to whatever or whoever triggers our wonder, be it the unfamiliar or the familiar. Two things might happen in this emotional state of not-knowing (Jones, 2013). Our imagination can get caught by glimpses of unexplored possibilities and connexions. Our cognitive senses heighten, and our attention focuses—we become curious and start exploring connections and possibilities to exploit them. Thus wonder forms an essential step in our learning because it is this very state of being puzzled that instils “a longing for the truth” (Piersol, 2014, p. 5), transforming our “initial wow” into the “enquiring how” (Trotman, 2014, pp. 23–24). Finally, our wonder ends when we find the answer to the puzzle. The opposite might also be true. We stay with that vaguely felt appreciation. We continue to dwell in “a peaceful attunement to existence and letting-be-ness” (Todres & Galvin, 2010, p. 4). We dwell in a caring attitude towards our Selves and the world we live in and with. We remain in a state of aporia and wonder for a little longer. In either case, though, we are prevented from reaching definite ground, as there is always more to be surprised by—“wonder urges us towards sensing and thinking, but without closure” (Di Paolantonio, 2019, p. 213).

Wonder is not only an interruptive process of the emergence of newness but also an affective state of being. Wonder is an emotionally charged and (mentally) rewarding experience caused by perceiving something new or unexpected. A state of being that is characterised by a feeling of instability (signalling a moment of transition or transformation), great intensity, partiality (when it strikes, nothing else seems to matter), and short duration (Schinkel, 2020b). Whereas other emotions are likely to be judgmental about how the object of our attention might be of value, wonder does

not care whether the object of our wonder is beneficial (or not) to our plans and schemes. Wonder values the value of the object itself. It cares for the object itself without having an ulterior motive.

In everyday life, wonder is connected to a host of different emotions. One set of such emotions is described as epistemic emotions (Bazhydai & Westerman, 2020; Carruthers, 2017; Frijda et al., 2000; Vogl et al., 2020). They are like curiosity and doubt—emotions that motivate one to learn through exploring, constructing, testing, and analysing knowledge to resolve uncertainty. With these emotions, affective and cognitive processes work together to enrich our activities in the hunt for knowledge. Without epistemic emotions, we would never wonder at emerging patterns in our data set nor consider relevant alternatives that belie our beliefs. Even more so, not exploring alternatives would lead to epistemic doubts about the trustworthiness of our knowledge. A student may come up with a wide range of possible business ideas and models. However, she knows there will always be other (new and better) solutions to which she has to remain alert if she wants to stay relevant in her profession (Mason et al., 2015; Nerantzaki et al., 2021). Besides epistemic emotions, there are emotions like awe and admiration. However, whereas curiosity and doubt open up a path of exploration, awe and admiration suggest “a willingness to be led” (Stone, 2006, p. 228)—they lead away from exploring and scrutinising the object of awe and admiration. How? Awe and admiration touch people so deeply that they make them feel small compared to the greatness of the object of their awe and admiration and have them adopt an attitude of humility and subjugation. They gaze upwards, certain of the object of their awe and admiration (Cicovacki, 2014; Vasalou, 2015). There is no doubt in their minds about the object or subject of their admiration. Finally, there is the set of almost purely emotional experiences, as Parsons (1969) calls them, like panic or terror. Where wonder retains an element of detachment and allows imagination to play its part, these emotions engulf people. Being overcome by fear and terror, their wonder dies. Given these differences, the authors in the literature review agree that the emotions connected to wonder frequently lean into each other, shade off into each other, or stand combined in a wondrous experience in unpredictable and irregular ways.

I think wonder, as a vague and fluid concept of lived experience, poses several interesting educational challenges. First, the open-ended and interruptive nature of wonder constitutes its power but also creates a formidable hurdle, especially as it is inherently unpredictable. How to plan and organise something that seems to elude planning and organising? Even more so, how to incorporate open-ended interruptions in an educational environment where we try hard to eradicate interruptions and surprises because they do not match our desire for accountability, predictability, and performability. It is hard to incorporate interruptions because they do not match an education that prefers valorising outcomes over exploration (Biesta, 2009a, 2013, 2015; Lum, 2003, 2014; Masschelein & Simons, 2008, 2010; Paradeise et al., 2009). To keep the learning process on track—to have the student reach the goals we have defined—we frame her learning within a fixed set of competencies, concrete learning outcomes, and a solid BOKS. These frameworks are all preset to guide her towards a predefined future—a business professional that is a creative innovator that can grow our economy. Of course, interruptions are built into the learning process of a student. We carefully plan and scaffold moments that disrupt her expectations in terms of pre-supposed knowledge, processes, and outcomes in order for the student to react and reflect. However, as these interruptions are planned—foreseen—and guide a student to preset learning outcomes, one might wonder how far these interruptions are wonder-full interruptions. Second, wonder is an affective state of being. How to incorporate affective states of being in an academic environment that is ruled by logic and reason (Reiss, 1982; Cicovacki, 2014)? An environment that intrinsically seems to distrust emotions and reason against them, even if we understand that by discarding what can be experienced intuitively and emotionally, we impoverish and limit our being in and with the world. If emotions are not part of an experiment—a phenomenon under study—they are not appreciated in our classrooms—"leave the classroom and cool off before you come back." Third, wonder needs one to be receptive to it, but how to realise a practice of reception in an educational setting that is permeated by the (social) constructive paradigm (Biesta, 2014, 2017; Facer, 2016; Roth, 2011)? How do we realise a meaning-receiving tradition in a meaning-making environment? At the business school featured in this thesis, we believe knowledge

is constructed through interaction with others. Therefore, the executive board champions the idea of a learning community in which the student and her peers, together with teachers and local professional practitioners, co-construct the domain of business. A community in which she is not seen as a unit of instruction but as an active agent of construction. She learns by doing—her learning centres around real-life business problems which she has to solve. She learns through acts of mastery rather than through acts of care. Finally, wonder is characterised by infinite plurality, but how to create an educational setting without mistaking a multiplicity in forms for a plurality in feeling? In chapters five and six, I will address these questions.

### ***3.4 Curiosity and inquisitive and deep wonder***

For Arendt and Heidegger, scientific curiosity and wonder are two different things, and wonder's not-knowing trumps curiosity's knowing as it lets people experience the existential aspects of living in and with the world—wonder is the first of all passions (Carlsen & Sandelands, 2015). Heidegger expresses this sentiment elegantly when he writes: “Since science does not think, thinking must in its present situation give to the science that searching attention which they are incapable of giving to themselves” (Heidegger, 1968, p. 135). In their reservations against science, Arendt and Heidegger are not alone. Wittgenstein also expresses his reservations when he writes that one should awaken to wonder if one wants to prevent science from sending one to sleep (Churchill, 1984; Erlich, 2020). As does Nicolai Hartman: “In our attempts toward solutions our problems increase, and with them also our wonder... the ultimate meaning of the philosophical cognition is not so much the solution of the puzzles as the exposure of wonder” (Hartmann, as quoted by Cicovacki, 2014, p. 795). In other words, when curious, these thinkers suggest, we imprison ourselves in the limitations of logic and reason, undermine our connectedness to the world, and thus sabotage our full being in and with the world. On the other hand, through wonder, we experience something that cannot be straightforwardly understood through the scientific language of logic and reason. Through wonder, we open our Selves up to the mysteries of life that cannot be calculated. Curiosity is a state of not-yet-knowing that drives one to know, and

curiosity matches education as an epistemological project. It enhances our knowing. Wonder is a state of prolonged not-knowing that takes one beyond the limitations of logic and reason—beyond the cognitive—into an atemporal clearing in which the world can intimately and wholly reveal itself, and we can fully experience what it means to be.

The new generation of wonder thinkers supports the distinction between curiosity and wonder. Wonder has people become authentic subjects, as Rubenstein (2008, p. 62) describes it, stripped of the “raw material for scientific adventure” that abandon the will to control uncertainty. Vasalou argues that wonder lacks “the strong rational core” (Vasalou, 2015, p. 29) that characterises curiosity. Opdal asserts that curiosity has people look for answers within accepted frameworks, whereas wonder has people question the frameworks themselves. Wonder highlights “that something that so far has been taken for granted is incomplete or mistaken” (Opdal, 2001, p. 342). Wonder, Opdal suggests, not only probes deeper than curiosity, but it also has greater psychological depth and “engages the whole person” (Opdal, 2001, p. 332) in a way that curiosity does not. Whereas curiosity motivates wonder does not, he observes. An idea, I add, that links with the studies of psychologists like Harmon-Jones et al. (2012) and Kidd and Hayden (2015) that suggest that states of being low in motivational intensity broaden our cognitive scope, and states of being high in motivational intensity narrow it. Schinkel (2017, 2020a, 2020b) argues that the broad scope of wonder involves an attitude of openness—receptivity—whilst the narrow cognitive scope of curiosity has us zoom in on the object of our attention entirely focused on constructing answers.

What remains to be clarified is whether wonder is liquidated when the puzzle is solved. Heidegger, Arendt and Schinkel argue it is. However, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, for example, believes that the beauty of and the ability to wonder do not disappear when a scientist has explained a mystery (Dawkins, 2000). Scientific understanding can actually increase wonder<sup>13</sup>. That is, mysteries do not need to lose their wonder because they are solved. The solution often is more

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<sup>13</sup> Reflexive note: Although I think it is fair to say that we are less open to wonder when our scientific curiosity presents us with clear and simple causal mechanisms. I, for example, am not averse to following an easy three-step plan for solving a problem. A preference I seem to share with many a student of mine.

wondrous than the original puzzle<sup>14</sup>. How scientists go from information to knowledge is much more complex than just applying logic and reason to the problem. Intuition, imagination, aesthetics, and even serendipity play a role. Science is not just logic. It is also, as Dawkins (2000) argues, poetry. Although science and poetry are two different ways to experience the world we live in and with, we still can speak of the poetry of science in the sense that we can feel wonder and astonishment at what we are studying. We can feel admiration for the beauty of what we observe and the many unexpected connections it reveals. The connection between curiosity and wonder is wondrous itself. Curiosity does not preclude wonder, nor does wonder preclude curiosity and the many different levels of knowing that it may encompass. Our curiosity and wonder span the domains of epistemological as well as the ontological without distinct barriers to cross or precise roadmaps to follow.

With Anders Schinkel in the lead, many authors not only make a distinction between curiosity and wonder but also identify and work with different types of wonder: inquisitive and deep wonder (Schinkel, 2017, 2020a, 2020b); active and passive wonder (Parsons, 1969; Hadzigeorgiou, 2020; Washington, 2018); wondering how and wondering at (Sinclair & Watson, 2001) and; wondering about and wondering at (Zazkis & Zazkis, 2014). Although inquisitive—active—wonder is closely related to curiosity, it differs from it in one crucial aspect. Inquisitive wonder implies a willingness and capability not to judge at first sight. It urges one to discard restrictive ways of thinking. It urges one to do away with restrictive ways of knowing, acting, and being. It has one pause, transcending one's biases to open up to the new and the unforeseen (Schinkel, 2017). It is interested in solving the mystery, but “it is not insensitive to mystery” (Schinkel, 2020b, p. 38). Deep—passive—wonder is furthest removed from curiosity. It is a state of being in which we find ourselves “content to view things in their wholeness and full context” (Taylor, 1998, p. 169) and quietly and

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<sup>14</sup> Reflexive note: I came across the work of Dawkins after reading Hadzigeorgiou (2012, 2016). What struck me in Dawkins' work not only is his belief that science is capable of making us wonder and his conviction that we should open ourselves up to the poetry of science. What made even a bigger impression is his statement that “I am almost driven to despair of which I am wrongly suspected”—people mistaking his “debunking of cosmic sentimentality, for loss of personal hope” (Dawkins, 2000, p. 44). Dawkins shows me we so easily miss the point when doggedly criticising the work of others—analysing all the warmth out of it. Dawkins inspires me to try and find the poetic sense of wonder that somewhere might be versed in the work of others instead. That is not an easy undertaking, but one that is much more gratifying to me.



comfortably “gaze on things as they are” (Hadzigeorgiou, 2014, p. 46). Whereas inquisitive wonder is connected to a particular concern of ours, deep wonder suggests that the object of our wonder is significant and of value, although it remains uncertain why and how (Schinkel, 2017). Whereas with deep wonder solving the mystery is felt to be beyond our cognitive control, this is not the case with inquisitive wonder. The missing piece of the puzzle just needs to be found (Schinkel, 2020b). The distinction between inquisitive and deep wonder, though, is not clear-cut. Again we see configurations in which they closely lay together and shade off into each other—“it is not difficult to imagine the one type of wonder giving way to (or leading on to) the other, or a person oscillating between the two” (Schinkel, 2029b, p. 38).

How might we recognise inquisitive and deep wonder in our work? Schinkel (2021) gives an exciting suggestion. If a part of our wonder remains after we have solved the problem, it is probably deep wonder we are dealing with. If we feel there is a mystery that keeps lingering beyond the limits of our understanding whilst still being worthwhile to engage with, it probably is deep wonder we are engaging with. But not all situations are as clear as these examples. Therefore, I think it is better to heed Sherry’s (2013) advice that we should define wonder minimally. Both modes of wonder inspire reflection on what it means to be a unique professional and human being that matters to herself and the world she lives in and with—both modes of wonder help do away with old and solid—unshakable—constructs of meaning.

The diffuse distinction between inquisitive and deep wonder affects the idea of wonder-full education at a fundamental level. The question is how to create an educational practice that acknowledges and takes advantage of this fluidity in an educational setting that favours compartmentalisation. At the business school in this thesis, education is based on Biesta’s (2014, 2017) three goal domains of education: qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. We qualify and socialise the student to become the competent practitioner society calls for, and we help her become a unique individual. We have developed three learning pathways for her to reach these goals: a knowledge-driven and a practice-driven pathway to qualify and socialise the student and a student-driven pathway in which she can relate to her freedom. In chapters five and six, I will address this issue of compartmentalisation.

### **3.5 Spaces for wonder to emergence**

Wonder helps the student to be in both an epistemological and an ontological relationship with the world she lives in and with. By interrupting her knowing, acting, and being—by temporally pausing what she does—she can see (new) meaning. What spaces might be favourable for harnessing that power? What educational spaces might help wonder to emerge? That is to say, spaces that allow living wonder-full education instead of only discussing it on a philosophical level. This thesis, after all, is written in the context of a doctorate in education—it aims to transform practices.

Arendt calls the environment spaces of appearance where “I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly” (Arendt, 1998, p. 198). For Arendt, to wonder is to enter into a sensed relation with the world and check with others the sense of what we are sensing—to attune to, care for, and bond with the world we live in and with and thus realise our beginning as a unique human being that matters. Wonder, Arendt argues, emerges and is sustained through a dialogue with others. A dialogue is what constitutes the space of appearance for wonder. Speaking and acting with others are essential to Arendt because our freedom to come into the world—to realise our beginning—is never an individual capacity. Our freedom is always the result of how others take up our beginning, which is fundamentally beyond our control. As Arendt emphasises, the “impossibility to remain unique masters of what we do is the very condition and the only condition under which our beginnings can become real, that is, can come into the world” (Arendt, 1958, p. 244). “Plurality is the condition of human action” (Arendt, 1958, p. 8). Therefore, a space of appearance can only truly exist if it allows for a plurality of form and existence. A space that not only allows for the student’s beginnings to emerge but also for the innumerable beginnings of others to emerge and be (Berding, 2021; Nixon, 2020). A space that urges the student to engage in a dialogue with others over what she finds confounding so she can transcend what she holds (im)possible. A dialogue in which she is unafraid to tell what she thinks, yet with an open and unclouded attentiveness

to the otherness of the other (Di Paolantonio, 2019). Of course, she can try to master how others react to her coming into the world, but if she does so, she not only robs them of realising their freedom to bring forth the new, but she also deprives her Self of the rich possibilities the new beginnings others create.

Arendt's ideas are intriguing, yet several issues do not sit well with me. First, Arendt sees dialogue as a form of consensual pluralism. The reality, though, is somewhat harsher. Mouffe (2000) shows that the outcome of a dialogue with others can be disruptive as well as consensual—tearing people apart as well as bringing them together. To her, agonistic pluralism is probably the highest achievable—respecting adversaries rather than silencing or converting them, and drawing from my experience with the loudness and unforgiveness of today's culture of argument (Tannen, 1998), I agree with Mouffe. Second, Arendt explicitly excludes the student from the dialogue as Arendt reserves it exclusively for the interaction between adults in the public domain of politics (Arendt, 2006). As a youngster, the student has not yet fully made the cross-over from the family sphere into the greater world and, therefore, she needs protection against the battles adults fight. A university should be a “place for the free development of characteristics, qualities and talents” (Arendt, 2006, p.185). It needs to be a safe place that introduces the student to the world based on a carefully curated and presented set of desirable knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Berding, 2021; Nixon, 2020). It is more fruitful to discuss under what conditions a dialogue can exist than to discuss political barriers, as politics inevitably interfere in educational matters. Today's neoliberal agenda (D'Agnesse, 2020) aims to produce a certain kind of practitioners—workers that can safeguard economic growth—with accountability and performability norms safeguarding the production process (Biesta, 2009a, 2010b, 2017). The student also brings politics into school herself, whether by questioning the system of study loans, fighting for inclusive education, debating which party to vote for in the next election, or simply ignoring COVID restrictions. Furthermore, by carefully curating what the student learns, we create a power imbalance which is a political challenge (Farnsworth et al., 2016).

Whereas Arendtian wonder pushes people into the world, Heideggerian wonder isolates them. Heidegger's wonder essentially is a 'philosophy of solitude' (Noroozi,

2019, p. 332). Wonder is our first beginning, as Dukic (2015) captures Heidegger's thinking. It opens up a clearing—Lichtung—to experience a prolonged state of not-knowing in and through which our being is revealed. A place of stillness which is “an indispensable condition for thinking to evolve out of wonder” (Heidegger, 1978, p. 299). An in-between-space “that contains all the directions that thinking can go” (Heidegger, quoted by Noroozi, 2017, p. 1006). An in-between-space, it has to be emphasised, that not only contains our own voice but that of others as well. To get in touch with our being—to modify those voices and let them take hold of our being and vice versa—can only be done by ourselves and in solitary contemplation, Heidegger argues. His clearing is a place of stillness for the new and unprecedented to emerge. Only in the silence beyond words and feelings—on the cognitive and emotional level—can the world intimately and wholly reveal itself. Todres and Galvin (2010) elude that such a clearing of aloneness creates “an openness to allow whatever is there to simply be present in the manner that it is present”, enabling “a peaceful attunement to existence and letting-be-ness” (Todres & Galvin, 2010, p. 4). A sentiment echoed by Hansen and Amundsen (2009, p. 37) when they write: “we hear—so to speak—the call of the situation and relation if we can just be there in a spirit of quietness, slowness and awareness.” Wonder practised as a dialogue, Heidegger warns, too easily ensnares one in repeating what already has been solidified into abstractions and general concepts (Stone, 2016). A dialogue lacking authentic and original experiences becomes rigid, shallow, and trivial. A danger, which must be said, Arendt also sees. Hence her advice is to listen in a dialogue beyond what is expressed in specific words, solid arguments and logical concepts—to listen to the “wonder that follows the words or pauses between the words” (Hansen, 2012, p. 13). However, Arendt remains adamant that to overindulge in reflective wonder, to “prolong indefinitely the speechless wonder” and “develop into a way of life what can only be a fleeting moment” (Arendt, 2004, p. 452) is to destroy the very nature of the human condition which is plurality.

Arendt and Heidegger ask that we choose between a dialogue or solitary contemplation. However, is it necessary to choose between these spaces of emergence? Schinkel (2017), for one, argues that this should not be the case. To

be a Heideggerian thinker that seeks the silence of a solitary existence does not mean that we never will connect to the contingency and plurality of the world we live in and with. A state of contemplation does not necessarily mean that we reject being a being amongst other beings, nor that we will invariably neglect the other's being for our own being. When in deep wonder, we may feel lost for words, but this does not mean it blocks all speech and articulation. "If it did, most of the poetry and philosophy in the world would never have been written" (Schinkel, 2017, p. 550). I, for example, need to retire into myself—to reach into myself—to bring this thesis about wonder-full education into the world. I draw inspiration from moments of contemplative solitude as these moments allow me to listen to what the world (and the people in it) have to tell me. Through such moments I establish and ground myself and find the inspiration and energy to bring the new and unforeseen into the world<sup>15</sup>. However, I also know that once the story of wonder-full education has come into the world, I need to interact with others—to engage with them and listen to them telling their wonder-full stories—if I want my story to change our educational practice. As Vermeulen and van den Akker (2010, 2015) advise: it is not a matter of choosing one above the other. All the stories are needed. Let them oscillate.

Next to dialogue and solitary contemplation, a third space in which wonder might emerge opens up in the discussions Hansen, Schinkel and their peers have about the intimate relationship between art and wonder. Heidegger confirms this connection between art and wonder. Art, Heidegger argues, establishes a perfect clearing where our being can dwell, and insights can freely occur. Art establishes a place where we can transcend the confines of the cognitive. Through art, we overcome the inertia of existing traditions and thus fundamentally transform our habitual and restricted being in and with the world (Boone, 2016). This sentiment is even shared by a hard-core scientist like mathematician Chandrasekhar (1990), who speaks of mathematics as a shuddering before the beautiful. Whereas science can be recognised as the primary space for curiosity to emerge, art is the leading space for wonder to emerge (Parsons, 1969). That is not to say that science and art do not

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<sup>15</sup> Reflexive note: If not for that inner searching, I am sure this thesis would never have been written. But I also experienced the negative consequences of overindulging in contemplative wonder, which Arendt warns for. At times I tended to prolong my speechless wonder indefinitely, which in the end, rendered me mute. Talking with my peers, colleagues, and tutors was what brought me back into the creative flow.

have things in common. Like curiosity, inquisitive wonder, and deep wonder, art and science can lean into each other, shade off into each other, or stand combined in a lived experience. Scientist and artist try to control their thoughts and actions by testing their plans and material. Scientist and artist seek to attain mastery over their techniques and medium. Scientist and artist develop their creations gradually. Meaning emerges slowly into awareness, is put into words, is experimented with in a material medium, and step-by-step realised. Their lives are a rhythm of order and disorder, and they share their perspectives with the world to influence others. Yet, whereas the logic cage of science tends to shield the scientist from the openness and unresolvedness of wonder, art brings the artist nearer to it by allowing her to freely express her excitement about the wonder she undergoes. The artist needs not to contain her excitement within the limits of logical schemes. On the contrary, she is expected to put into vivid forms the excitement of her wonder. She is expected to recreate and perpetuate in her Self and her audience the excitement she feels at the experience of wonder. And, even more liberating, her artistic excitement does not have to undergo the humiliation of proof, something a scientist is rigorously subjected to—the validity of a work of art lies in “its convincingness as an emotional perspective” (Parsons, 1969, p. 197).

In wonder literature, art and aesthetics are often used interchangeably. I not only think we should be careful in doing so, but I also argue art is more meaningful to a practice of wonder-full education than aesthetics. Aesthetics, which I define as the studying of the experience of art, might bring one near to what it is to wonder. Nevertheless, caution is advised, as Nicholas Boone (2016) shows when he discusses Heidegger’s stand against aesthetics. We discuss aesthetics, Heidegger argues, in the realm of the logical theisms that claim to know the unknowable, with aesthetics’ main goal being the expansion of cognition (of the beautiful, of art). Heidegger, though, aims to get beyond limiting theisms and, therefore, beyond aesthetics (as wonder-full education aims to transcend logic schemes that abstract our world away). Art does that as it establishes a place where insights can freely occur. To practise art is to challenge and overcome a habitual and restricted being in and with the world by creating challenging ontological events and responses

(Hansen (2012). Events that call one to be open to the emergence of wonder, to immerse oneself in wonder, and to embody that wonder into new wonder: art. Lived experiences that, on the one hand, do not care for the desire to know the end product as it cannot be known (Jones, 2013) whilst simultaneously drawing upon knowledge and techniques to produce a work of art. In short, artists live the paradox of wonder.

As to what art we should work with in wonder-full education, I again heed Sherry's (2013) advice to define wonder minimally. Heidegger believes language is fundamental to our being in and with the world. Thus the art of words— poetry— takes a special place in his philosophy. Through the intense and thoughtful use of language, poetry reveals and shapes the essence of our being's being. Heidegger does not stand alone regarding the role poetry plays in philosophy. Thomas Aquinas speaks of philosophers and poets as one because they are both moved by wonder, whilst Hansen (2012) argues that the purpose of poetry is to inspire and (re)create wonder. Merleau-Ponty (2007) contends that poetry is often more in tune with our lived experiences than what can be accessed through scientific experimentation and logical constructs. Furthermore, Eugen Fink (1939) argues that the fundamental philosophic problems might better be understood as something that belongs to the space between the lines of philosophical text, something that we have to listen for and have a musicality to hear. Although language plays an important role in philosophy and education, I rather follow Arendt's argument that plurality is the nature of the human condition. An argument that brings me to today's contemporary art critics like Marcel Duchamp and Sherrie Levine, who contend that it is no longer interesting to ask what art is as anything and everything can be art (Amor Mundi, w.d.). This broad definition of art opens up the space for wonder to emerge to the max. It allows it to be(come) a space where the plurality of feelings truly can find a home.

A fourth space for wonder to emerge seems to escape the attention of Hansen, Schinkel and peers—they only hint at it. Therefore, I have widened the search a little. Wonder as an affective state of being has to do with our senses and, therefore, our bodies (Guild, 2017; Knudsen & Stage, 2015). It is our heart that misses a beat

because of wonder. It is our tongue that is being tied because of wonder. It is our posture that shows our emotional state of being. As admirers, we look up to what we admire—we lower ourselves in front of it. As curious scientists, we look down on things through our microscope—we raise ourselves above things. In terror, we run away from things, and as a wonderers, we are part of things—we level with the world we live in and with and sit down with it in a comfortable unfamiliarity. However, Western thinking treats the body as secondary to the mind. Discussing the bodily affect of wonder, the name Maurice Merleau-Ponty inevitably pops up. Merleau-Ponty is a twentieth-century French phenomenologist who makes the body central to our understanding of our relationships with others (Huth, 2018; Todres, 2008; Todres & Galvin, 2008, 2010). We do not exist as an independent entity moving through a neutral space. We rather exist in and through involved relationships that our body weaves with its surroundings. Our bodily Self, as the centre of our experience, is embedded in ongoing communication with the world we live in and with, and thus with all the other bodily beings that form the social world. Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between two concepts of our body. There is the physical body that can be measured and charted, for example, by weighing ourselves. However, more important is the lived body. The lived body is the body through which we ground our being in and with the world. The lived body is the breathing, beating entity we intuitively call upon, even before we think, that lays the groundwork for whatever we are going to think, feel, say, and do. Connecting to this lived body offers moments to re-ground our Selves. The lived body helps one to be in the here and now and offers a natural way to adopt an attentiveness and wonder towards the world we live in and with, and remain open to the experience. Such an embodied state of being not only allows one to “come home to what is there with oneself” (Todres & Galvin, 2010, p. 4), but it also sensitises one towards the other. The more we open up to our embodied, sensitive, and vulnerable Self, Merleau-Ponty argues, the more we open up to the otherness of the other. Something which, according to Arendt, is a prerequisite to bringing forth the new and unprecedented into the world—for becoming available and receptive to the unimaginable riches uncertainty has in store. Like our dialogue with others and our contemplative mind, our body constitutes a space of appearance, a clearing for wonder. To become attuned to



that place—to become bodily attuned to the world we live in and with—Merleau-Ponty advises to practise open-mindedness and attentiveness to the bodily presence. That involves a mood of listening and waiting. A stillness that often is very much absent in our daily activities. By letting go of cognitive or biological hierarchies, we can tune into the entangled interplay of ontological and epistemological interdependencies (Arndt et al., 2019; Huth, 2018).

To summarise, spaces conducive for wonder to emerge and to immerse our Selves in a wonder-full practice encompass an active dialogue, contemplation, art, and embodiment. It will be interesting to see how these spaces for wonder are opened and sustained in practice. To see what is necessary to let these spaces become living and breathing spaces in an educational environment that still favours scientific debate and experimentation as the space for learning.

### **3.6 Food for thought**

In the field of wonder studies, in any field for that matter, authors adopt different focus areas. Anders Schinkel, for example, focuses on the importance of deep wonder and offers philosophical arguments for incorporating wonder into education. In contrast, Finn Thorbjørn Hansen connects wonder to philosophical counselling and guidance in practical settings. Heidegger challenges me to find my own clearing to think the most thought-provoking—to find my own focus. A doctorate asks me to do the same thing—to develop a new practice in higher education. The topic I choose for this thesis is wonder-full education as a practice of open-ended interruption. A practice that helps a student to care for her Self and the world she lives in and with. I choose this clearing for a specific reason. In this chapter, we have witnessed wonder's power and challenges lie in its interruptive caring nature. Because of wonder's open-ended quality, we stay flexible and versatile in the face of the unknown and can bring the new and unforeseen into the world. However, open-ended interruptions are problematic in an educational system that favours accountability, predictability and performability, which might limit or even hinder the coming into the world of wonder-full education. Wonder's open-ended interruptive

caring nature in a fixed-end educational practice has yet to attract the attention it should have (D'Agnese, 2020). This omission makes for a Heideggerian authentic clearing. It makes for an interesting new lens to look at wonder-full education in wonder studies.

As wonder is very much a lived experience, it is not enough to study wonder from a theoretical perspective as we have done in this chapter. We also need to look at wonder through a practical lens. Only with both perspectives in place are we ready to think and write the most thought-provoking—to spin the narrative of wonder-full education. In the next chapter, I, therefore, explore examples of wonder-full practices.

# Chapter 4: Wonder-based Practices

*A recursive process of emergence and immersion.*

## 4.1 Outline

In chapter three, we have approached wonder through a theoretical lens. We have seen wonder being defined as an open-ended interruptive state of prolonged not-knowing that opens up endless new possibilities to connect with the world and our Selves. Thus wonder can open up radically new and unprecedented ways of knowing, acting, and being, so we can stay flexible and versatile in the face of the unknown. We have seen wonder being described as an affective state of being. It comes in different modes and is accompanied by a host of other emotions that all shade off into each other and sometimes even stand combined in the experience. Furthermore, we have come to understand that it is not so much wonder as a philosophical concept but wonder as lived experience that has us see meaning.

Wonder is not the clear and unified concept we want it to be, and trying to create a practice of wonder-full education is a challenge. How to plan and organise something that seems to elude planning and organising? How to incorporate interruptions in an educational environment that seems to be set on doing away with interruptions and surprises because they do not match our desire for accountability, predictability, and performability? How to incorporate affective states of being in an academic environment that intrinsically seems to distrust emotions? Furthermore, how to create an educational practice that acknowledges and takes advantage of wonder's fluidity in an educational setting that favours compartmentalisation and clarity?

In this chapter, I will explore the practice of wonder so that we can sensitise our Selves to lived thoughts, ideas, and actions. Lived experiences, after all, are of great value as they offer "moments of seeing meaning or 'in-seeing' into the heart of things" (van Manen, 2014, p. 12). I have selected two studies. One involves an active dialogue and contemplation, whilst the other involves embodied art. Thus

these studies cover the four spaces conducive for wonder to emerge that we have identified in chapter three. To find wonder-driven practices, I searched the electronic database of Liverpool University using the criterium 'wonder' combined with 'practice'. I limited the search to full-text, peer-reviewed articles published between January 2015 and January 2022. This search netted 1759 unique articles. A review of the abstracts showed 23 articles featuring a real-life practice of wonder. Next, I searched on the criterium 'wonder' combined with 'entrepreneurship'. This netted 275 unique articles and led to 1 additional real-life practice. Most of these practices have a shared focus on a single course or exercises within such a course. I am interested in the broader picture—wonder-full education as an integral practice throughout a programme. Therefore, I have selected two studies that show insights into such an integral practice.

#### **4.2 Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt: wonder labs**

Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt instigated a phenomenological action-research project called 'Entrepreneurship Teaching in Professional Bachelor-Education' (Hansen, 2015; Hansen & Herholdt-Lomholdt, 2015) at Aalborg University in Denmark. The study ran for three years (2012-2015) with over 400 students and ten lecturers from different professional bachelors participating in communities of wonder. The study aimed to investigate and discuss the implications a wonder-driven approach has on teaching innovation and entrepreneurship. Their study is interesting for several reasons: because of its depths, breadth and length; because of its angle on innovation and entrepreneurship that matches that of the business school featured in this thesis and; because of the similarities between Dutch and Danish higher education (Paradeise et al., 2009).

At Aalborg University, innovation and entrepreneurship projects are traditionally defined by a problem-finding and problem-solving narrative. The same narrative we use at the business school in this thesis. That is a narrative in which we trigger and sustain a student's learning process by having her work on authentic problems defined by local practitioners. Problems that echo our belief that uncertainty can

(and should) be eliminated as long as the student sticks by the principle of order, the principle of knowability, the principle of self-mastery, and the principle of reciprocity (Cicovacki, 2014; Reiss, 1982). Problems that are designed to pique the student's curiosity and are meant to be solved through rapid experimentation and meticulous customer validation based on the Lean Startup Method (Bortolini et al., 2021; Frederiksen & Brem, 2017; Castrogiovanni & Faridian, 2017; Ries, 2011).

With their wonder labs, Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt changed this approach. They separated a traditional innovation project into two parts, a pre-ject and a pro-ject. Instead of starting the innovation cycle with problem-oriented questions like 'What is the problem the customer wants us to solve?' and 'What innovation problem do we need to solve?' the pre-ject is designed to bring students into a state of wonder so they can develop their own independent thoughts on what value—what meaning—innovation and entrepreneurship holds for them and how they might act on it. That is to have students connect with their own values (and not the once's we have chosen for them) in connection to entrepreneurship and innovation. The pre-ject aims to change the educational narrative from a meaning-making to a meaning-receiving paradigm through contemplation and dialogues in a community of wonder. A playful atmosphere is created in the community of wonder to help students engage in reflection and dialogues and find the spirit of mind and mood to see sense in sensitising themselves towards vague but deep-seated impressions..

The pre-ject starts with asking students to bring a personal story with them to the community of wonder. A story about their internship. An open-ended living story that still strongly appeals to them. A story about something that touches them and is not resolved yet. In small groups, students are encouraged to tell and re-tell these stories to each other. The goal is not to identify underlying problems but to attune themselves to the wonder and wonderment emerging from these stories and become aware of the deeper meaning their everyday practice holds for them. The goal is to find what matters to them, what genuinely draws their attention, and what truly has them thinking. That is, living the question of what it means to be in and with the

world. After this initial momentum<sup>16</sup> that helps the students to arrive at a sense of personal wonder about themes connected to innovation and entrepreneurship, the students are challenged to compare their personal themes with how the world views them. The goal is to enlarge the students' personal horizons and to help them break through whatever personal biases might hold them back. Again the process is a process of dialogues and contemplation done with other members of the community of wonder. After this second momentum, a third one opens up in which the students can find the time and space to ground themselves in their thoughts—to return to their Selves. Engaging with the greater world can easily lead to students losing their own Selves again. To stand in awe of what others have thought might close them to the plurality of thought that characterises the world, and to feel pressured by others can lead to a perfunctory relation with the (involuntarily) accepted wisdom of the community. The third momentum serves to help the students discover who they are in the greater picture of things. The fourth and final momentum is to have the students connect again to the daily practice of innovation and entrepreneurship. The goal is to develop novel ideas based on their personal concept of innovation and entrepreneurship that can change their practice. In the fourth momentum, the students make the transition from the pre-ject to the pro-ject, which is the place for realising ideas by drawing up plans, freeing up resources, and building and testing prototypes.

What insights did the research project yield? Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt observe that the professional practitioner in the pre-ject begins to comprehend her professional practices from “within” and “seems to get into a more profound thoughtfulness and attunement with what he or she experiences as important and cares for in his or her professional practice” (Hansen & Herholdt-Lomholdt, 2015, p. 9). Listening to one's inner voice, normally tuned out in the epistemic fact-finding mission, is a powerful driver for innovative questioning. At the same time, though,

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<sup>16</sup> Reflexive note: Herholdt-Lomholdt and Hanssen rather speak of momentums than phases. Phases imply that the pre-ject is a step-by-step process with clear techniques and workings, which is not the case. The linearity that can be seen in the momentums described only explain the general outline and direction of the process.

Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt find that discussing such questions in the setting of a professional Bachelor's is complex and demanding:

- To find out which story talks to them and to find the words to tell that story in a way that catches all the nuances felt is quite a challenge for the students. Especially as such stories, when viewed from a logical or rational perspective, might seem dead ends. To stay with such stories is even more challenging as the students often are still in the unknown where that felt meaning might take them—a scary feeling.
- Students find it challenging to think original thoughts. Being taught to copy the thoughts of others, they lack confidence in the value of their own thoughts. “One student even asked us, if we were sure that she was allowed to do so” and some students expressed that they “even do not know what they are thinking anymore, as they are more familiar with the thoughts of others” (Hansen & Herholdt-Lomholdt, 2015, p. 10). Finding their own voice within a community of wonder is also a real challenge. Refraining from conforming to the voice of the community is difficult. A comforting and playful atmosphere in the community of wonder, to let the students feel that all thoughts matter, helps, according to Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt. However, inspiring original and authentic thought in students remains challenging as it is an unpredictable process.
- For students, staying part of the dialogue in the community of wonder is difficult. To slow down to raise and listen to questions from the heart of one's existence takes too much time. Students often want to move on. They frequently are in a hurry to begin finding and solving problems. Although the pre-ject approach leads to exciting, authentic, and original ideas, not all students are patient enough to stick to the programme. So Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt wonder how to motivate students to “dwell in processes of innovation and wonderments, which they probably will first see the meaning of much later” (Hansen & Herholdt-Lomholdt, 2015, p. 11).
- Finally, when transitioning to the pro-ject phase, students quickly revert to business as usual and shut out the wondrous why in favour of the curious how. This is a reason for Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt to ask how to sustain wondrous

thought—how to sustain meaning-full thoughts that originate in the lived experiences of professional practices and lives—throughout a project of innovation. Of the four challenges Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt describe, this one makes me wonder about how they organised their wonder labs. By dividing the traditional project into a pre-ject and a pro-ject they create definite beginnings and endings. But what is the impact of this division on the expectations of students? Hansen phrases the final stage in the pre-ject as “the last momentum ... bringing the participants back to their daily lives and work situation, so that the musicality of seeing the wonder in the ordinary does not disappear” (Hansen, 2015, p. 236). However, does the artificial division between a pre-ject and pro-ject not precisely trigger the opposite reaction? Does the division not stop a student from seeing the musicality of things? Moreover, does the divide not also imply a linearity that, in reality, is absent? Is the divide between pre-ject and pro-ject not the cause of the problem Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt observe?

Reflecting on his experiences Hansen (2015) adds two extra dimensions to these ruminations. First, he concludes that not all situations and settings might be advisable to wonder and that we should always be wary that wonder does not become the overall aim of our educational efforts—wonder should never be a purpose. Sometimes it is better to be straightforwardly curious and embark on a fact-finding mission, and sometimes, it is better to linger in wonder and take the time to dwell in a state of not-knowing (Hansen, 2015, p. 237). Second, Hansen questions if wonder can be educationally engineered, except for creating a playful atmosphere that can bring a student to "the neighbourhood of or doorstep to wonder" (Hansen, 2015, p. 225).

### **4.3 *Medlock: the emergence of wonder***

How to sustain wondrous thoughts throughout a project can be answered by Medlock (2015), who investigated how wonder and wonderment emerge in the context of art. Medlock (2015) interviewed 20 artists working primarily in a community of artists in San Miguel, Mexico. The arts Medlock studied included



painting, photography, poetry, fiction, instrumental music, songwriting and performing, acting, filmmaking, mixed-media arts, sculpture, art education, and found art. Thus, his study fits my choice to follow Duchamp's and Levine's suggestion that art can and should be anything and everything and not only poetry (painted).

Medlock identifies two interconnected features that explain artists' creative process: emergence and wonder. Wonder is what inspires and nurses the creation of art, and emergence is the course of action through which wonder is embodied in art.

Artists describe wonder in broad terms. They describe it as a blend of emotional and cognitive experiences that all shade off into each other and sometimes even stand combined in the experience. Being able to be receptive to the experience of wonder throughout the creative process is consistently mentioned as constituting successful work. Being able to be receptive furthers the creative process and is a source of happiness and inspiration for the artist. Routine is experienced as blocking the ability to be(come) receptive to wonder's wonder<sup>17</sup>.

Artists describe the emergence of wonder as a process in which the work arises from within. Wonder takes the artist where it wants it to go. The artist not so much is the maker as serving as a channel. Rather than forcing her work to match her own goals and views, the artist only furthers the autonomous emergence of her work. The creative process begins with the emergence of an initial sense of wonder originating in lived experience. This sense of wonder is then, through the sustained experience and actions of the artist, embodied into a new expression of wonder: art. The process of emergence, thus, is not only an act of responsiveness to wonder's wonder. It is also an act of actively immersing oneself in the deliberate practice of putting one's knowledge, skills, and talents to work. Curiosity, inquisitive wonder, deep wonder, and a host of other emotions like surprise, astonishment, and awe are combined in the experience, and immersing oneself in this creative experience is essential in the emergence of successful work. Immersing oneself means being able

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<sup>17</sup> Reflexive note: In my classroom, I observe similar problems with routine. Knowing and acting as a successful business professional causes excitement and almost always puts a smile on the face of the student. However, once she has found the answers, they become routine, and as with most of her peers, routine acts as a deadly poison. When touching upon routine, her eagerness stultifies, and she loses interest. Thus, she becomes the destroyer of things. She becomes the destroyer of her fascination with the world she lives in and with, which is the opposite of what we intend to achieve in a creative process.

to playfully engage with all phases of the creative process in a state of openness and positive flow, often described as losing oneself in the process and stepping out of the spacetime continuum. To immerse oneself is described as a nurturing and fulfilling experience and is felt as a natural extension of wonder (Medlock, 2015).

The answer to the question of Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt about sustaining the wondrous during the whole of a project, I think, can be found in the nature of the process of emergence of wonder. Medlock's study shows it as a multifaceted yet integrated process that comprises several specific phases. These phases include lived experience of wonder, immersion in artistic practice, conceiving ideas, composing and presenting the work, and finally, moving on to a new experience. These phases form a process in which wonder and deliberate practice are intrinsically linked. These phases, however, also form an unpredictable and recursive stream in which the idea of linearity only serves to explain the general outline and direction of the process. To cut such a process in two neat and manageable halves, as Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt try to do with their pre-ject and a pro-ject, is to cut the process up into a myriad of unconnected and unsustainable little pieces. It is like cutting up a knot. One does not end up with two well-defined strings but a heap of loose ends.

As to the relation between the artists and the world they live in and with, Medlock's study shows that how artists perceive themselves as being connected with their audience influences the processes of emergence of wonder and the immersion in wonder-full work. For artists who perceive their practice as a way of self-expression, the response of their audience matters little. Foremost, the work of art needs to be meaningful to these artists themselves and not so much to their audience. That is not to say these artists do not care about what an audience thinks of their work, but it is not their primary concern. Even more so, they think it is an incalculable variable beyond their control. For artists, though, whose goal is to reach their audience through their work—whose intention is to get a message across—the audience's response is essential. Their work often includes elements of 'co-performance', in which the audience actively participates in the creative process and outcome. That is not to say that authentic self-expression for these artists does not play a role.

Self-expression remains an integral part of their art(work). Interestingly, commercial artists consider the response of their audience essential until the work's authenticity becomes compromised by the need to please the customer. A situation that negatively impacts the personal pleasure the artists derive from their work. However, the situation is remedied when the outcomes matter to the artists and their audience equally. Commercial work and the emergence of wonder and wonder-full work can be, and often is, compatible. When authentic self-expression and communication stand combined, the impact of artwork is more profound, and the perceived quality of the work is more intense.

Yet the study of Herholdt-Lomholdt and Hansen is set within a business school context. Is there any potential in comparing the creative processes of an artist with the processes of innovation and entrepreneurship? Based on my own experiences<sup>18</sup>, business and art make great neighbours. They can stage a refreshing and fascinating conversation. A conversation that can help a business escape the expectation trap that holds down so many businesses. Its customers live in an expectation society in which what is trendy today is already destined for tomorrow's garbage bin (Mason et al., 2015). As business professionals, we are trapped. Our products need to become ever more extraordinary for customers to stay excited and buy the products—it is a never-ending race. Very much a Heideggerian setting (Stone, 2006) in which curiosity only can be aroused by the novel and unusual and, therefore, needs a constant feed of the new and peculiar. On the other hand, wonder makes the ordinary extraordinary and does not need a continuous supply of newness. So why not design a product that has customers wondering instead of being curious? Why not create a product as embodied wonder: art? A wonder-full product does not need to be constantly updated to stay interesting. A wonder-full product releases entrepreneurs from the expectation trap. Similarly, wonder-full education releases teachers from the expectation trap as teachers are also prone to keep updating their classes to the latest fads to keep

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<sup>18</sup> Reflexive note: Next to having a career in education, for over ten years, I was a chef in my own restaurant. Coming up with ideas that were able to catch and hold the attention of my guests constituted an important part of running a successful business.

them interesting for a student. Not relying solely on my own experiences, I turn to what other authors say on the matter.

Creativity helps to develop various ideas, form unexpected associations, combine the non-obvious, and transform the existing into innovative ideas (Bazhydai & Westerman, 2020). Bujor and Avasilcai (2016), Van Ewijk et al. (2021), Wartiovaara et al. (2019), and Zhao and Seibert (2006), to name a few, all show that creativity is an essential trait for business innovation. Bandera et al. (2020) make an educational case by proposing that business schools adopt the studio model used in the arts. This model successfully combines creativity, critical and integrative thinking, and social interaction to rework how students develop and apply knowledge. The studio model of art replaces linear processes that generate incremental and predictable outcomes with integrative thinking processes that are driven by input from multiple sources. It moves a student away from settling on compromises towards allowing her to combine opposing solutions into new options. Rather than trying to understand customer experiences through futuristic statistical models, the dynamics in the studio capture those experiences directly and keeps them alive and internalise them through discussion and debate, rather than killing them off by codifying them. Thus data analysis is replaced with a deeper understanding of how a value proposition suits the life of customers. The meaning of value is reframed for both the entrepreneur and the customer, which leads to decisions that would not have been made using conventional methods of thinking. The ubiquitous classroom at universities is also being reshaped into something that resembles an artist's studio, as is the case at the business school in this thesis. Incubator spaces are built to support business innovation—(Kojo & Nenonen, 2016; Pittaway et al., 2019)—creative spaces inspired by the artist's studio. The artist's studio allows the artist to live with—immerse herself in—the process of creation (Fortnum, 2013). The artist leaves reference materials and past work in her studio. Materials and work that can serve as prompts for new ideas and inspiration. Objects and things the artist can live with for a while without knowing if she will use them or when. Thus the studio visibly holds the potentiality of the future in the impotentiality of the present. That is, immersed in her own space, wonder can emerge for the artist.

There is potential in transferring ideas and practices from the art domain into the business domain. However, it comes with a warning. We need to be careful that the existing epistemological orientation at our universities does not drown out the ontological dimension we seek to incorporate. That is a likely probability, as, for example, Jones et al. (2017) and Kassean et al. (2015) show.

#### **4.4 Food for thought**

In chapter three, I have described wonder as an open-ended interruptive state of prolonged not-knowing. By interrupting the everydayness of her life, wonder sensitises a student on an existential level to what it means to know, act, and be. Wonder interrupts solidified ways of knowing, acting, and being. Thus wonder opens a student to endless possibilities to connect with that world and her Self, and bring the new and unforeseen into that world. Furthermore, the student stays flexible and versatile in facing the unknown because of wonder's open-ended quality. Wonder can help her flourish in the uncertain world in a meaningful way to her and that world. We have seen that wonder's open-ended interruptive nature is its power and biggest challenge. We also have seen that wonder comes in different modes, accompanied by various emotional counterparts that all fluidly shade off into each other and sometimes even stand combined in the experience. Wonder is an affective state of being and a process of emergence and immersion that neither cares about artificial boundaries nor harmonious settings. It takes the student where it needs her to be. Do the practices we have explored in this chapter change this picture<sup>19</sup>? Not as such, but they highlight the importance of certain elements in relation to an educational practice full of wonder.

Hansen, Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Medlock confirm that wonder has the power to bring new ways of knowing, acting, and being into the world—wonder and wonderment inspire original and authentic thought. In order to let wonder emerge

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<sup>19</sup> Reflexive note: It is impossible to draw conclusions based on only two studies. But then, in an ephemeral and fluid reality, validity and credibility are never attainable, as Attia and Edge (2017), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Probst and Berenson (2013) argue. Given an ever-changing reality, each study will differ (however slightly) from its neighbour and, therefore, cannot be copied. However, this kaleidoscope of interconnected work at least allows us—in the spirit of learning—to poetically sense how an education full of wonder might proceed in practice (Trueit, 2005).

and immerse her Self in wonder-full work, a student needs to be open—she needs to be receptive to wonder's wonder. To be receptive is not an easy feat to accomplish and cannot be planned and executed at will or to predefined specifications and outcomes. Wonder takes a student where it wants her to be, and to let wonder do its wonder-full work, a student needs to be and stay open and undefined. To wonder, Hansen, Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Medlock observe, takes courage. At times it is difficult for a student to hear the call of wonder or to open her Self up to the call of wonder. What wonder has to tell her, especially in the beginning, might leave her unclear where wonder might take her. Seen through the lens of logic and reason, what wonder tells her might seem a dead end, whilst powerful voices within and outside her community of wonder easily can drown out her voice of wonder if she finds it. A comforting and playful atmosphere to let the student feel that her thoughts matter helps. Playfulness is an element we have not come across in chapter three and is an element that I add to the idea of wonder-full education.

If not for Medlock, Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Hansen, I would have overlooked the simple but crucial truth that wonder is the beginning and end of wonder-full education. That is, wonder inspires but is also the essence of authentic and meaning-full work and a meaning-full life. The creative process is a transformative process in which emerging wonder is embodied into a new manifestation of wonder—art and innovative work—whilst the wonderer herself is transformed at an existential level. The studies of Medlock, Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Hansen also show me that the emergence of wonder and the immersion in wonder-full work, cognitively, emotionally, and bodily, can and should stand combined. The processes of emergence and immersion, and the phases that characterise them, form an unpredictable, intertwined, and recursive stream of activities. If we were to cut up this tangled knot, we would end up with a heap of loose ends. Wonder-full education, thus, is best approached as an integrated practice of knowing, acting, and being.

In chapter three, I have defined wonder-full education as an open-ended practice of interruption. Based on this chapter's learnings, I add playfulness, emergence and immersion to it. That is wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended

interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge.

Hansen, Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Medlock affirm that wonder-full education can offer new and unforeseen opportunities for a student to flourish in and with an uncertain world. Nevertheless, inspiring original and authentic thought in students remains challenging as it is unpredictable. Hansen (2015) doubts it even can be done. In the following two chapters, I will address how to bring wonder-full education about. In chapter five, I will formulate a pedagogy of wonder that underwrites the practice of wonder-full education, and in chapter six, I will describe the wonder-full practice itself.

# Chapter 5: A Wonder-full Pedagogy

*To be in a caring spirit of slowness and awareness to become a unique and authentic individual.*

## 5.1 Outline

We know wonder as an open-ended interruptive state of prolonged not-knowing that opens a student up to endless new possibilities to connect with the world and her Self. Wonder interrupts solidified ways of knowing, acting, and being, and in doing so, it keeps a student flexible and versatile in the face of the unknown. In its different modes and accompanied by a host of other emotions that all shade off into each other, wonder creates an ontological and epistemological openness towards the world and our Selves. A caring openness that has a student focus on the value of the object of her wonder itself instead of how that object fits her plans and schemes. Wonder divulges an endlessly diverse world of which large parts, thus far, remained inexplicable, inexpressible, and even invisible. Hence, it continuously allows a student to create new beginnings for her Self and the world she lives in and with. That is if she allows wonder to emerge and immerse her Self in the experience. That is if she lets wonder take its course and bring her where it wants her to be instead of trying to regulate, control, and master the unpredictable, intertwined, and recursive stream of activities that characterise the processes involved.

I have defined wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge—an education that cares. However, when it comes to wonder-full practices, there are still only a few examples to be found in (higher) education. Even more so, when such practices are found, its researchers question if wonder because of its interruptive nature can be educationally engineered, except maybe for creating a playful atmosphere that can bring a student to “the neighbourhood of or doorstep to wonder” (Hansen, 2015, p. 225). Given the success artists achieve with their wonder-full



practice, I think Hansen might be too pessimistic. It will take, though, a different approach to education than today's practices based on Aristotelian principles (Biesta, 2018) if we build an education full of wonder. Trying to hardwire interruptions into an educational practice that champions logic and reason to construct definite outcomes is likely to fail. It makes more sense to move beyond those Aristotelian principles and create an education that is shaped like an open-ended process of emergence (Biesta, 2018; Schinkel, 2020b, 2021). An education that lets living experiences grow into interruptions that create living questions from which new thinking and meaning can emerge whilst knowing that these questions can never be answered definitely.

In this chapter, I will take the first step towards a wonder-full education by formulating a pedagogy of wonder.

## ***5.2 The consciousness that accompanies our educational practice***

Dutch education is influenced by the German idea of Pädagogik, in which education has a particular concern—the student's personal development. That is, Dutch education has an emancipatory concern. This concern goes further than the student having to acquire a broad scope of intellectual and moral virtues, like respecting science, fair play, and a host of other personal qualities linked to the British idea of liberal education. The consciousness that accompanies the practice of education, as Biesta (2018) describes pedagogy, is one of helping the student to transform into someone new—helping her to evolve her being or, as Heidegger would express it, unfold out of herself (Trueit, 2005). Only if we have a pedagogy—our consciousness—in place can the how of education make sense. That is why I start building a pedagogy of wonder before building an educational practice full of wonder.

We need to remind ourselves of two important things before we start formulating and discussing a pedagogy of wonder. First, the business school in this thesis not only underwrites the emancipatory interest of Dutch pedagogy but also expands on it. Next to transforming its students, it also aims to transform society actively. The

business school sees education as personal and societal transformation—a vision the school shares with Dutch universities of applied sciences. This broad transformational concern is promoted by the Dutch Ministry of Education (Minister van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen, 2019) and the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen, 2019). It also fits a broader global trend in which higher education is not only understood as a process of personal development but also as a way to transform society in a mutual and continual process of collaboration and co-creation (Rinaldi et al., 2018; Trencher et al., 2014). The executive board of the business school challenges the teachers to innovate their education. I have accepted the challenge. My transformational interest lies in helping a student flourish in an uncertain world. I use the term flourish because I want the student to thrive, not merely survive. My concern fits the concern of the executive board and even encompasses it as, for me, to flourish means that I want a student to be fully aware of her potentiality, not only the path her educators have chosen for her. It implies that I want her to become a professional and human being that is meaningful not only to the world but also to her Self, as from that found meaning, the will, the inner compass, and the courage to transform her Self and the world can start to unfold.

Second, we must remind ourselves that this thesis approaches education from a metamodern perspective. From a metamodern position, we look for new horizons, answers, and solutions but expect never to fully find them—the future is and remains open-ended. A metamodern consciousness has one “oscillate between modern enthusiasm and a postmodern irony, between hope and melancholy, naiveté and knowingness, empathy and apathy, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity” (Vermeulen & van den Akker, 2010, p. 6). The crux of a metamodern consciousness is that it does not seek to balance or harmonise opposites. It embraces the notion that it is precisely in the gap that separates and binds how the world is, and the images we have constructed of it, that our being’s being emerges. It understands that in this gap, a pedagogy of wonder finds its home as the gap allows one to delve into the inner structures of knowing, acting, and being so new meaning can unfold. Artists like David Thorpe, Ragnar Kjartansson, Paula

Doepfner, Vermeulen and van den Akker show that successful contemporary art resonates with its audience precisely because it dares to adopt incompatible styles to exist in one work. Contemporary art resonates with its audience because it dares to embrace contradicting concepts like hope and irony or purity and plurality. However, whilst these examples show a contemporary audience is ready to embrace a metamodern consciousness (and I think the student is part of that audience), we need to be aware that trying to balance or harmonise opposites is deeply rooted in our systems of thought and behaviour. Even authors who underwrite the constituting power of opposites see balance as the element that energises opposites and that can bring into the world the new and unprecedented, as the example of Davis (2003) shows. Davis argues that the portal to self-transformation lies in the gap between stability and instability. Whereas metamodernism avoids balancing polarities, for him, the tensions between the different poles need to be held within a dialectical balance, as such a balance energises surprise and novelty. Whilst that may be true, to balance contradictions also implies the cancellation of forces and, thus, the cancellation of energy. Even more so, balancing contradictions leads to a loss of sincerity. To balance contradictions is to curb genuineness and frankness in our thinking and our dialogue. To balance contradictions is to ultimately decrease a plurality in feeling necessary for self-transformation.

### **5.3 *A wonder-full pedagogy***

In chapter one, I have defined that higher education should help a student flourish in an inherently uncertain world. An education full of wonder is the key to realising this interest. In chapters three and four, I have described wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge. It is an education that has the student care for her Self and the world she lives in and with. I will use these elements to lay the groundwork for a wonder-full pedagogy and describe the consciousness that accompanies an educational practice full of wonder. As we have seen with the different modes of wonder, I expect these elements to shade off into each other as much as they oppose each other. Therefore, they serve only to explain the general

outline of a pedagogy of wonder. I will follow Sherry's (2013) advice that it is best to define wonder minimally and keep the specifications of a pedagogy of wonder minimally. Although we love to express everything clearly, naming things never quite catch the living reality of an education full of wonder.

One must be so careful with names anyway; it is so often in the name of a misdeed that a life goes to pieces, not the nameless and personal action itself, which was perhaps a perfectly definite necessity of that life and would have been absorbed by it without effort. (Rilke, 1954, p. 71)

### 5.3.1 *Open-ended interruptions*

We have seen that wonder's power and challenges lie in its interruptive nature. By interrupting the everydayness of life, wonder sensitises a student on an existential level about what it means to know, act, and be. If we connect this to the emancipatory context of the business school in this thesis, and Dutch education in general, what precisely are we looking for when we let wonder interrupt a student's everydayness? What consciousness accompanies such an interruptive endeavour? What awareness guides a student and her teachers in a wonder-full practice?

Guided by Arendt and Heidegger, emancipatory education is about the freedom to bring the new and unprecedented into the world by allowing and encouraging the student to be herself and think the most thought-provoking. As we have seen, wonder promotes and enriches that process as it makes the student think by discarding restrictive ways of knowing, acting and being. Where inquisitive wonder is about solving the mysteries the student encounters, deep wonder has her be with things in their wholeness and full context. Where inquisitive wonder is connected to a particular concern of hers, deep wonder makes her experience the world for its own sake. It is easy to see the educational importance of the interruptions created by inquisitive wonder. For deep wonder, that is more difficult. But how would a student find and sustain the will for change and the inner compass to act on that will if not for experiencing meaning on an existential level? How would a student begin to emancipate her Self if it has no meaning for her? Furthermore, is it not liberating

in itself to discover endless possibilities to connect with the world and our Selves without being pressed to realise them?

At the business school in this thesis, (emancipatory) interruptions are staged in various ways. The standard interruptive tactic is that teachers interrupt the smooth running of the student's learning by staging surprise moments that disrupt her expectations in terms of pre-supposed knowledge, roles, processes, and outcomes. Thus we mirror how interruptions (and subsequent modifications) happen in real life. We provide the student with direct experiences that command her to react and reflect. We use this technique to increase the student's participation, adaptability, and critical thinking skills (Campbel, 2017; Wildemeersch & von Kotze, 2014).

These interruptions connect with curiosity and inquisitive wonder in the domain of knowing and acting. That is, these interruptions aim at creating an epistemological openness. However, do these interruptions also create an ontological openness? Do these interruptions create an openness towards being in and with the world from which a student derives the will and the inner compass to engage (epistemologically) with that world? Do these interruptions create the will for emancipation? Do these interruptions open a student up to thinking the unthinkable? Do they transcend her beyond the limits of her present understanding towards a new, more profound, or more encompassing meaning?

Gert Biesta (2014, 2017, 2018), a Dutch educational theorist and pedagogue whose ideas on education heavily influenced Dutch higher education, thinks not. He frames the interruptions, as mentioned above, as attempts to qualify and socialise a student. The consciousness that guides the interruptions we stage is one of conditioning. We instil in a student what we deem important for her to know, do, and behave, so she can become the competent professional and concerned citizen society needs her to be(come). What characterises these interruptions is that they are staged as a direct judgement by the teachers: 'you are wrong' or 'you are right.' We press a student into becoming someone we want her to be—to remain an object of our intentions and activities. We interrupt her knowing, acting, and being by qualifying and socialising a student. She learns things she had no prior knowledge of, she learns how to behave in a professional setting, and she even might create new conceptual

tools, theoretical lenses, and rules of conduct for her professional practice. However, she stays within the narrow parameters we have defined for her. She stays within the limits of our carefully curated BOKS and predefined learning outcomes. She follows the pathway we have created for her, which points her in a specific direction, wordlessly implying that other directions are not worth pursuing. Biesta argues that the student's education needs to allow for and create a different kind of interruptions to create an ontological openness to the world. Next to interruptions that qualify and socialise a student, a third type of interruption is needed. A type of interruption that subjectifies a student instead of treating her as an object of our will, our intentions, and our control. Subjectification aims to awaken the longing in a student to want to become an independent being that makes her own choices when confronted by the question of why it matters that she exists. Subjectification aims for a student wanting to become a unique human being—an emancipated human being. In this type of interruption, she becomes her own judge and jury instead of her teachers judging her. By allowing her to insert herself into the world on her own accord actively, she opens up endless new possibilities to connect with the world and with her Self. Possibilities that are beyond what her educators could ever imagine.

In other words, Biesta argues that in today's educational practice, we have come to mistake education in the form of qualification and socialisation for emancipation (Biesta, 1998, 2018). However, we leave a student with no room for free action as we have already chosen the outcomes for her. Instead of cultivating the student's freedom, we curate and curtail it through carefully selected learning outcomes and BOKS, and in doing so, education becomes counter-emancipatory. Instead of furthering freedom, we install inequality and dependency in the relationship between the student and her teachers (Noordegraaf-Eelens & Kloeg, 2020; Moilanen & Huttunen, 2022; Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 2001).

I think this critique is too harsh. First, emancipation might not be a direct effect, but teaching in the sense of qualification can help the student to develop the skills and mindset required for self-determination. Teaching in the sense of socialisation can help the student to develop a mindset for breaking free. Second, the starting point of

education is the student's immaturity and her need for support as she is just beginning to discover her path to becoming a unique human being. Inequity between the student and her teachers is a given, at least at the start of her learning journey. Third, teaching is only one factor that can limit the student's freedom. The lack of material conditions or oppressive social circumstances outside school can also restrain her freedom.

Therefore, although education might not directly emancipate a student, it can help her develop the competencies necessary for self-liberation. That is, as long as her teachers do not give her solid (normative) standards and learning pathways and allow and urge her to go where wonder might take her. That is, as long as her education allows and urges her to dwell in a *Lichtung* of receptivity to what constitutes her *Dasein*. To be in a clearing where she can begin to care for her authentic being by questioning her existence and looking at what is unique about her situation.

The freedom that comes with wonder, though, is not unlimited freedom. Being an emancipated individual that makes her own choices is not boundless. A student's coming into the world as a unique human being is partly defined by Arendt's argument that the student's being is not entirely in her own hands. The student's ability to bring into the world the radical new is always challenged by the plurality that characterises the world she lives in and with (Arendt, 1958)—her coming into the world is interrupted by the coming into the world of others. That is, the world "is neither a world of our own making nor a world that is just at our disposal, that is, a world with which we can do whatever we want or fancy" (Biesta, 2017, p. 8). Of course, the student can try and limit the coming into the world of others, but that will also limit the potential of her coming into the world, as she cuts herself off from a source of renewal—from possibilities not foreseen by her. The student must engage with the world to find her unique place within it. Even more so, her freedom is defined by Levinas' argument that an interruption of her being by an irreplaceable call from the other is what genuinely awakens her to what it means to live in and with the world. Taking up a call that is specifically directed at her and that nobody else

but her can answer—taking up the responsibility for the other—is what ultimately constitutes her uniqueness as a human being.

By using Arendt and Levinas, Biesta shows that becoming a unique human is not a question of identity but rather what a student chooses to do with that identity. It is about actively considering her own interests in relation to the interests of others. That is, to recognise that not all her desires are necessarily desirable and that she needs to make choices instead of letting everything emerge, form, and flow. Barnett heads in a similar direction. Whereas Arendt and Levinas inspire Biesta, Barnett is inspired by Heidegger. For Heidegger, an authentic Self is willing and capable of setting herself apart from the everydayness that governs her existence to discover her own way of being. That is, “the authentic Self [is] the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way” (Heidegger quoted by Barnett, 2007; p.p. 42-43). Authenticity requires a Self that wills and actively wins its authenticity. It requires a student to take ownership of her experiences, and the consciousness that guides taking ownership is one of agency. The student needs to be aware and willing to take ownership, and we, her teachers, need to be aware and willing to cede control to the student and free her from the many restrictions we have built into our educational practice. To do this, Barnett argues, the student needs to break free from the limitations the voices of the others have on her, and we, her teachers, have to let her break free. That is not to say that a student can ignore other voices. To come into her own way is not achieved in isolation from other voices. To dwell in stillness which is “an indispensable condition for thinking to evolve out of wonder” (Heidegger, 1978, p. 299), does not come with the intention to drown out other voices. It comes with the intention to modify those voices into her own voice. Something that is best done in silence, so the meaning of those voices can intimately and wholly reveal itself to her on a cognitive as well as an emotional level (Todres & Galvin, 2010). A dialogue too easily ensnares a student in repeating what already has been solidified into abstractions and general concepts (Stone, 2016). The consciousness that guides a student to break free is not only one of agency but also one of commitment. Commitment means that a student not only pledges herself to what she says and creates but, more importantly, commits to her Self—that she believes in her Self. To



commit means to take hold of her freedom, which is a challenging state of be(com)ing. It takes courage and determination to be her Self and speak with her own voice. There lies a sense of security in hiding behind others. It takes sincerity and integrity to be her Self and speak with her own voice. On the one hand, the student might become too confident in herself, leaving no room for the other. On the other hand, the student might be too indulgent and take what others have to say at face value. In either case, the potentiality of the student's authenticity is lost.

To conclude, for a student to emancipate her Self and become a unique and authentic human being, her teachers should re-evaluate how they look at interruptions. Not only should they lead a student towards something the teachers already know, and the student still has to master. They also should challenge the student to the point of "what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself" (Biesta, 2017, p. 71). That is to help the student come into the world in her own way by deliberately disrupting what appears normal and natural through questions like 'Where do you stand?' 'What is meaningful to you?' and 'Why is it meaningful to you?' Questions that are difficult but eventually can help a student enter a grown-up way of being (Biesta, 2014, 2017, 2018) or, as Barnett (2007) puts it, emerge as a responsible being. Questions that help a student emancipate her Self by prompting her to establish a meaningful relationship with her own freedom. Questions that allow her to become an individual that matters and from which she can draw the will, the courage, and the inner compass to bring into the world new ways of knowing, acting, and being. Defining the outcome of these questions in advance, by preset goals, fixed schemes, and predefined outcomes, would close the question of the student's coming into the world as a unique, authentic individual, even before her education begins. Her coming into the world can take so many unexpected forms that it essentially is boundless and, therefore, should not be bounded by her teachers as to what direction it takes and what road it travels—plurality is key. These interruptive questions, I add, need to be allowed to become living questions that can linger and that are not expected to be answered definitely, and thus have the power to keep interrupting the student's being in and with the world.

In my practice, I experience the challenges of my student becoming a unique, authentic human being first-hand. It is demanding to bring in questions that burden her with the responsibility of her freedom. Freedom's defining moment is when what we want encounters what others want. That is, when our freedom meets resistance and when our initiatives and good intentions clash with those of others. It is challenging to interpret this resistance in a positive way, which, I think, is the essence of what it is to help my student become a unique, authentic human being. Resistance should not be seen as a time-consuming obstacle that stands in the way of effective learning. However, it is hard for my student to put up with interruptive questions, and it is equally hard for me to put up with seeing my student struggle with those questions—especially when, in my opinion, the student is taking a wrong turn. And finally, it is surprisingly hard to let go of the controls and let my student become that unique and authentic individual who decides how she wants to come and be in the world. Her failed attempts in the past tempt me to hold her hand a little longer. The pressure of what is at stake tempts me to stick to qualifying and socialising her as this seems the quickest and safest way to positive results. A safe way, I have to admit, my student is often also partial to it.

What helps me in my moments of doubt, what helps me when tempted to take the safe route, is the realisation that becoming a unique and authentic individual in itself is an act of creation. It implies that my student transforms her old ways of knowing, acting, and being into new ones—that she comes into the world as a new person. That creative act might not directly lead to original thoughts, as my student might come up with an idea that is radically new to her but that thousands of others have already thought of. But the point is that sensing a sharp novelty in awareness and meaning can energise my student to construct and tell her own story—to be her Self. Moreover, as it is her story that she puts out in the world, there will always be elements, however small, that diverge from how others tell their stories. These divergencies create ample opportunities for new beginnings. As we have seen in chapters three and four, wonder does not need extraordinary divergencies to turn into wonder-full opportunities. As an authentic being, a student can be wonder-fully ordinary when transforming the world. Her stories only have to loosen the self-

evidence the other possesses to make the ordinary becomes extraordinary and call something into existence that did not exist before.

In this subparagraph, I have explored what kind of opportunities a pedagogy of wonder is after. The consciousness that comes with an educational practice full of wonder transcends interruptions that qualify and socialise how a student knows and acts. It extends to interruptions that subjectify a student. Interruptions that open her up on an ontological level to the infinite new possibilities that exist for her to connect with the world and with her Self. Interruptions that allow her to become a unique and authentic human being, which is extremely important as it is from her being that she gets the will, the courage, and the inner compass to engage with an inherently uncertain world. To define the outcome of these interruptions in advance would close a student's coming into the world as a unique, authentic individual, even before her education begins. Wonder-full interruptions need to be allowed to become living questions that can linger and are not expected to be answered definitely and thus have the power to keep interrupting a student's being in and with the world.

Seeing how challenging those interruptions can be, I think it is not enough for an educational practice full of wonder to just allow for such interruptions. Wonder-full education needs to be interruptive itself. It needs to interfere, interject, and discontinue a student's being in the world, making the educational relationship challenging. Luckily the efforts to interrupt a student's knowing, acting, and being, do not have to stop with her teachers. In a learning community, we all are each other's Levinasian other that can make the irreplaceable call.

Though, we should not wait for the other to make that irreplaceable call. That call might never come. We should take responsibility for our being in the world, no questions asked. And for that matter, why not also embrace solitary contemplation? Instead of trying to establish a hierarchy in the possible actions that Levinas, Arendt, and Heidegger suggest, make responsibility a living question. Let it freely oscillate between Heidegger's authenticity and strength in aloneness (whilst knowing it threatens us to forget the other), Levinas 'irreplaceable' call (whilst knowing it can endanger us to become enslaved to the other), and Arendt's dialogue (whilst knowing that we often adhere to repeating each other's sameness)? I argue that

more room for plurality is needed—more room to express our Selves. Why restrict ourselves to an anthropocentric worldview regarding those living questions? Biesta, for example, is preoccupied with a small and particular part of the world. With his focus on social interaction, he places the student and her teachers in a realm of their own—apart from the world. Why only be conscious of social interaction? Why limit ourselves to a human world? The world we live in and with is not just a human world, nor is it merely a humanly constructed world. Although wonder might end in constructing something new, it begins with be(com)ing receptive to wonder's interruptive call. Wherever and whomever that call might come from.

### 5.3.2 *Playful and critical*

In chapter four, Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Medlock argued for a playful atmosphere to bring a student to the doorstep of wonder. Their arguments have induced me to incorporate playfulness as a constitutive element of a pedagogy of wonder. What, then, is playfulness?

Over the last few years, a new form of education has been developing rapidly: gamified education. We introduce games and gamified tools to enhance the student's motivation, promote joy, circumvent poor student experience, and boost performance, productivity and competitiveness. What is interesting about the educational games the student plays is that they put her on the spot. The games keep her from evading the situation we have chosen for her. They do not even let her evade her Self when playing the game. Nowadays, games are designed to address the student not only at an intellectual level but also on an emotional and ethical level by re-creating situations that immerse her in the multi-faceted world of business. The games do more than challenge the student to solve problems and overcome obstacles. The games challenge her to develop her own point of view, find her own voice and internalise that voice by taking the side of others she encounters in the game, for example, customers, colleagues, employees, competitors, and pressure groups. The games offer unknown spaces for her to explore. Spaces that she has to discover for herself, and in doing, lead her to discover more about her Self. Having come into these new spaces, into a new Self,

she still might not be sure of its validity. However, as she conquers and defends her new place, she can be sure about its genuineness, giving her a sense of security amidst insecurity.

There is, though, another side to the gamification of education. As said, games are designed to heighten the motivation of a student. What could be wrong with that? When it comes to wonder-full education, a lot. Studies by Harmon-Jones et al. (2012) and Kidd and Hayden (2015) suggest that states of low motivational intensity broaden, and states of high motivational intensity narrow our cognitive scope. That is, the openness of a student to the new and unforeseen might diminish with the higher motivation levels that can come with playing games—something that is contrary to the idea of a pedagogy of wonder. A challenge of a different kind is that games present a prime example of the performance-based approach that permeates education in general (Koeners & Francis, 2020). The engagement strategies used in games perfectly fit a metric-driven and performance-based higher education. That is, the student's performance can be clearly measured against the performances of her peers, and rewards can be meted out accordingly. A performance-based approach, though, can lead to performance anxieties. It can lead to fear of failing, avoidance of risk, and so on.

When it comes to a playful pedagogy of wonder, it is important to distinguish between play and playfulness. Play is the activity—a student playing the games we have created for her. In contrast, playfulness is the disposition that colours how a student plays the game (Fisher & Gaydon, 2019, p. 78). In light of the pedagogy of wonder, I am interested in the latter.

Based on an extensive meta-study, Proyer et al. (2019, p. 46) define playfulness as “an individual differences variable that allows people to frame or reframe everyday situations in a way such that they experience them as entertaining, and/or intellectually stimulating, and/or personally interesting.” As a nurturing and lifting capacity, playfulness thus has the potential to make a positive contribution to the will-to-learn. In a groundbreaking study, Bishop and Chace (1971) show a strong relationship between playfulness and creativity. Experiences like a sense of purposelessness, a feeling of pleasure, and a feeling of unlimitedness, often without

clear links to reality, are akin to experiences that are connected with the creative process. These findings are acknowledged by the artists Medlock interviewed in his study. The artists recognise that playfulness allows for wonder to emerge and helps them to immerse themselves in wonder-full work better. A playful attitude enhances a student's creative potential. It enlarges her receptiveness—responsiveness—to the emergence of creativity and facilitates creativity and creative processes in general. Bateson and Nettle (2014, p. 219) suggest playfulness may do so because “it brings the person into contact with a range of different experiences that can be relevant to solving a problem with a novel solution at a later time.” For example, in design, a playful approach contributes to more creativity and, therefore, better results (Lucero & Arrasvuori, 2013). Playful people are often found in creative environments where they fuse the knowledge they already possess into new or unusual combinations to bring into the world the radically new and unprecedented (Proyer, 2014). The same can be seen in the domain of (higher) education (Nørgård, 2021; Nørgård et al., 2017). A playful disposition enhances the creative process and enhances a student's capabilities to become a unique, authentic human being. This process is a creative process in itself.

Being playful can be linked to “a preference for complexity rather than simplicity and a preference for—and liking of—unusual activities, objects and topics, or individuals” (Proyer, 2017b, p. 114). The difference between work and play is not so much about what job/task we are performing but rather about with what attitude we are performing the job at hand. Swiping through the latest TikTok, analysing the data of marketing research, meditating, and designing a value proposition, “any one of these may be work of the hardest kind to one person and the most delightful play to another” (Proyer et al., 2019, p. 46). Even more so, it is possible to play at work while being hard at work (Mainemelis & Ronson, 2006), and we only have to look in our classrooms to see that a student can be serious whilst playing on her phone and be playful whilst doing serious research. Csikszentmihalyi (2007) observes the same interplay and argues that creative people can couple play and (self-)control, benefitting from a playful attitude when pursuing their goals. Fisher & Gaydon (2019) add that a playful attitude is critical in situations where learning seems

unchangeable, whilst play does not have to be fun. Difficult, tiresome and risky play can be enormously rewarding mentally, physically, and monetarily, so why not educationally? No wonder Hansen (2015) argues that a playful atmosphere can bring a student to “the neighbourhood of or doorstep to wonder” (Hansen, 2015, p. 225).

In short, playfulness is not a luxury in a pedagogy of wonder. Playfulness can act as a powerful enabler for it. Bishop and Chace (1971) summarise that open-mindedness, flexibility, nonconformity, equality, entertaining multiple viewpoints, and autonomy constitute the consciousness that guides a playful practice. Let that oscillate against Medlock’s childlike joy, and I think we have a spirited mix for a playful pedagogy of wonder.

Before I tackle the last element of a pedagogy of wonder, I need to discuss another aspect of playfulness. Playfulness might imply that a pedagogy of wonder stands for making things easy. It might be understood as not being critical. That is not the case. Crucial in wonder-full interruptions is that they unsettle and provoke. Wonder-full interruptions are critical incidents that let a student experience resistance. By working through that resistance, the student discovers the very meaning of her being, as wonder is concerned with meaning (Arendt, 1978). The student can find her power by working through and reflecting on that resistance (Lewis, 2014). By working through and reflecting on that resistance, the student can develop a critical way of living that protects her against the paralysis of thinking described by Arendt. That is, wonder-full interruptions create a readiness for authenticity that puts the student on a path of not only thinking the most thought-provoking about her Self and the world she lives in and with but also acting on it. In other words, wonder-full interruptions help the student become a critical being who thinks critically as a way of life. In contrast, in the traditional sense of critical inquiry, critical thinking only focuses on knowing and acting. At the business school in this thesis, the latter is the case. The student is expected to work with complex ideas and evidence to make well-appointed judgements whilst taking into account the context in which she makes her judgement and taking a critical stance towards her process of thinking (Moon, 2005). Critical being—critical living—transcends critical inquiry and its cognitive and

metacognitive focus. It adds extra value to the business school's education as critical being forms the background against which cognitive inquiry can arise. Critical being, I argue, is necessary for critical inquiry to emerge. If the student is to be critical, she needs a Self and a world that already matter to her. How else can she begin to feel unsettled?

Given wonder's care-full nature, the consciousness that guides critical living cannot be to let everything emerge, grow, and flourish. Critical living has one reflect and act upon what can contribute in a positive (caring) way to one's Self and the world one lives in and with (Biesta, 2014). It is to acknowledge that one's (assumptions about) knowing, acting, and being are situated in the vast unknown and act on that notion. It is to actively abandon the idea that one knows everything and the other does not. In other words, to live critically is to be humble in action, as Egan et al. (2014) express beautifully.

Education and educational playfulness should not be mistaken for making things easy for a student. To make her feel at ease is to put her back to sleep again, to borrow Wittgenstein's expression. By taking out the resistance and making things easy, we isolate a student from the world instead of helping her come into that world. The struggle and the frustration of trying and getting to the next level in the game is half the game's fun, and succeeding boosts a student's agency. It puts her right in the thick of it all. Right in the middle of the world she lives in and with. Precisely where wonder-full education wants her to be.

### 5.3.3 *Emergence and immersion*

I have defined wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge—an education that has a student care for her Self and the world she lives in and with. In this last subparagraph of a pedagogy of wonder, I will focus on the awareness that enables a student to immerse herself in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge.



As we have seen in chapters three and four, we need to be open to wonder for wonder to emerge. Wonder is about a student be(com)ing receptive to whatever the world has to tell her and wherever wonder wants to take her. To be(come) receptive, I think, is a key disposition that guides a wonder-full practice. To be receptive challenges the constructivist paradigm that extends throughout higher education. Constructivism is based on the idea that a student, based on her prior experiences, actively constructs her domain of knowing and acting (Palincsar, 1998). That is, the student uses previous learning as the foundation to build new learning, making her learning unique. The role of her educators is to help the student understand and interpret previous knowledge and experiences—they are her guides. The main constructivist principles are: knowledge is constructed; previous knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and insights are all important foundations for a student's continued learning; a student learns to learn in the process of learning; learning is an active process of engagement; learning is a social process and social interaction the key to a student's learning; learning is contextual, that is, it is connected to things a student already knows and believes; learning is personal as it is based in and on a student's own experiences and beliefs; engaging the mind is indispensable for successful learning and; the will to learn is key to learning.

Problematic with the constructivist paradigm is that a student stays in her own close-knit circle. It is easy to stay within solidified ways of knowing, acting, and being, as it is the comfortable thing to do. However, that makes it difficult to come up with something new and unprecedented. An outside force has to reveal the new and unforeseen to her. For that to happen, she needs to develop a receptive ear to what the world has to tell her and to understand “that world is not a construction of her mind and her desires, but actually has an existence and hence an integrity of its own” (Biesta, 2017, p. 13). That is not to say that a student lets in whatever the world tells her. She still is responsible for what she lets in and how she responds to what she lets in. Knowing, acting, and being as an event of reception puts a student in a different relation to the world than an act of construction. In an event of reception, the world, and the people in it, come to her. In the act of construction, the world, and the people in it, are at her disposal—objects to be used and controlled.

The emergence of wonder, though, is similar to an event of reception. A work of art, Medlock observes, is not created by the artist. It slowly reveals itself through the artist. A process in which the artist is the channel rather than the one who makes it happen. Of course, when immersing herself in practice, the artist also constructs, but that is not the main focus. Only when being receptive to it can wonder emerge and transform itself into new and wonder-full ways of knowing, acting, and being. Biesta is not the only one questioning the hegemony of the constructivist paradigm in modern-day education. Authors like Roth (2011) and Facer (2016) share Biesta's reservations about the constructive metaphor. "How can you aim at constructing knowledge when this knowledge itself is required for aiming at it" (Roth, 2011, p. 6)? The constructivist paradigm has its limits when it comes to bringing into the world the radically new and unprecedented because the radically new and unprecedented cannot be constructed from prior experiences. Nor can it be constructed by a pure cognitive mind because the act of constructing is controlled by its own intrinsic laws that partly reside outside the world of logic and reason. It is impossible to construct the unknown—the future—from the perspective of the known—the present—as Facer (2016) explains. What we can do is listen for it and open up to it when the unknown reveals itself. Barnett argues that crossing the boundaries between the epistemological and ontological calls for a certain kind of disposition that involves receptiveness (Barnett, 2012, p. 75). A pedagogy of wonder, I conclude, needs a disposition that helps a student, next to acting out a constructive mindset, to develop a receptive ear that can inspire and guide her constructivist action. That is, a receptive ear to hear wonder emerge whilst immersing herself into the construction of wonder-full work. When it comes to the question if being receptive is criterion-less, as Heidegger proposes, or moves one to a responsibility to act, as Levinas argues (Boone, 2016), I think the better question is to have a student explain what being receptive does to her—what it means for her that the world speaks to her and what it means for her to speak to the world. Through such questioning, she can establish her Self, as these questions ultimately address who has authority in her life—living questions instead of theoretical ones.

To be receptive is also to embrace the non-linear nature of the processes of emergence and immersion instead of trying to regulate and control the unpredictable, intertwined, and recursive stream of activities that characterise these processes. To be receptive is to embrace a non-linear consciousness. Linearity only explains the general outline and direction of these processes, but the processes themselves are non-linear. We can pick this line of reasoning up from Biesta (2010b, 2014, 2017, 2018) when he argues that in the social domain, the connections between interventions are non-linear and connections between interventions and outcomes at most probabilistic. This is a line of thought we encountered in the work of Medlock in chapter four and that we also can pick up from Chow et al. (2020), who connect non-linearity to the processes in the creative domain. Creative processes are composed of many interacting components that constantly interact with each other, and the processes of change can be non-proportional. That is, a small change can lead to significant transformations, making the potentiality of such processes almost infinite, and because the dynamics are unpredictable, changes in direction and changes in outcomes can emerge spontaneously. Or Land et al. (2014) and Land (2014), who emphasise the non-linear and non-hierarchical nature of liminal spaces in the threshold approach to a student's learning and the design of our educational frameworks (see paragraph 6.2). Or for a final example, Wegener (2014), who argues that in research, good insights emerge in a non-linear fashion when being lost. Coming from different angles, all these authors emphasise the ability to stay flexible and versatile when facing a non-linear reality.

And finally, connected to a receptive consciousness is a caring consciousness. To be receptive to the otherness of the other is “having a concern for the world, of caring for the world, and perhaps even of carrying the world (Biesta, 2017, p. 33). To care for enables a student to enter spaces of ambiguity without the ambition or the need to control them (Green & Gary, 2016) and thus become receptive to whatever uncertainty has to tell her—to uncertainty's unlimited potentiality. To care for something or someone is to let herself be interrupted by that something or

someone—to open herself up to the new, unforeseen, and transcend fixed ways of knowing, doing, and being.

Hansen, Herholdt-Lomholdt, and Medlock show that another element is important for a student to immerse herself in a wonder-full practice in which wonder can emerge: suspension. Suspension, or slowing down, provides a student with the time and space to let the interruptions of her established ways of knowing, acting, and being, emerge into new beginnings. It enables a student to hear and become aware of all the nuances that those interruptions have to tell her. To re-evaluate her desires and to figure out which of them are desirable is first to establish a relationship with them and see how they impact her. Only then can a student work out which ones will help her be(come) that unique human being that matters to her Self and the world she lives in and with. Brunstad and Oliverio (2019) dub this element of suspension 'tarrying'. A time and space for inertia, hesitation, and slowing down. A time and space to build relations with people and things so they can become subjects that matter to a student instead of mentalising them into cold objects. A time and space for a student to reflect on the familiar and the new and articulate why and how this might matter. Thus framed, inertia, hesitation, and slowing down become opportunities to let things become—to look at things not from a perspective of enforcement but rather from a perspective of emergence. Lewis (2012, 2014, 2016, 2017) speaks of freedom through suspension. Traditionally we speak of freedom in terms of self-actualisation—the freedom to do or be someone, for example, the unique or authentic human being we talked of earlier. However, there is a different kind of freedom to achieve this—the freedom not to do or not to be. Through a deliberate choice to suspend realising her being, a student can learn to understand what being might be. Traditionally we qualify and socialise a student to fulfil her potential. That is, to transform her potentiality into definites. The result is that she becomes a human being that only is capable of performing a select set of specialised skills, roles and functions. These are the roles we have chosen for her. By suspending this transformation process, a clearing in time and space is created where a student can explore her full potential—not the limited potential we have set up for her. A clearing in which she can find new meaning. Heidegger might say she

creates a *Lichtung* in which her authentic being's being can emerge, freed from the trials and tribulations of everydayness. To pause and slow down, to dwell in potentiality, might be conceived as simply being passive and counterproductive. However, suspension is not a passive indecisiveness that derails a student's work but rather "the active gesture of inquiry, in which work, action and execution are comprehended not from the perspective of their enforcement but in the process of their emergence and becoming" (Brunstad & Oliverio, 2019, p. 572). "Constantly moving forward towards an end while also delaying an end" (Lewis, 2016, p. 302) is hard work, especially because we are conditioned towards realising productive outcomes, and slowing down and delaying outcomes is seen as an obstacle on the road to progress and efficiency. That we live in an impulse society only makes it even harder. We seek satisfaction in the here and now; there is no time to waste to get our next shot of excitement. We seek direct gratification, not delay.

To summarise, for a student to immerse herself in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge, a flexible receptive, and caring disposition is essential, as well as a disposition that allows for suspending knowing, acting, and being. These dispositions help a student to hear and make sense of what wonder is trying to tell her.

#### **5.4 Food for Thought**

I have a specific interest in the education of a student. That interest is to help her flourish in the uncertain world she lives in and with. An education full of wonder will help a student flourish. Wonder is an open-ended state of prolonged not-knowing that, by interrupting solidified ways of knowing, acting, and being, opens a student up to endless new possibilities to connect with that world and her Self. It enables her to bring the new and unforeseen into that world whilst staying flexible and versatile in the face of the unknown. I have defined wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge—an education that helps a student to care for her Self and the world she lives in and with. In this chapter, I have used the elements in this definition to

describe the consciousness that guides the educational practice of wonder. Only if we have a pedagogy in place can the how of education begin to make sense. This chapter aims to define a pedagogy of wonder that guides the educational practice at the business school featured in this thesis and beyond. This pedagogy is:

- An open-ended and interruptive pedagogy. It not only aims for interruptions that interfere and discontinue the everydayness of qualifying and socialising a student. It also aims for interruptions that disrupt the everydayness of her being. It addresses her on an epistemological and ontological level to open her up to the infinite possibilities there are for her to connect with the world and her Self and become a unique and authentic human being. It does so in an open-ended way as her coming into the world can take so many unexpected forms that it essentially is boundless and, therefore, should not be bounded by her teacher as to what direction it takes and what road it travels—plurality is key.
- A playful pedagogy that can bring a student to the doorstep of wonder by stimulating open-mindedness, flexibility, nonconformity, equality, entertaining multiple viewpoints, autonomy, and childlike joy. Qualities that allow a student to frame or reframe everyday situations in a way that they can become entertaining, intellectually stimulating, and personally interesting. Be it without taking the resistance out of her educational practice because by making things easy, we isolate a student from the world instead of helping her to come into the world.
- A pedagogy that allows a student to immerse herself in a wonder-full practice whilst letting wonder emerge. The aim is to develop a flexible receptive, and caring disposition in a student next to a constructive disposition so the new and unknown can reveal themselves to her. The aim is also to slow down education, to temporarily suspend knowing, acting, and being so a student will be able to hear and become aware of all the nuances the emerging has to tell her—to explore her full potential. Thus a student can develop a concern for the world she lives in and with and her Self.

As this pedagogy of wonder is set within a metamodern context, it is important to realise that the above-mentioned elements do not replace the ones that are already in place. Constructivism is not to be replaced by a caring receptivism. Qualification and socialisation are not to be replaced by subjectification, nor is knowing and acting to be replaced by being. In wonder-full education, these elements are supposed to oscillate against each other. We must prevent a student and her teachers from trying to balance or harmonise these opposites. That would take the transformational energy out of the process and lead to a loss of sincerity. We must allow a student and her teachers to make atemporality and displacement their way of learning and teaching, even if others tell it is impossible to do so. As a pedagogy of wonder is something new that challenges education as we know it, we must not only allow for it to happen, we must actively urge a student and her teachers to explore and invest in a pedagogy of wonder.

In this chapter, I have established a pedagogy for wonder-full education. A pedagogy that has a student question what she knows and how she acts but, more importantly, a pedagogy that has her question who she is and why it matters that she exists. Because it is ultimately from her being that she gets the will, the courage, and the inner compass to engage with an inherently uncertain world. It is from her being that, ultimately, a flourishing individual emerges. With the pedagogy of wonder established, in the next chapter, I can start designing the wonder-full practice in which a student as a flourishing human being can begin to unfold.

# Chapter 6: A Wonder-full Practice

*To include and safeguard pluralism: there is no static practice.*

## 6.1 Outline

I have a specific interest in education. That interest is to help a student flourish in the uncertain world she lives in and with. In this thesis, I argue that an education full of wonder will help that student flourish. Wonder can achieve this by interrupting what it is to know, act, and be. Wonder opens a student up to endless new possibilities to connect with the world and her Self at an existential level. Wonder's interruptive nature enables her to bring the new and unforeseen into that world whilst staying flexible and versatile in the face of the unknown. Building on this potentiality of wonder, I have defined wonder-full education as a playful practice. A practice of open-ended interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge—an education that has her care for her Self and the world she lives in and with.

In chapter five, I used this definition to describe the consciousness that guides an educational practice of wonder—I have formulated a pedagogy of wonder. I have done so because only if we have a pedagogy in place can the how of education make sense. In this chapter, I will design the wonder-full practice in which a student's flourishing can begin to unfold. I will design that practice around the two guidelines the executive board of the business school that features in this thesis gives for innovating its educational practice. Follow-up research projects (see chapter seven) will likely expand wonder-full practices beyond these initial parameters. First, the school's practice should be structured and scaffolded by educational frameworks that tackle real-life problems and contain fixed qualifications that clearly show a student what is expected of her. Second, the practice at the school should build on the idea of inclusive learning communities in which every student is seen and acknowledged for the unique human being she is and that offer safe spaces for her self-development. Communities that offer equal opportunities



whilst tuning into different backgrounds, ambitions, and talents and challenging everyone to perform at their highest level. Communities in which lecturers, field professionals, and students together shape the learning environment that enables a student to become a critical professional who does not blindly follow the wisdom of the crowd.

In the next paragraphs, I will explore if the current practices at the business school are wonder-full practices, and if not, how they can be transformed to become wonder-full practices.

## **6.2 *Beyond knowledge-driven frameworks***

At the school in this thesis, solid educational frameworks are designed and created to structure the student's learning practice. These frameworks start with a well-defined set of competencies that are validated by the local business community. We translate these competencies into a fixed set of learning outcomes to be sure that a student knows when she has become the business professional we envision her to be. We pair these predefined learning outcomes with a well-thought BOKS as we understand that knowledge and skills are necessary to get the job done. When building educational practices, we are knowledge-driven and have specific ideas about the type of knowledge we need to incorporate into the student's education. A meta-study by Voogt and Roblin (2012) shows that the way we work is common practice in higher education. That is not to say that how competencies, BOKS, and learning outcomes are framed do not differ—the frameworks vary widely in terminology and models used. For example, at traditional universities whose sole mission is to research and teach, these frameworks tend to be built along the lines of institutional, intellectual, and disciplinary silos. At the business school, which also aims to be a place of strong societal and cultural engagement and pluralism, entangled with the whole of society, these traditional frameworks are replaced by interdisciplinary ones that intend to cross borders and break up established frameworks (Rinaldi et al., 2018; Trencher et al., 2014). Nevertheless, whatever the orientation, the assumption is that the frameworks we use are accurate

representations of the world we live in and with and can guide a student to predefined learning outcomes. As is the adjacent notion that what is not included in these detailed specifications is irrelevant and an inefficient digression from a well-planned path to becoming a professional practitioner.

From a wonder-full point of view, the educational frameworks of the business school in this thesis tell a student up front and in precise terms what should emerge from her studies and how she should immerse herself in her studies. The frameworks do not aim for open-ended states of prolonged not-knowing. Nor do they particularly inspire a playful attitude in the student that enhances interest in her studies—in my contact with students, playfulness is not something that leaps at me. I made these observations earlier in this thesis, but I have not yet gone into details about the frameworks we build. By bringing out the details, I think new possibilities can open up and bring a wonder-full educational practice into the world.

Two modes of knowing govern a student's education: mode 1 and mode 2 knowing (Barnett, 2009, 2012; Nowotny et al., 2001; Savin-Baden, 2014). In the language of wonder, I argue, it is safe to say that both modes of knowing are born out of and resolved through curiosity—systematically and methodologically, a student applies reason and logic to construct knowledge, which she validates through (practical) experimentation. When in mode 1, the student builds theoretical concepts and frameworks—academically produced and validated knowledge, separated from practical use in the world she lives in and with. When in mode 2 she works with creative and practical knowledge to solve specific real-life problems. Mode 2 knowledge is in demand, as the economy and society are in desperate need of solutions to a growing number of problems. Hence mode 2 knowledge plays a dominant role in our education. In other words, at the business school, we essentially distinguish between two kinds of knowledge—“a knowing how and a knowing that, and it is appropriate for vocational capabilities to be associated predominantly, if not exclusively, with the former rather than the latter” (Lum, 2003, p. 2). But are these two modes of knowing up to the task? On more than one occasion, we have already seen that they cannot provide all the answers we seek. Both modes always will fall short of understanding and dealing with an inherently

uncertain world, Barnett, for example, asserts. Mode 1 and mode 2 knowing, therefore, at best, make up for a part of the student's competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS. They only constitute part of the package.

Do these modes of knowing even constitute an adequate basis? Lum (2003, 2014) questions the unspoken assumption that competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS are impartial and inert things that can be tied down to clear-cut end specifications. When framing what professionals are, know, and do, we lodge ourselves firmly in the reducibility trap. First, we tend to choose things that lend themselves to precise and rational descriptions. However, as we have seen earlier, there are many aspects of being a professional that cannot be known rationally. There are ways of knowing besides reason, and there are things that, even then, remain inexplicable and inexpressible (Barnett, 2009, 2012; Cicovacki, 2014). We are firmly set in our ways to reduce the polymorphic reality we live in and with to clean entities that can be measured and calculated up to the point where all substance and meaning are lost. Second, we prefer things that seem to have a function, which is not a great surprise as function is the default lens through which universities of applied sciences see themselves and the world they exist in and for. But what function serves function? Function is subjectively imposed. It "can only take place within a context of previously determined interests, values or purpose" (Lum, 2003, p. 5). Our seemingly objective and functional set of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS are touched by the interests and values of the teachers, researchers, staff members, and the local professional practitioners who define and validate them. Furthermore, how we understand function (implicitly) refers to a whole range of other things. More than we, in all probability, are aware of. For example, our understanding of privacy is interconnected with our understanding of how we behave online and offline. As we have seen with Floridi (2014, 2015), the online is morphing into the onlife, which affects how we identify ourselves, how we socialise, how we describe reality and how we interact with that reality. Only by referring to the context—offline, online, or onlife—can the function of privacy and everything living aspect of it make sense (Ess, 2015). Whatever interdependencies between contexts and concepts we are trying to capture with accurate

representations, “those concepts will always be determined by our descriptions of those contexts” (Lum, 2014, p. 631). Poor descriptions as they are grounded in an inadequate and poor understanding of the capabilities of human beings. Third, we crave generality, as Souto (2019, 2020) calls it. When we look at things, we tend to try and capture those things under a common denominator. For example, when we describe customers, we are inclined to use general terms to capture the properties this group of people has in common. Hence the terms *lunching ladies* and *yuppies*. We urge the student to do so as we understand it as one of the fundamental marketing laws. Once a term like *lunching ladies* is born, we use it to justify all our actions regarding that group of customers. As a result, our perception becomes blurred, and instead of seeing real people and real things as they are, we see superficial abstracts. We no longer sense the uniqueness of that person, that thing, or that experience we are trying to understand, and we lose the capability to form an authentic relationship with it and respond to its call wisely. Finally, the situation gets even more problematic if we try to formulate the competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS of the future. How can we define and document future knowledge when knowledge of the future itself is required for aiming at it (Roth, 2011)—when the knowledge for future transformations exceeds the constraints of the present (Facer, 2016)? The future is located in unknown territory. To go beyond the present is to enter a non-present that can only be lived through representations that are never real and never disclose the full potential of what might be.

In light of these shortcomings in mode 1 and mode 2 knowing it is interesting to see that Barnett (2009, 2012) and Savin-Baden (2014) distinguish a third mode of knowing, that of knowing in and with uncertainty. Mode 3 knowing is a knowing that does not try to eliminate uncertainty but rather sets out to create more uncertainty. It is the kind of knowing in which a student first recognises and then engages with epistemological gaps in her knowing. In modes 1 and 2, she solves problems— theoretical and practical problems; in mode 3 she actively lends a voice to what she knows and does not know to expand her knowledge. She questions her (missing) knowledge and asks herself why she deems that (missing) knowledge appropriate in the first place. Or, as Jones (2013, p. 2) describes it, she aligns the “as-yet-

unknown” with the “not-yet-encoded” so she might embody it into new conceptual frameworks for her to make meaning of the world she lives in and with. As such, mode 3 knowing can be related to inquisitive wonder, as inquisitive wonder implies a willingness and capability to defer judgement and set aside possibly restrictive ways of thinking. Savin-Baden adds two more modes of knowing: mode 4 and mode 5 knowing. Mode 4 knowing is about recognising and engaging with epistemological gaps and realising that there is an order to these gaps. Some gaps are more important than others. Mode 5 knowing then lets the student play with these gaps—“a position whereby one holds several modes together in a complex and dynamic way” (Savin-Baden, 2014, p. 204). Mode 3-5 knowledge, I argue, is an excellent place to observe how epistemic intentions and ontological revelations—how curiosity and wonder—can shade off into each other.

Smith (2016) addresses the ideas of Barnett and Savin-Baden on knowing in and with uncertainty from a slightly different perspective. He sees it as unknowing—“the capacity to keep ourselves in harmonious relationship with that which escapes us” (Smith, 2016, p. 277)<sup>20</sup>. A quiet and gentle epistemic state of being in which a student not only takes stock of what is worth knowing and what is not worth knowing but also what escapes her knowing. A gentle and forgiving way to distance herself from mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge. For Smith, we are sometimes precisely good knowers because we do not know. As a good knower, a student embraces a state of being in which she lives the paradox of being in the known about unknowing itself. However, Smith's gentle epistemic virtue of unknowing is lost on Bojesen (2019) in his critique of Smith. For Bojesen, unknowing becomes a means “of epistemological resistance, especially against that which, often with very real social and political consequences, is presented as self-evident” (Bojesen, 2019, p. 394). Smith's soft disposition of unknowing, Bojesen argues, too easily becomes a convenient excuse for inaction and rejection. Unknowing, for Bojesen, is an active and hard form of "unpicking the knowledge we think we have and the prejudices that often come along with it" (Bojesen, 2019, p. 396). Germana (2007), who also wrestles with the

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<sup>20</sup> Reflexive note: I find the work of Smith extremely difficult to put into words. But this might be precisely its power. His work to me is like a koan—riddle—that a Zen Buddhist uses during meditation to become enlightened about the world and her Self. How is she to take stock of what she does not know? The answer escapes me, but knowing that it escapes me seems to be reward enough.

concept of unknowing, joins Bojesen in his hard epistemological stance. For Germana, unknowing's virtue lies in how it forces disparity on people. It moves one to explore the unfamiliar more earnestly, he argues. What is especially interesting is that he sees the dynamic interaction between knowing and unknowing as something that needs a playful attitude rather than a solving one—the playful consciousness we have defined as part of a pedagogy of wonder. Unknowing is easily mistaken for ignorance, something we abhor in our educational practice. But rightly so? Not necessarily! As Bojesen (2019) shows, ignorance comes in two modes: negative and positive ignorance. Negative ignorance, consciously or unconsciously, for that matter, represses knowing, often favouring other ways of knowing. Positive ignorance, on the other hand, questions knowing and pushes one to move on. As such, it has educational value. Logue (2013) pushes the envelope even further. The positive and negative forms of ignorance are often “actively sought after, consciously produced, strategically deployed, ferociously consumed, and carefully maintained” (Logue, 2013, p. 53). Ignorance can be used by a student as a way of resistance—to halt the learning machine from producing more copies. To not-know the answer or not-do what is expected is a soft way for a student to escape the terms set by her teachers. A form of resistance that, I think, harbours excellent opportunities for rethinking our educational practice<sup>21</sup>. Ignorance, like knowledge, is a social construct and, therefore, is a meaningful, sometimes even valuable practice and thus deserves a place in a wonder-full practice.

Smith opens up yet another dimension of knowing, that of not-knowing. Not-knowing is furthest removed from the instructional knowledge we began with. Whereas with knowing and unknowing we seek to find answers, with not-knowing we stop looking for answers. Not-knowing fully transcends the epistemic and brings a student into the domain of the ontological. It is a state of being in which she is content to view things as they are, in their wholeness and completeness (Taylor, 1998). As such, not-knowing relates to deep wonder. In chapter three, we have defined wonder as a state of prolonged not-knowing that allows one to be open and flexible in the face of

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<sup>21</sup> Reflexive note: We often complain about the lack of engagement from the student, calling her ignorant. Likewise, the student laments our ignorance—complaining that we are blind to her needs and realities. To recognise and discuss where that felt ignorance comes from, Biesta would argue, is an excellent starting point for teaching and learning.

the unknown. We have met Schinkel, who argues “the aim of education is to make us ‘truly’ see things, which means that we know them in a way that always has an element of wonder mixed in—i.e. an element of not-knowing” (Schinkel, 2021, p. 105). Not-knowing, as in being in and with the world, is a far more fundamental way of knowing—it is a prerequisite to knowing, theorising or explaining (Lum, 2003). Not-knowing is different from unknowing, which still has one engage with the world on an epistemological level, whereas not-knowing suspends the desire to know. Not because knowledge is unimportant, but because sometimes simply being in and with the world is needed to experience what and who matters. It is liberating to discover endless possibilities to connect with the world and our Selves without being pressed to realise them. Not-knowing is an elusive and ephemeral concept that I find difficult to capture. I understand it as avoiding interpreting our experiences immediately and translating them into definites. However, that is a slippery description to work from. Lewis (2012, 2014, 2016, 2017) and Phelan and Rogoff’s (2001) helped me translate the concept to educational practice by making the merits of not-knowing tangible to me.

Lewis dives into our psyche as learners. As learners, we follow a strict not-yet logic. A student, for example, does not-yet have a degree. She is not-yet an adequate professional and not-yet a full member of society. To become all of that, she needs to destroy the not-yet. She needs to transform the contingent into the definite—to transform the potentiality of the unknown into the definite of the known. However, the result is that she becomes a human being that is capable of “only a select few behaviours, skills, and actions, easily assignable to a specific function” (Lewis, 2014, p. 2). That is, she becomes de-subjectified as a human being to “remain an object of the desires and directions of others” (Biesta, 2017, p. 28). The answer that Lewis gives is to not-yet transform the potential into solid outcomes (Lewis, 2017) but to dwell in it. Not-knowing for Lewis is not to act upon the potential so it can remain impotential (a little longer). Not-knowing is to be with unlimited possibilities for its own sake. That is, to live “the experience of bewilderment in the face of the interminable or indeterminate manifestation of ‘impotentiality’ as such” (Lewis, 2014, p. 279). Not-knowing is an experience that calls for patience. Something many

students lack, as we have seen in the wonder-driven practice of Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt (2015). Phelan and Rogoff (2001) refer to not-knowing as being without. Being without is an active practice of participation and reflection in which we discover that what we have done is no longer sufficient whilst simultaneously resisting the urge to form new ways of knowing and acting to replace them. To let the potential remain and to be without is an active choice for not-knowing, not-doing, and not-being. Rather than not being able or not wanting to know, to do, and to be, it is being able to not-know, not-do, or not-be. The idea of not-knowing implies that teachers not only show a student that she can bring knowledge into the world she lives in and with. They also need to show a student that she has the power to abstain from bringing knowledge into the world—“holding within itself both the ability and inability to be, do, or become x” (Lewis, 2016, p. 346).

Where is the business school on this ladder of knowing? Where is the school in thinking about knowing seen from a wonder-full perspective? Ticking off the boxes of knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing, only knowing—the epistemic—is firmly incorporated in the frameworks built for its educational practice. It also includes unknowing—mode 3 to 5 knowledge—into its frameworks, but not to its full potential—only its epistemic part is addressed. To be more precise, we urge a student to be critical, which is an essential competency in all of our different business programmes, but we actively keep her and ourselves away from ignorance, and we silently ignore that unknowing should not only be understood as a cognitive challenge. Finally, not-knowing is not incorporated into the educational frameworks. The business school is a stranger to letting the potential remain. To be without is not on the list of things a student needs to have. Not-knowing is not-yet in our system, as we still impatiently try to grasp the future and dismiss things and experiences that cannot be efficiently framed within conceptual and objective schemes. We dismiss not-knowing as not wanting or not being capable of knowing. We are firmly anchored in the epistemic and not in the ontological.

Given what we have come to know about wonder, a wonder-full practice benefits from incorporating knowing, unknowing, not-knowing, and even ignorance—the epistemic and the ontological—into the frameworks that structure a student’s



learning. Combined, these three forms of knowing bring out opportunities for a student to immerse herself in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge. That is, to benefit from the open-ended interruptions (the combination of) these forms of knowing harbour. How we structure these three forms of knowing in educational frameworks determines to what extent the new and unforeseen can unfold. Building solid barriers between them ignores the fact that they as much shade off into each other as they oppose each other. Building solid barriers between the three different forms of knowing, or trying to harmonise or balance them, cancels out the transformational energy that can arise from them freely oscillating against each other. Embedding atemporality in educational frameworks—embedding displacement in our sets of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS—is key to a student’s learning in a wonder-full practice.

The idea for wonder-full educational frameworks is to hold competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS, and the schemes that colour them lightly. Problematic for this endeavour is how we traditionally present these frameworks in brochures, course guidebooks and course work. We should be aware of the tacit messages we communicate through them. What we see comes before words, and how we draw frameworks, therefore, determines what others can see and cannot see—what a student is likely to notice and what she is likely to ignore. Art critic John Berger (1990) argues that we construct a template for everything that follows when drawing a framework. Pictures quickly settle in our heads and silently whisper assumptions that no longer need to be articulated. Even if we can explain away what we see, we can never fully undo how that framework settled us in the world in the first place. To show a frame is to think within and live according to that frame. So if we design and draw closed frameworks, how is a student supposed to think and live in an open-ended way? Let us forget about using fixed tables and spreadsheets with their neat columns and outcome boxes that imply calculus and suggest that the formula for good education is only one click away. Let us design dynamic images that show competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS as living and breathing things. Images that show them as fluid spaces filled with a multiplicity of competing elements that drift through time and space—coming from somewhere and going towards an

uncertain future yet to be explored and called into existence. Elements that as much shade off into each other as they oppose each other. I suggest using dynamic images that show educational frameworks as unfinished spaces. Dynamic images that explicitly show uncharted territory and areas for being without—for impotentiality. Dynamic images that fluidly reveal, over time, elements that morph into something new and that clarify that new voices and questions will keep entering the frameworks. We should build frameworks—sets of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS—that whisper the assumption that a student too can move and join the conversation about what knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing mean for her flourishing in and with an inherently uncertain world. Frameworks that not only represent her learning but are part of her learning and incorporate living questions that address a student's curiosity and inquisitive and deep wonder. Questions like: 'What do I know?' 'What do I not know?' 'What contradicts the things that I know?' 'What have I not been taught?' 'What might be the reason for that?' 'What experiences in my life do I value?' 'How do they make me feel?' 'Why do they make me feel the way I feel?' Living questions that direct learning without a fixed or predefined direction.

### **6.3 *Beyond problem-based practices***

We build frameworks that consist of sets of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS to structure the learning of a student. To trigger and sustain her learning process, we have the student work on authentic problems defined by local practitioners. Problems that are designed to pique her curiosity and are meant to solve problems through rapid experimentation and meticulous customer validation. To help develop the student's problem-solving capabilities, we scaffold the problems we present to her. She starts with well-defined problems that have only one solution. But over time, the nature of the problems changes. They become only partly defined and divergent. They no longer have a single solution, and solving them requires more than just the direct application of knowledge. The student needs to learn how to interpret and approach these problems and to find out what knowledge she needs to solve them whilst reflecting on how they impact her as a professional. The idea is

that such problems cause her to change her role from a passive receiver to an active, responsible, reflexive, and autonomous participant, whilst her teachers become guides on the side instead of sages on the stage. Guides that no longer transmit knowledge but provide the support and appropriate help the student needs to achieve her learning objectives. Howard Barrow coined this approach problem-based learning.

Scaffolding problematises critical aspects of a student's future profession. Scaffolding challenges her to mindfully and productively engage with (new) domain-specific schemes and strategies. It also provides her with guidance and structure on how to solve problems. Each critical aspect can be described as a threshold concept (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007; Quintana et al., 2004; Reiser, 2004). Threshold concepts are concepts that the student needs to master if she is to reach the next level in her transformation from a novice to an expert professional. Once understood, threshold concepts change the way the student thinks about business. But until then, according to the above-mentioned authors, threshold concepts are viewed by her as difficult. Thresholds are related to the educational frameworks we talked about in paragraph 6.2, as they contain the critical aspects of what we think a business professional is and should do. As thresholds and frameworks are connected, the changes I propose to make to those frameworks will impact the concept of problem-based learning, whilst the idea of problem-based learning might also be problematic with a wonder-full practice.

Problem-based learning is designed as a project of scientific curiosity—it is designed to help a student construct rich cognitive models to solve problems that matter to her professional practice (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007; Kirschner et al., 2016; Schmidt et al., 2007). It heavily emphasises formulating hypotheses, gathering data through rapid experimentation, and analysing data to construct evidence-based solutions. Problem-based learning and the thresholds it works with are banking on the epistemic, not ontological. From the perspective of a wonder-full practice, this might be a problem as a wonder-full practice should encompass the epistemic and the ontological—knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing.

This potential problem is partly defused by threshold thinkers like Brown et al. (2021), Land (2016), Land et al. (2014), and Stopford (2021). They criticise that the thinking about threshold concepts is obsessed with epistemic issues, whilst thresholds naturally touch upon ontological issues too. They argue that it is time for an approach to threshold concepts that address them not only on an epistemic but also on an ontological level. Brown et al. and Stopford contend that, when it comes to thresholds, we can be certain and uncertain in many ways. Not only on an epistemic level but also on an existential level (sometimes even on both levels). Epistemic certainty and uncertainty have one doubt knowledge. We may be uncertain because we realise that we need to gain the knowledge to crack the code and that we first need to study a subject before taking action. We also may not be entirely certain of our knowledge, yet we think we know enough to act. We might even be certain that we know our stuff, yet still not find it enough to act<sup>22</sup>. Existential certainty grounds our epistemic certainty—the ontological grounds the epistemological. When we become existentially uncertain, the ground beneath our feet opens up, and our beliefs (and biases) begin to fall apart. Brown et al. and Stopford argue that existential uncertainty constitutes a primordial threshold concept and, thus, should form an inseparable part of threshold thinking. Therefore, they advise doing away with the one singular body of knowledge and instead using a much looser, more non-descriptive approach. This advice fits the wonderful frameworks I construed in paragraph 6.2. Land (2016) and Land et al. (2014) have similar ideas when they discuss the ontological dimensions of liminal spaces in threshold thinking. When we enter a liminal space—when we enter a place of transition, a time of waiting and not knowing the future—we automatically enter a space where transformative personal changes occur. As we cross a threshold, we become a new and alternative version of ourselves. Crossing thresholds is a dynamic interplay between cognitive and emotional processes and directly impacts our emotional well-being and vice versa (Timmermans & Meyer, 2019). Liminality, as the subjective state of being, throws our sense of Self and our place within the world we live in and with into disarray. It is within these liminal spaces the evaluation

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<sup>22</sup> Reflexive note: An experience I have gone through many times over when writing this thesis.

of our knowing, acting, and being, happens, which ultimately “cumulates into irreversible epistemological and ontological shifts” (Land et al., 2010, p. 11). Shifts that play out in the domains of knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing and that affect a student’s being in a dynamic process of “trying on of possible selves” that are “constantly shifting” (Brown et al., 2021, p. 7).

If thresholds are of an epistemic and ontological nature, how to incorporate them into the existing problem-based learning at the business school? Is that possible, or should we do away with problem-based learning and begin from scratch? How can we incorporate knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing into a problem-based practice? Savin-Baden (2008, 2009, 2011, 2014) might provide ideas for moving forward with her problem-based learning model. Her model is a spiral-like arrangement of nine transitional problem-based learning spaces. In each space, the learning process begins with confronting the student with a disjunction—begins with a sense of stuckness, as Savin-Baden calls it—that places her into a troublesome situation and acts as a catalyst for her learning and eventually leads to a new level of knowing, acting, and being. After that, the process starts anew in the next space. Thus the spiral-like arrangement of the model averts the solidification of schema building and boosts the perpetual emergence of the new and unforeseen (Green & Gary, 2016; Sarid, 2017). The first five constellations have the student work with knowing. The constellations six to nine have her work with knowing, unknowing, and finally, not-knowing. In those constellations, a shift occurs “away from a demand for mere know-how and propositional knowledge” (Savin-Baden, 2014, p. 207)—away from knowing to unknowing and not-knowing. The student is urged not only to develop epistemological positions but also ontological ones. She is encouraged to explore disciplinary boundaries and transcend them as she realises these boundaries are always somewhat illusory. She is heartened to develop a personal stance towards her knowing and unknowing and the underlying structures and belief systems implicit within her profession and to reflect on what is included and excluded from the dominant discourse in her professional domain. She is invited to think about what it means (for her) to be a professional. She is invited to think about how she is embedded in professional and social structures. Constellations six to nine

urge her to understand her professional practice, its credence, and her Self and thus touch not only upon the epistemic but also the ontological. It embraces (without using those specific terms) knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing to suspend judgement and set aside existing and potentially limiting ways of thinking to bring the new and unforeseen into the world.

Savin-Baden's model provides the ontological dimension necessary for a wonder-full practice. The problem, though, is that the model implicitly assumes a hierarchy between knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing, which does not fit with the non-hierarchical concepts of wonder and metamodernism. In Savin-Baden's model, the epistemological comes before the ontological, implying that knowing deserves more time and attention than unknowing and that knowing comes before unknowing and not-knowing. As we have seen earlier, the opposite might be true. The ontological is what grounds the epistemological. I suggest that we transform Savin-Baden's model and that in each of the learning spaces we confront the student with a disjunction that has her address that disjunction from a knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing perspective to get past her sense of stuckness and enter the next learning space. In each learning space, we have her work on problems but also with lived experiences. That is, we have the student not only work on problems defined by local practitioners to pique her curiosity and solve them. We also have the student work with lived experience from her own life to pique her wonder and offer her "moments of seeing meaning or 'in-seeing' into the heart of things" (van Manen, 2014, p. 12). That is Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt's approach to building on lived experiences to have a student sense and reflect on what is meaningful to her. Like with the wonder-full frameworks in paragraph 6.2, problems and lived experiences cannot and should not be neatly separated as Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt did in their practice. They are both living and breathing entities that as much shade off into each other as they oppose each other. That is, sometimes it is better to engage in scientific curiosity and sometimes it is more appropriate to engage in inquisitive wonder and solve the world's problems. Sometimes deep wonder is the right thing to do—to allow ourselves the time and space to "view things in their wholeness and full context" (Taylor, 1998, p. 169). Sometimes they are all thrown into the mix, so we

can no longer tell when curiosity stops and wonder begins (and vice versa). What educators have to do is to make sure that none of these approaches is forgotten or marginalised in the process. They need to ensure the student experiences the different approaches as oscillating against each other.

I change the name from problem-based to practice-based learning to emphasise that a wonder-full practice transcends a student beyond merely solving problems. A change of seemingly little consequence, but by naming something, we pre-sort what follows. Practice-based learning is a better denominator as it incorporates working with problems and lived experience so the student can establish her Self in the world she lives in and with and be an agent of change that matters to the world as well as her Self.

#### **6.4 *Beyond communities of learning***

At the business school featured in this thesis, we build solid frameworks of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS to structure the student's learning. We trigger and sustain her learning process by having her work on authentic problems defined by local practitioners. We shape her learning environment as a community of learning to foster and nurture her learning. A community in which she and her peers, aided by her teachers and local professional practitioners, are encouraged to share ways of knowing, acting, and being. A community in which we all are invited to construct a consensual domain of business. Does this arrangement live up to the expectations of a wonder-full education? Are the communities we build the open-ended environments conducive to the emergence of wonder and immersion in wonder-full work that a wonder-full practice needs them to be?

The idea of a community of learning is inspired by Wenger's community of practice (Farnsworth et al., 2016; Wenger, 2000), in which members share information and experiences to learn from each other and thus create opportunities for themselves and the other members to develop a professional practice and a shared professional

domain<sup>23</sup>. The essence is that a Wenger-style community aims at negotiating shared meaning. Sharing a common interest triggers and sustains the community, and by creating the right conditions in the classrooms, we can create such shared interest and gather everybody around it. That may be true for a tight group of professionals. However, we tend to overlook that classrooms neither consist of students that are invariably highly motivated nor that they consist of only one community of interest (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). A student and her peers pursue many different objectives and play various, often disparate, roles. The student is not only a student but also someone who needs to earn her keep and pursues her own interests and passions. She is a friend amongst friends and a family member among family. She is a provider and sometimes even a caretaker for a dear one. Furthermore, when it comes to her motivation, she keeps surprising me with the many types and levels of motivation she can display, not only during her studies but even during one lecture.

On the topic of her (lack of) motivation to participate in the community of learning, a story comes to mind that Lewis (2014) recounts when exploring the educational benefits of potentiality. The story is about Bartleby the Scrivener. Bartleby is a scrivener who prefers not to realise his potential as a copyist and stops working. However, he does not withdraw from his workplace. When asked to work, or at least explain himself, all he answers is that he prefers not, and when asked if he will not, he answers that he prefers not. The story reminds me of the times a student prefers not to engage in assignments or discussions—not to participate in the community of learning. Of course, I could interpret that behaviour as a forthright refusal to involve herself in learning or as an indication of laziness or lack of talent. Like Bartleby's boss, I tend to become annoyed—even insecure—by a student who does not abide by my norms and rules and interrupts the flow of my classes. However, is this the right response for a teacher who propagates wonder-full education and actively seeks out educational spaces and places where wonder can emerge? Biesta would

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<sup>23</sup> Reflexive note: A community of learning must not be mistaken for a learning team or a learning network. A team is defined by a shared task, for example, creating a new and improved product or service. A team is task-driven, whereas a community of practice is about creating a shared domain of practice. A community of learning emphasises identifying with the domain of practice, whereas a network focuses on the connection between people. Of course, a community of learning will include a network element as that network is necessary to negotiate meaning, but it is only one element of many.



lecture me as, for him, the resistance displayed by a student who does not want to maximise her learning outcomes and who wilfully chooses to be a subject without (the prospect of) a destination in our learning factory is what makes teaching worthwhile. I should not take that resistance as something that needs to be corrected. By not letting her Self be qualified and socialised, a student opens up a space for her coming into the world as a unique human being—for her subjectification. Not the space I would have chosen, but my task is to help her explore this living feat of resistance, not to tell her off or marginalise her choice. Her not-learning might be the very opportunity for her to learn. Her not-knowing and not-acting might provide the best opportunity to be(come) her authentic and unique Self. If only I, her teacher and coach, acknowledged the potential of her preferring not to.

However, as Merriam-Webster's definition of a community shows, being unique is not at the centre of a traditional community: "a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society." Members of a community share goals and a sense of understanding—a shared identity and a shared domain of knowing and acting—which is produced through a common discourse within a shared culture. When the student speaks as a member of a community, it is probably not her (unique) voice we will hear. It will be the voice of the community. From my own experience and what I observe in Hansen and Herholdt-Lomholdt community practice, it is fair to say that a student is prone to repeating what her community has accepted as the truth. She is likely to copy her community's patterns of understanding and behaviour. Furthermore, as she confirms the social reality of her community, she suppresses what could make her stand out from that community—she smothers her uniqueness (Bertelsen & Bøe, 2016; Biesta, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2010a, 2017; Lingis, 2004). Or, from a different perspective, she puts on a performance so others will identify her as a member of a specific community. A performance not to surprise others but to convince them that she belongs to a distinct category, and in doing so, she loses her authenticity—she becomes a replaceable.

To prevent a student from becoming a replaceable and instead grow into that unique human being that matters to herself and the world, Biesta (2002, 2004, 2006, 2010a,

2017) and Lingis (2004) argue that we need to transform the traditional make-up of a community into a community of those who have nothing in common. That is a community that is open to and constituted by the otherness of the other. A community that explicitly allows for what Biesta calls subjectification and in which its members meet each other as unique and irreplaceable human beings—not to affirm themselves but to expose the otherness of their Selves to their peers. Just imagine “what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself” (Biesta, 2017, p. 71). In a community of those who have nothing in common, we urge the student to open up to and accept the otherness of the other and her own otherness rather than assimilating that otherness into sameness. By opening up and accepting the otherness and immersing her Self in it, she can find new meaning and/or produce authentic work. Thus Biesta’s and Lingis’ community of those who have nothing in common becomes a community of wonder. A community that allows and urges for interruptions, resistance, and opposition, so the new and unprecedented is allowed to come into the world. However, this does not mean that a community of wonder needs to be separated from or replace a community of learning. No, a community of wonder shows itself in a community of learning at those moments when we speak with our own voices. Voices that are authentically unique and include things that never have been heard before by their owners or by the community they form.

In order to be(come) a unique human being that matters to her Self and the world she lives in and with, a student has to discover but also recover her own voice. To discover implies that she learns new and unforeseen ways of knowing, acting, and being and explores her potentiality that is waiting to emerge. But the student also has to recover her voice. She needs to save it from the oppressive voices of others as she immerses herself in a community of learning, and she needs to save it from her angst of being hurt in the process of being heard. A wonder-full practice has several voices to encourage as a student, in the company of others, discovers new possibilities to realise her Self and transform the world she lives in and with in the process.

How does Wenger react to such ideas? Upon analysing a study by Farnsworth et al. (2016), I conclude that Wenger also urges community members to refuse to restrict their identity to the labels imposed on them by others or themselves. He describes his theory of a community of practice as an attempt to place the negotiation of meaning at the heart of our learning instead of just developing knowledge and skills. Meaning is central to the process of becoming an authentic individual, as meaning is also central to wonder. Therefore, his theory does not “separate learning from the becoming of the learner” (Farnsworth et al., 2016, p. 8). That is, we cannot have a student acquire knowledge and skills without allowing, even urging her to grow into a human being for which this set of knowledge and skills matters in a meaningful way. We already saw this idea with Barnett (2009, 2012), who argues that our being is fundamentally challenged by the inherently uncertain world we live in and with. For Wenger, the essence of his theory is to use the relationship between our Selves and the world we live in and with as a way to negotiate meaning. Moreover, to become meaningful is to singly accept labels and, at the same time, refuse them altogether. Being part of a community means identifying our Selves with that community but simultaneously not letting that same community marginalise our Selves. A rather difficult endeavour in a community whose default setting is to clamp down on discord, shut down unique voices, and totalise its influence over its members and is likely to ostracise members from its ranks if they dare to step out of line (Farnsworth et al., 2016). Wenger, though, is clear in what we should do, and that is to live the tension between surrender and being marginalised. As it is in the gap that separates and binds these opposites, new meaning arises, which is the sole purpose of a community.

Whereas Biesta and Lingis focus on showing our otherness and becoming receptive to the otherness of the other in a community, Wenger suggests a different path. As individuals, we are set in many contexts to realise ourselves as unique individuals that matter to our Selves and the world (Farnsworth et al., 2016). Or, as Roth and Lee (2006) argue, the success of learning communities lies in their heterogeneity. We are part of many different communities to account for our fluid objects of interest, relations, actions, motivations, and levels of expertise and for the rich descriptions of

knowing that all frame the negotiation process. The success of communities of learning in an education full of wonder, therefore, not only lies in addressing the inner workings of these communities of learning. It also lies in helping a student benefit from her membership in other communities she is part of inside and outside her school by allowing these affiliated communities to play their part in negotiating meaning. The challenge is to let the student qualify, socialise, and subjectify not only through the community of learning we have designed for her. As we are on the subject, why not enrich the idea of heterogeneity even further by opening the communities we have designed for her up to those she has nothing in common? Not in the sense of Biesta and Lingus, but in the sense of introducing people into the communities who have nothing in common with the business domain. Traditionally we already do this by including students and professionals from other disciplines in the communities of learning, as we have seen with the discussion of mode 3 knowledge. I also suggest including people with whom the student does not have a shared (scientific) dialogue in common. We have the student engage with experts and consumers to build the perfect product. But why not work with non-consumers, with non-experts? They are the ones who truly represent the otherness in a way that is hard for a student to ignore. They are the ones that really can help her negotiate new meaning of what the domain of business should be(come)—about what she should be(come).

## **6.5 Food for thought**

I have a specific interest in education. I want to help the student flourish in the uncertain world she lives in and with. I have defined wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended interruption that immerses the student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge—an education that helps the student to care for her Self and the world she lives in and with. In chapter five, I formulated the consciousness that guides a practice of wonder. In this chapter, I use the guidelines given by the executive board of our business school to formulate the groundwork for an educational practice full of wonder at the business school featured in this thesis and beyond:

- Frameworks that structure a student's learning: Wonder-full frameworks extend the frameworks we use to incorporate not only knowing but also unknowing, not-knowing, and even ignorance. Thus our sets of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS show that a wonder-full practice is not only an epistemic matter but also very much an ontological one. Such broader frameworks signal that in a wonder-full practice, a student not only uses her scientific curiosity but also accepts inquisitive and deep wonder as opportunities to bring into the world the new and unforeseen and transform her Self and that world. There are no solid barriers in these frameworks between knowing, unknowing, not-knowing, and ignorance, as working with solid barriers is to ignore the fact that the elements as much shade off into each other as they oppose each other. Wonder-full frameworks also are presented in different ways. That is, they are no longer still pictures, frozen in time, but fluid and unfinished images in which the constituting elements can be seen drifting through time and space. Wonder-full frameworks show that constituting elements come from somewhere and go towards what is yet to be called into existence. They are dynamic images that show what should be and what could be. They are sketches of the potential and a blank canvas for the impotential. They whisper that a student can and should move through the world of ideas and join the conversation about the meaning of knowing, unknowing, and not-knowing. These dynamic images represent what a student needs to learn and are part of her learning. To conclude: The fixed and solid frameworks the business school envisions in wonder-full education become open-ended and dynamic frameworks open-ended and dynamic frameworks.
- Tackle real-life problems: A wonder-full practice has a student not only work on problems defined by local practitioners to pique her curiosity and solve them. It also has the student work with lived experience from her own life to pique her sense of wonder and see the meaning of things. A wonder-full practice is about practice-based learning instead of merely problem-based learning in which working on problems and with lived experiences is not neatly

separated. Problems and lived experiences as much shade off into each other as they oppose each other. Therefore, sometimes it is better to engage in scientific curiosity and sometimes it is more appropriate to engage in inquisitive wonder and solve the world's problems. Sometimes deep wonder is the right thing to do. Sometimes they are all thrown into the mix without the student or her teachers being able to tell when curiosity stops, and wonder begins (and vice versa). We have to make sure that none of these approaches is forgotten or marginalised and that they freely oscillate against each other. To conclude: to tackle only real-life problems, as the business school envisions, is not enough in wonder-full education.

- Communities of learning: Pluralism is the key to a wonder-full community of learning. Pluralism as in urging and helping a student to discover and recover her own voice as a unique human being within a community that pushes its members to develop a shared identity and a shared domain of knowing and acting—to speak with one voice. Pluralism as in members opening up to the otherness of the others within the community. Pluralism as in introducing people with whom a student does not even have a shared (scientific) dialogue in common. They are the ones that really can help negotiate new meaning of what the domain of business should be(come). And finally, pluralism as in incorporating other communities the student is a member of into existing teaching and learning arrangements and accepting that every one of these communities contributes to the student becoming a unique professional and human being. To conclude: The community of learning becomes a circle of pluriform, overlapping, and interacting communities in wonder-full education.

In this chapter, I have formulated the outlines for the practice of wonder-full education. A practice that has a student not only question what she knows and how she acts but, more importantly, has her question who she is and why it matters that she exists. Because it is from her being that she gets the will, the courage, and the inner compass to engage with an inherently uncertain world. It is from her being that a flourishing individual emerges. A practice that is as much about extracting value from her Self and the world she lives in and with as it is about enhancing value for

her Self and that world. A practice that is as much about being instrumental as it is about having a concern—care—for her Self and the world. A practice that is not neatly divided between knowing, acting, and being but combines them whilst simultaneously letting them oscillate against each other. A practice that leads to thinking the unthinkable and letting the unthinkable affirm the practice.

In the next chapter, I will summarise the concept of wonder-full education. I will look back at the process of formulating the concept and show how I intend to have the ideas impact the educational practice of the business school that set the innovation challenge, the university of applied sciences it is part of, and higher education in general.

# Chapter 7: Wonder-full Education

*Bringing wonder-full education into the world.*

## 7.1 Outline

The executive board of the business school featured in this thesis sets me a challenge: to innovate its educational practice so the school can stay successful at educating students that can deal with an uncertain world and become the agents of change that the world needs them to be. With this thesis, I accept that challenge. In it, I argue that a new kind of education—an education full of wonder—can help a student flourish in the uncertain world she lives in and with. Now we are nearing the end of this thesis, or so it seems. But what I have done is only create a beginning. I took the first step by entrusting my thoughts on wonder-full education to paper. Wonder-full education is still a lifeless specimen in a jar that academia is littered with. For my thoughts to impact the educational practice at the school in this thesis and beyond, I need to open the lid. I need to set the idea of wonder-full education free for others to start sharing their thoughts about an education full of wonder, so a living practice can develop from what now are only words on paper.

In this final chapter, I will discuss how I intend to open the lid of the jar, but before I do so, I take a concluding look at the specimens in it and at the challenges they present to the unfolding of wonder-full education.

## 7.2 *Wonder-full education: conclusion*

The idea of wonder-full education is a coming together of multiple lines of thinking. One line formed with the notion that a student lives in and with an inherently uncertain world, and helping her flourish in such a world constitutes an important concern for educators. Another line formed with the notion that education as a project of knowing is not enough to help a student flourish. In an inherently uncertain world, knowledge will always lag. Even more so, such a world transcends what can



be captured, understood, or expressed by a rational language of knowledge, however subtle that language might be and how creative and imaginative a student is. It is ultimately from her being that a student derives the will, the inner compass, and the courage to engage with the world. That is, to engage by caring for the world she lives in and with and for her Self. Because what is at stake is not so much to develop her will-to-power but rather her will-to-care as that enables her to become receptive to whatever uncertainty has to tell her—become receptive to uncertainty's unlimited potentiality. To care for is to let her Self be interrupted by the otherness of the other. It is to open up to the new and unforeseen and to transcend fixed ways of knowing, acting, and being.

A sense of wonder is key for a student to care for the world she lives in and with and her Self. Wonder has her focus on the value of the object of her wonder. Wonder has her care for something or someone other without having an ulterior motive, only minimally aware, if at all, of its relationships to her own plans. Wonder defamiliarises the known and familiarises the unknown. It pilots a student deeper and deeper into the unknown, yet it simultaneously leads her to an understanding she previously did not have. When wonder strikes, it can do so in different modes like inquisitive and deep wonder whilst accompanied by a host of emotions. Wonder addresses epistemic emotions like curiosity and doubt—the ones we are familiar with in today's education—but also emotions like awe and admiration and even panic or terror. Wonder has a student not look down on things through a microscope to analyse and dissect them beyond recognition. Nor does wonder make her look up to someone or something in blind admiration or shrink away from it in fear. Wonder has a student sit with the other's otherness and have a concern for it. To shake its hand as an equal so she can experience and appreciate its otherness. Something that takes time because for a student to get into a dialogue with the other's otherness, to get in resonance with it, and hear it speak back, she needs to slow down.

Wonder's strength is its ability to interrupt. By interrupting the everydayness of a student's life, wonder can sensitise her on an epistemic and existential level to what it means to know, act, and be. By interrupting solidified ways of knowing, acting, and being, wonder does open her up to endless new possibilities to connect with that

world and her Self. An indefinite and open-ended process, as what begins in wonder ends in wonder. However, open-ended interruptions are problematic in an educational system that favours accountability, predictability, and performability. Likewise, wonder's affective dimensions are tricky in an academic environment ruled by logic and reason. Wonder-full education needs to be different from education as we know it. In this thesis, therefore, I have operationalised wonder-full education as a playful practice of open-ended interruption that immerses a student in wonder-full work whilst letting wonder emerge—an education that cares. I have formulated suggestions as to the consciousness—pedagogy—that guides that practice, the practice itself and its metamodern context:

- A pedagogy of wonder shows a student that her coming into the world can take so many unexpected forms that it is essentially boundless and, therefore, should not be bounded by her teachers as to what direction it takes and what road it travels—plurality is key. A pedagogy of wonder stimulates open-mindedness, flexibility, nonconformity, autonomy, and joy. But without taking the resistance out of the educational experience. Because by making things easy we isolate a student from the world instead of helping her to come into the world. And finally, a pedagogy of wonder encourages in a student a receptive, caring disposition along with a constructive frame of mind. That is, it encourages a meaning-making as well as a meaning-receiving disposition. It asks a student to slow down and ponder the potentiality of the inconceivable and value nothingness as passages to the unthinkable instead of being rushed and pushed to fit her work and her being to preset intentions and predefined outcomes. That is, to develop the art of being unhurried and quiet so the world can lovingly and wholly reveal itself to her.
- A wonder-full practice is guided by open-ended frameworks—sets of competencies, learning outcomes, and BOKS—that show what a student should know, how she should act and whom she should become. These frameworks are fluid and ephemeral and give a student an active voice in filling in these frameworks. These frameworks are infinite in their possibilities, shapes, extensions, and relationships with other frameworks. They show that

not only knowing but also unknowing, not-knowing, and even ignorance are important for her learning. They all open up opportunities for a student to move through and be in and with the world. The wonder-full practice itself has the student not only work on problems defined by local practitioners to pique her curiosity and solve them. It also has the student work with lived experience from her own life to pique her sense of wonder and see into the meaning—the heart—of things. That is, it is a practice that mixes the epistemic with the ontological, the active dialogues with solitary contemplation, and the unplanned and the unpredictable with the programmed and the projected so the student sheds her thoughtlessness and can start thinking the thought-provoking. Finally, a wonder-full practice has the student learn and work in many communities inside and outside of her school and not only the communities we create for her but also communities that include people with whom the student does not have a shared (scientific) dialogue in common. All these communities and their members contribute towards the student's coming into the world as a unique professional and human being. The challenge for the student is to discover and recover—claim—her own authentic voice whilst letting others do the same in a community that pushes its members to develop a shared identity and domain of knowing and acting—to speak with one voice.

- A metamodern wonder-full education no longer consists of clearly defined and separated learning pathways and learning arrangements. From a metamodern perspective, knowing, acting, and being cannot be clearly separated. To add the ontological to the epistemic, I think, is not the biggest challenge we face in an education full of wonder. The bigger challenge is to let the epistemic and ontological oscillate against each other in one learning pathway. As we are conditioned to harmonise and pave over opposites and differences, letting things oscillate goes decidedly against the grain.

Wonder-full education is a new way of learning and teaching that changes the educational practice. Not in a revolutionary way but rather in an evolutionary way, as it adds an ontological paragraph to the already existing epistemic paragraph in our

educational playbook. That is not to say that wonder-full education is an easy or carefree endeavour. To come anew in the world as a student or as a teacher, for that matter, is a challenge. It pushes the student and the teacher out of their everyday mode of being and has them engage with new and potentially conflicting modes of being from which they have to constitute their own unique and authentic Selves. That is not a minor task. It can be an unsettling experience when we suddenly find ourselves alone with something new and unknown. Our first feeling might be a kind of homesickness—a longing for the familiar. Our first act might be to move against new meaning forming in our heads and hearts by preventing our old ways from becoming undone. Our challenge lies in forming the will to engage with the new and unknown in an academic setting that has a will of its own. Our challenge lies in finding a home in our homelessness and in seeing the invisible and not-seeing the visible. Our challenge lies in daring to be without in a world that does not want to do without anything. In being brave to let the potential remain in a world that is ravenous for solutions. In working with tensions instead of trying to harmonise or pave over paradoxical interruptions as it is in the gap that separates and binds these opposites that new meaning is found and by having the courage to adopt the incompatible into our learning and teaching.

Wonder-full education thus is quite the challenge for the novice student and the expert teacher. It takes an epistemological and ontological leap of courage to start believing in wonder-full education and take off into its infinite possibilities. We must have faith in our Selves and each other to start this endeavour and bring it to a good end. Barnett (2007, 2009) and Biesta (2017) highlight the importance of faith, self-confidence, and self-belief from the student's perspective. Chemi et al. (2017), for example, look at faith and self-belief from the teacher's perspective. As wonder-full education is new to a student and her teachers, it is safe to say that they all are learners and thus need faith. It starts not so much with having faith in knowledge but in having faith in our Selves—having confidence in our being. How deep runs this positive concept of our Selves? I like to compare it to Heidegger's idea of wonder. Wonder, for him, is a mood. A mood runs deeper than a disposition—"moods are the tectonic plates that make the various emotional shakes and quakes possible in

any given situation” (O’Shiel, 2017, p. 1575). A positive concept of our Selves forms the background against which dispositions can arise. A positive self-concept is a prerequisite for dispositions to emerge because to have dispositions, we need a world and a Self that already matters to us. We have to have faith—self-confidence—and do away with what we know from the past, signalling that we are not ready yet because if we postpone the moment of wonder-full education we tie the student and her teachers to the past and block the future. That is not to say that we should become over-confident or have too little confidence. Nor must we try and harmonise too much and too little into just enough confidence. That is not the metamodern path of wonder-full education. The energy that feeds the will to engage with an education full of wonder is formed in the gap that separates and binds too much and too little. What we need to do is to let these manifestations of self-belief and faith freely oscillate against each other and be aware not to marginalise one or the other in the dialogues we have with others and in the silent and solitary moments of contemplation.

### **7.3 *Wonder-full education: new beginnings***

So how to bring wonder-full education into the world and let it unfold? How to let a living practice develop from what now are only words on paper? Given the metamodern setting of an education full of wonder, I expect the ideas I propose in this thesis never to mature into a grand story. They can only be the beginning of a series of short-lived stories that show local realities and that will be told by a pluralistic crowd of storytellers in a way that is rhizomatic rather than linear and open-ended instead of closed. But a series of stories that, nevertheless, can change our educational practice if I create opportunities for these stories to be told and re-told. Action research might be a way to start this telling and re-telling of wonder-full stories.

Action research is a reflexive enquiry done by a group of practitioners. By gaining a better understanding of our practice and the context and circumstances in which we carry out our practice, we improve our practice (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Ponte,

2002). Committed to and actively involved in the research, we gather information about what participants do and the context and circumstances in which it is done. We then critically analyse and interpret the information and reflect on what participants have been doing, including our own actions, to find areas of success and shortcomings. Finally, we set out to resolve the issues and problems found, implement the new practice and evaluate the worth of the solution, which then triggers a new look-think-act cycle. Action research is democratic in the sense that it enables the participation of all involved. It is equitable as it recognises and acknowledges that all participants are of equal worth. It is liberating because it can free the participants from a repressing or impairing practice, and it is life-enhancing as it can free up the participants' full potential. However, what especially draws my attention to action research as a way to introduce an education full of wonder is that it can be seen as a conversation rather than a technique (McNiff et al., 1996)—it is a telling and re-telling of stories as a wonder-full practice is.

There are, though, challenges associated with action research. Action research mostly deals with matters of efficiency, accountability, and performability and focuses on realising targets (Newton & Burgess, 2008) which are often framed within solid matrices and rubrics (Blackberry et al., 2019). Action research is rooted in scientific curiosity, not in wonder. We only have to look at the words Williamson and Prosser (2002) use in their study—words like efficiency, targets, matrices, and mastering—to see that action research as a methodology is firmly rooted in the ways of scientific curiosity. Ways of knowing, acting, and being we want to transcend with wonder-full education. The resemblance action research has with a community of practice and the challenges that come with such a resemblance—assimilating the other's otherness into sameness—have me also rethink traditional action research. Furthermore, the fact that students are seldomly (full) partners in an action research team does not fit my intention that the story of wonder-full education should be a joint narrative of teachers and students. Therefore, I aim to expand on action research in new ways: action research that begins in a/r/tographic renderings.

A/r/tography is a research methodology characterised by an enacted—lived—inquiry that engages with the world it seeks to understand (Barney, 2019; Irwin, 2003;

Phelan & Rogoff, 2001; Schultz & Legg, 2020; Springgay et al., 2005). It mixes art, education, and research by folding the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher into the process of inquiry, hence the abbreviation a/r/t. A/r/tography is done through renderings. Renderings are performances in which the a/r/tographer together with her audience, explores (new) ways of knowing, acting, and being. Renderings create tangible opportunities to unravel (new) meaning. The explorations are not limited to lived experiences. They also can be about dreamed and not-yet-imagined experiences as long as they aim to stretch the imagination beyond the imaginable. Renderings come in many different forms. For example: bringing art and text together; organising lived encounters that produce questions that reverberate conflicting interpretations; playing with metaphors and metonymy to dislodge normalised meaning by displacing accepted signifiers; or enactments that create an emotional resonance with the ungraspable, the uncomfortable, and the difficult. A/r/tography does not follow a prescribed list of techniques, rules, or steps to follow in order to reach valid conclusions. Instead, it encourages living, fluid, adaptable, and ongoing forms of inquiry that can capture a plurality of feelings (Schultz & Legg, 2020). The challenge Springgay et al. (2005) give is to develop renderings of our own design—to go beyond the renderings they give in their work. These new renderings are best performed as fluid, open-ended and ongoing processes of inquiry and creation, entailing a posture of vulnerability and playfulness and “allowing for fluid, fantastic, visceral, supernatural, emotional, and, at times, even random knowledge” (Schultz & Legg, 2020, p. 246). Dispositions we already have become familiar with in describing a pedagogy of wonder.

A/r/tography fits the nature of a wonder-full practice and the metamodern perspective that frames it. A/r/tography favours lived experience; it focuses on meaning and does not solely rely on logic and reason; it embraces pluralism; it sees interruptions and shifts as its metonyms; it reverberates conflicting interpretations; it is playful, exploratory, and expressive. It is research that aims to create openings. It is research that intends to displace meaning. It is research that explicitly allows for departure and loss. Gaps create presence through absence—one lives the experience more intensely precisely because one feels and sees something is

missing. It offers detours around solidified ways of knowing, acting, and being to provide one with a fresh perspective. Even more so, a/r/tography is “not meant to inform but to open up to conversations and relationships” (Spencer & Paisley, 2013, p. 906). “Rather than closing spaces and options with singular or sweeping interpretations, the researcher’s role is to reject the universality of experience and open space for multiple, even contradicting, interpretations that continue to shift over time” (Schultz & Legg, 2020, p. 248). It leaves stories open to ongoing interpretation by having the researcher relinquish control over the narrative. By using performative elements that bring the artist and audience of potential artists (students and teachers) together, ar/tography is as much a process of co-constructive action as it is a process of being receptive to the otherness of the other. Moreover, expanding beyond lived experiences into dreamed experiences allows peers who do not yet have actual experiences with wonder-full education to actively take part in the renderings. To conclude, a/r/tography, as a process of emergence as well as immersion, is a promising way to take the next step in our wonder-full project.

Therefore, the next phase in the study of wonder-full education is a series of ongoing sessions with colleagues and students at the business school and university in this thesis, in which we share stories of our lived experiences with wonder and what they might mean to us. Loose and playful renderings in which the embodied and entangled processes of poietic telling and re-telling stories further our existential grounding in and understanding of wonder-full education. An a/r/tographic-inspired version of Hansen & Herholdt-Lomholdt’s practice of wonder we have met with in chapter four, which is performed to help all participants hear the call of wonder amidst their daily professional lives as teachers and students. Sessions that are not explicitly created for meaning-making by the storytellers. Sessions that are not designed to only hear the storytellers tell the specifics about their personal encounters with wonder-full events. Instead, the sessions urge the storytellers to go deeper and beyond the factual—how it felt to be immersed in the wonder-full experience. That is, sessions to help ready the storytellers “for an ontological openness and receptiveness for the wonders of and in everyday life” (Hansen, 2015, p. 222). To become aware of the unspoken and often concealed moments of



wonder in their ordinary and everyday life at university that have the potential to disrupt and dismantle single stories (Adichie, 2014). The idea is that these renderings will inspire colleagues and students to form action research groups to tackle wonder-full education in their own programmes whilst ongoing renderings, in which the different groups tell and re-tell stories about the progress of their research, keep energising the innovation process.

Earlier in this thesis, I expressed my belief that wonder-full education would raise some eyebrows at the business school in this thesis. Colleagues at the school are mostly professionals from the business community who started teaching to share their passion for business and help students become successful business people themselves. Because many of them are not primarily being schooled in pedagogics and didactics, I had them down as not being interested in something as philosophic as wonder. The opposite turns out to be true. Could this be the result of their own education being built on the ideas of Bildung? That is, having instilled in them that one should be allowed to pursue one's feelings and dreams through a broad interaction with culture and not only with ideas and values related to one's future profession. Whether this is true or not, sharing my stories about wonder-full education has led to an ongoing dialogue in the team I work with. A dialogue that shows a vivid interest in wonder-full education whilst raising lots of questions: "What does a prolonged not-knowing imply?"; "Does slowing down mean slowing down in taking action?"; "Do discussions about lived experiences with students lead to fewer discussions about the problems that need to be solved and consequently to less output?" and; "What does wonder actually look like in a classroom setting?" Finally, sharing my stories led to a dialogue that expresses an interest in how to incorporate wonder-full education in the planned curriculum changes of the programme.

Based on this dialogue, one thing I need to do in the second phase of my wonder-full project is to revisit the literature review. Whereas I initially decided to focus on practices of wonder that show wonder-full education as an integral practice, the practices that show wonder-full education implemented in single courses and exercises become valuable. These practices can inspire colleagues who design and

implement individual courses within the curriculum to create and sustain wonder in their classrooms.

We have begun our journey—this thesis—by shaking hands, and I intend to end our journey by shaking hands on wonder-full education in the renderings yet to come. But what is the significance of such a handshake, and how might it be connected to the metamodern position I take in this thesis? In the final paragraph of this thesis, I will try to make sense of that embodied gesture that has come to represent my thoughts on the nature of wonder and wonder-full education.

#### **7.4 *Shaking hands***

I began this thesis with the image of a simple handshake. A handshake that I interpreted as a gesture embodying the will to meet, to listen, and to hear out each other's thoughts, speculations, prejudices, and angsts. An interruptive gesture that brings people face to face with the otherness of the other. A defenceless gesture that signals loss of power, privilege, and logic. A touching gesture in which we can feel the concentrated reality that resides in a wordless meeting of hands. Now that I have met the otherness of many other wonder-full thinkers, have my ideas of the meeting of hands changed?

I have learned that a handshake is more varied and complex than I presented it to be. To no great surprise, I might add. We only have to look at the different forms of handshakes we come across in our everyday lives. There we meet the handshake as a salut and as an adieu. There we feel the forceful bone-crusher, the superficial meeting of fingers, and the gentle, loving touch. Not to mention the wet handshake we are enveloped in, one that nobody seems to like. And then there are those other more exotic—at least for a sober Dutchman—forms that replace the handshake, such as the embrace, the bow, the kiss, and the veiled meeting of eyes. I have framed the handshake as a positive experience. However, the touching gesture—the handshake in all its forms and substitutions—clearly shows it can express positive and negative feelings. The term positive, therefore, needs clarification. I use the term not to exclude negative feelings. I use the term positive to signal that a

handshake has the potential to open me up to the otherness of the other and the unlimited possibilities it has in store for me to flourish in and with the world. This assumption raises the question of how we look at the one whose hand we shake. Do we, for example, look upon her in terms of the effect she has on us, or do we look upon her with a genuine interest in her otherness? And if we do, is it even possible to see her alterity?

Merleau-Ponty, whose interpretation of a handshake inspired me in the first place, takes a positive view of meeting the other's alterity (Bennington, 2008; Huth, 2018; Reynolds, 2002; Todres, 2008; Todres & Galvin, 2008, 2010). He rejects Levinas's explanation that we find in the other only what we are looking for. Levinas argues that, although we might look for the other's alterity, it is impossible to see it truly: "If we consider the other, we do so only in terms of derivative otherness that we already have prepared ourselves for" (Reynolds, 2002, p. 63). Due to our fixed and limited horizon, we cannot but turn the other's otherness into our sameness. Merleau-Ponty also rejects Sartre's view on the other's alterity. In Sartre's world, the other's alterity is "forever inaccessible and incomprehensible [as] nothing more than a freedom which transcends my freedom" (Reynolds, 2002, p. 67). Merleau-Ponty rejects Sartre's absolute alterity as it would mean accepting the other as forever inaccessible and beyond our understanding. This is a path Merleau-Ponty does not want to go down because, in doing so, we are in real danger of cutting our Selves off from a valuable source of renewal which results in an irreparable loss. Not the kind of loss I have in mind for an education full of wonder—the loss that creates new openings because we feel and see that something is missing. But a loss that closes openings for new meaning. I agree with Merleau-Ponty's objections to Sartre's view because of the plurality in thinking and being I have unearthed in this thesis. I think the other's otherness is too varied and complex in its possibilities to conclude that it will escape one entirely. Something about the otherness of the other will always lie beyond our grasp, which is a good thing. It protects the other or otherness from being totally taken over. As we realise that such a takeover is futile, the otherness and the other are safe.

Merleau-Ponty contends that the other is neither entirely beyond our comprehension nor is she utterly domesticated by our horizon of knowing, acting, and being. He argues for seeing, or rather living, the relationship between Self and the other's otherness as a chiasmic relationship (Reynolds, 2002). A metamodern relationship that Merleau-Ponty captures beautifully in the metaphor of the handshake: When we shake hands, our two hands start alternating in the function of touching and being touched. Which hand then is touching, and which hand is being touched? Our embodied being is neither found in the palm of our hand nor is it found in the palm of the hand of the other. In the intertwining of hands—in the chiasm of hands touching and being touched—our being's being becomes meaningful. It becomes meaningful in a way that neither signifies fusion—there is always a faint non-reciprocity in the shaking of hands (Bennington, 2008)—nor indicates absolute distance, as it will always be possible to find reciprocity in the shaking of hands. A simple handshake is meaningful beyond the theoretical—it is far richer and more specific than an abstraction ever can be (Fielding, 2011; Torres, 2008).

Merleau-Ponty's chiasmic and ever-changing relationship of hands touching mirrors the essence of what I have come to understand as metamodern wonder-full education. That is to let the otherness of the other surprise us as much as it surprises the other herself. To meet in unprecedented ways, to be a copy without an original, even if the result may seem silly or stupid, as long as it is a serious attempt at our being in and with the world. The infinity of wonder rests in the palm of our hands. Imagine what happens if our palms meet.

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