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Wonder: Temporality and Educational Value

Anders Schinkel*

Abstract

This paper argues that wonder's temporality and temperament help explain its educational value; and that to some extent its educational value is closely connected with its temporality and its temperament. Much of ordinary life, including education (in the common, descriptive sense of the term) has a temporality that is at odds with care-full attention to the world and allows us little time to think and reflect on the meaning of things or our own actions. Wonder interrupts that stream; it arrests our attention, lets us dwell with things, gives us pause for thought. It thus facilitates truly educational experiences that transform our outlook on the world, and whose temporality falsifies the idea of learning as a linear, additive process.

Keywords: *time; education; phenomenology; Richard Peters.*

1. Introduction

Education – whether primary, secondary, or higher education – is today commonly conceived of and structured as a roughly linear cumulative process. Learning targets are set, activities are designed that are expected to enable students to meet those targets, tests are designed in alignment with the targets and activities, and when the test results indicate that the targets have been met, the process moves to new targets, that build on the previous ones like bricks in a wall.[1] The temporality of this process, designed for optimal efficiency, is chronological and linear; there may be 'flashbacks' in the form of rehearsal of previously treated subject matter, but this is merely to prevent memory lapses that would threaten the cumulative, directional process – in no way does it interfere with or challenge its temporal structure.

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1 For analyses of how this relates to the neoliberal paradigm in education and politics, and to the economization of education, see for instance d'Agnese (2020) and Gillies (2019); in relation to wonder see Trotman (2014).

Students' motivation to learn is a central concern in this system. Setting – and communicating – learning targets with students is part of its motivational strategy: students are expected to be more motivated to learn something when they know why they have to learn it. 'Intrinsic motivation' is the Holy Grail of education, but in most educational institutions it indeed remains as elusive a goal as the mythical Holy Grail itself. Students' interests and curiosity seldom align strongly with the curriculum.

A potential source of interest and curiosity is *wonder*. Many teachers have entered their profession at least in part because they were driven by wonder about (some aspect of) the world and/or by wonder about children – and many subject teachers hope that their wonder about the subject they care so much about will prove contagious and light the spark of wonder in their students. But wonder sits uncomfortably in a curriculum designed in the way I sketched above, and part of the reason why this is so is wonder's temporality – which to a great extent also defines its temperament.

Wonder – conceived of as a type of experience in a receptive mode of consciousness in which we experience something as 'other', as puzzling or mysterious, yet as worthy of our attention for its own sake – relates to time in multiple ways. Firstly, experiences of wonder *interrupt* 'normal', linear, chronological time, and are therefore at odds with planning. Secondly, wonder also *requires* time, in the sense that it is unlikely to arise as long as one is immersed in activity structured by chronological time, and more likely to occur in time left 'empty'. Thirdly, experiences of wonder have a *different temporality* from our everyday experience of the world; they play out (phenomenologically) in an extended present that includes past experience (*durée*), and as such offer an important counterpoint to chronological time. Fourthly, wonder can be *evoked* by time-experiences, by the experience of deep time or by the 'historical sensation' of contact with the past. Fifthly, time is a perennial *object* of philosophical wonder. This paper will begin with an example of the fourth relation, but will mainly be concerned with the first three relations, with particular emphasis on the third.

This paper investigates the implications of wonder's temporality and temperament for education. In order to assess wonder's educational value, we need to revive the distinction between a descriptive and a normative sense of 'education', and dare to embrace a qualitative concept of education and what makes a process or experience educational that focuses on *what happens in students' minds*. Using such a concept of education we can see that the educational value of wonder has everything to do with its temporality, and specifically with a) the occurrence of transformative moments of deep awareness, and b) experience-based temporal interweaving that ignores or runs counter to chronological time. Before I delve deeper into wonder's temporality and temperament, therefore, I will briefly outline the normative conception of education we require.

A standard use of the term 'education' today – perhaps its most common usage – is as a synonym for schooling or, even more broadly, all forms of formal education from kindergarten to university. Understood in this descriptive way, 'education' lumps together a great variety of places (institutions) where people are brought together or come together specifically in order to learn. But the term is largely indifferent with regard to the quality of the 'learning' that actually occurs there. A normative sense of education emphasizes that quality. On a normative interpretation of the term, education is something that can and *should* happen in schools, but by no means always occurs there, and can and does also occur outside of schools. Education in this sense is only weakly related to earning good grades in school, because one can get good grades without achieving any significant understanding, as long as one has the ability to cram one's head full of 'inert ideas', "ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations" (Whitehead, 1962: 1-2). Richard Peters explained this idea as that knowledge should "characterize [a person's] way of looking at things rather than be hived off" as well as "involve the kind of commitment that comes from being on the inside of a form of thought and awareness" (Peters, 1970: 31). Education can be deemed successful – or activities can be considered educational – when they lead to an enhanced understanding of the world, that is, when what is 'learned' does not remain an isolated intellectual fact or set of facts, but becomes integrated with one's previous knowledge and understanding so that it can modify (or confirm) one's outlook. Crucially, this involves a sense that what is learned is *about* the world. This may seem trivial, but it is not. Much 'learning' that goes on in school involves committing text to memory. Even if this entails an understanding of the meaning of the words, and of connections between things discussed on page 1 and things discussed on page 29, what is often lacking is a felt connection with the world beyond the book. Such knowledge and understanding remain entirely abstract (abstracted from the real world) and therefore inert. From an educational point of view it is far better to take in 'incorrect' propositions about the world that actually draw one's attention to the world, enabling one (in principle) to put those propositions to the test, than to process 'correct' propositions that remain forever in splendid isolation from any active perspective on the world. In short, education (in the normative sense in which I use the term) involves an opening up of the world to those educated, and a corresponding opening up of their minds and hearts to the world.

In what follows I first analyze wonder's temporality and temperament, and then reflect on wonder's educational value, in particular in so far as this relates to its temporality and temperament. The paper concludes by reflecting on the implications of the above for 'dispositional' wonder, which would seem to be of particular educational value, but is temporally even more complex than 'momentary' wonder.

2. Wonder: temporality and temperament

As a boy I was mightily interested in medieval knights and castles (and I still like to visit – and dwell in – old castles or their ruins). One time my parents took me to see castle De Haar (near Utrecht, the Netherlands), an impressive medieval castle, significantly restored and 'enhanced' in medieval revival style in the late nineteenth-century, where we joined a group tour. At some point during the tour our guide picked up a large, rust-stained – in fact, as he explained, blood-stained – sword, asking whether there was someone among the children who wanted to hold it. I volunteered, and had some trouble keeping the long (it wasn't much shorter than me), heavy sword upright. I studied the sword in fascination, while the guide explained that in combat heads had been severed with this sword. My fascination undoubtedly – and perhaps regrettably – had to do in part with the violence that the sword and its history embodied. But another part came from the experience of 'touching' history: I believe I was experiencing what Johan Huizinga famously called the 'historical sensation'. Huizinga used this term to describe 'a feeling of immediate contact with the past', a sensation 'as deep as the purest enjoyment of art', "an almost ecstatic sensation of no longer being myself, of overflowing into the world around me, of touching the essence of things, of through history experiencing the truth" (Huizinga, 1948: 566, cited in English translation in Kossman, 1973: 368). The 'historical sensation' is understood by Huizinga not as a sudden insight or intellectual discovery, but an intuitive and vague, yet very real, form of contact, 'like going into another sphere':

> The object of this feeling is not people as individuals nor human life or human thoughts. It is hardly an image which our mind forms or experiences. If it takes on a form at all this remains composite and vague: an *Ahnung* of streets, houses, fields as well as sounds and colours or people moving or being moved. There is in this manner of contact with the past the absolute conviction of reality and truth … The historical sensation is not the sensation of living the past again but of understanding the world as one does when listening to music. (Huizinga, 1950: 71, cited in English translation in Kossman, 1973: 369)

Typical of the historical sensation is that you transcend a 'mere' intellectual knowledge or understanding of (some aspect of) the past; suddenly the past becomes intensely real, though paradoxically without gaining sharp definition. Tangible objects often facilitate this experience. And it clearly involves being momentarily taken out of the present, or experiencing something close to a mystical fusion of past and present.

It is difficult to say whether what Huizinga understood by the historical sensation is equivalent to, or an instance of, the experience of wonder; and I cannot say for sure that I experienced wonder that time (though it seems likely). But at any rate, firstly, there are strong similarities between the his-

torical sensation and the experience of wonder; and secondly, such experiences of 'contact' with the past almost invariably evoke wonder in me *now* – giving the lie, incidentally, to the idea that the sense of wonder inevitably dims as one grows older. Perhaps this is because it has become *more* incredible to me (though not literally, of course) that the 'worlds' which objects such as the sword stem from and symbolize were as real once as mine is to me today; perhaps also because I now have a greater sense of the *contingency* of the world – things could so easily have been different.

I have defined wonder elsewhere as an experience – or a mode of consciousness, a way of being aware of the world – in which we experience that which we perceive or are contemplating as in some way strange, beyond our understanding, yet worthy of our attention for its own sake, and in which our attention takes the form of an open, receptive stance (Schinkel, 2020b: 46).[2] Wonder is neither purely cognitive or intellectual, nor purely affective; it is 'object-centred', and one's attention is 'arrested' by the object of wonder (its intentional object, not necessarily a physical object); it is strongly receptive (as opposed to active, willed exercises in concentration, thinking, or imagining); it entails an intensification of the present, an extraordinary fullness or vividness of experience; it entails also a sense of 'psychic distance' (Parsons, 1969: 87) from its object, a sense of being an observer; and it involves an activation of the imagination – a play of the imagination, an attempt to somehow order (intellectually or aesthetically) what remains as yet beyond one's grasp. Apart from these characteristics which wonder shares, to a greater or lesser extent, with the historical sensation, wonder also involves an epistemic element in the form of a sense of puzzlement, mystery, surprise, or perplexity and a concomitant awareness of *not*-understanding; in connection with this also the experience of a 'meaning gap' (but also, often, a sense of a new, deeper or more comprehensive meaning just beyond the horizon); and an openness or indeterminateness: the attitude to take towards the object of wonder is not yet wholly decided.

Experiencing wonder involves *staying with* or *dwelling with* the object of wonder, something that not only takes time, but also takes the wonderer *out of (chronological) time*. Compare this dwelling with the object of wonder with these two situations: 1) You are on a school trip, visiting a castle, and you are tired, hungry, and bored. You see a mounted harness, then another, and another, and another. You see sword after sword after sword. Your eyes dart over the information signs but you take nothing in.

2 Like several other authors I also distinguish between two types of wonder, which I called inquisitive and deep or contemplative wonder; my definition of the latter is a slight modification of the definition of wonder given here, to accommodate that deep wonder involves an attunement to mystery, and experiencing things as deeply other or mysterious (Schinkel, 2020b: 46-47). I also emphasize that the distinction should not be reified, however (Ibid: 35-36). For the purposes of this paper I will leave the distinction aside and speak simply of 'wonder'; it will be clear from my examples of wonder in what category they would fall.

2) You are rehearsing for an exam about the European Middle Ages, so you are reading and rereading parts of your history textbook about the three estates, feudalism, and famous battles, like the battle of Agincourt. You memorize everything (concepts, dates, even pictures) well – you are taking it all in – and you make sure you are able to explain in outline how the medieval social and political system worked. In both examples you are likely to be well aware of – possibly even too aware of – time: the clock is ticking too slowly, in the first example, or too fast, in the second. This is reinforced by the temporal background of both situations, which will also form the backdrop of one's experience; in the first example the temporal background is formed by the time schedule of the school trip (dinner is the next item on the schedule), in the second it is constituted by the temporal order of the curriculum, which dictates which subject matter has to be mastered when.

Wonder is not the *only* type of experience that takes you out of chronological time. Experiences of flow do so as well, and so do many intense emotional experiences; and if you are engrossed in a book or a game, you also lose all sense of time. But wonder (as I will argue in section 4) is particularly valuable from an educational point of view, and therefore it is worth looking at wonder's temporality – and its related temperament – a bit more closely. Bergson's distinction between two conceptions of time ('real time' and 'measurable time') is helpful here (Bergson, 2001; see also Scott, 2006), so I will briefly explain this before returning to wonder.

On the one hand we have, according to Bergson, a scientific conception of time, where time is conceived as analogous to space, as a homogeneous medium *within which* everything takes place or has its place. Time, thus conceived, is entirely abstract – also in the literal sense of being abstracted from material reality. It does not enter into the make-up or life of anything that exists, it is just a measure placed alongside it, neatly (and infinitely) divisible into successive units of equal length. On the other hand we have a notion of time as *becoming*, as *duration*. This is 'real' time, time with substance, and it enters into the constitution of everything. Nothing is conceivable without time as duration, for everything is in the process of becoming, and any 'still' we make of this, any photograph, any frozen frame, is a mere abstraction that does not and cannot capture the life of what it depicts. Scientific time – which is equivalent to what I earlier called chronological time – belongs to an external, analytical view of things; duration is time perceived from the inside, when we observe our consciousness from within, or grasp something outside of us intuitively (see also Bergson, 1961).

When we apply this distinction to, for instance, a situation where we study intensively for an exam, it is likely that we find ourselves alternating between both experiences of time. Where we succeed in concentrating on the material, losing ourselves in it, as it were, we experience (time as) duration – not from the outside, but from the inside. But since our whole situation is governed by deadlines and time schedules, i.e. by 'scientific', measurable time, we will probably look up from our work quite often to

glance at the clock, to check how much time we have left. If there is little time left, this will in turn make it more difficult for us to concentrate and to immerse ourselves in the material, leading us to study less efficiently and lose more time. This will be, I presume, a familiar conflict between chronological time and 'lived' time, and it illustrates how the former, though it can help us structure education and study, can also get in the way of it.

At any rate it should be clear from this example, as I noted before, that wonder is not necessary to break out of chronological time and experience (time as) duration. But wonder does have a special relationship with duration, or so I believe. What I would like to suggest is that experiences of wonder not only interrupt chronological time, but *also* the 'ordinary' flow of time *as duration*. Wonder may well 'strike' at a moment when we are unaware of time – i.e. living it (experiencing it internally, as duration) – and in that case it interrupts this flow as much as it would do a moment dominated by a chronological experience of time. Importantly, it also interrupts *duration governed (externally) by the dictates of chronological time*. Wonder takes us out of a chronological experience of time, also out of duration enframed by planning, deadlines, et cetera, replacing this with its own duration. And wonder's duration has the special character that it *makes us aware of* the 'enduring' character of time. I do not mean this in an explicit, cognitive sense, but rather in the sense that part of the quality of the experience of wonder is that we *feel* it as an extended present; this is connected with the (inarticulate) sense of observing something or being witness to something special that is part of the phenomenology of wonder, and both are probably related to the fact that wonder is a state of heightened awareness in general (see Hadzigeorgiou, 2020: 204) – a state we might also metaphorically describe in terms of an intense luminosity. In wonder we are therefore *temporarily* 'removed' from chronological time *much more radically* than in situations in which we are simply caught up in whatever we are doing. We may 'lose' ourselves in wonder, but never entirely.[3] We forget our plans and goals, anything we might want from whatever triggered our wonder or has become the object of wonder, and anything that might foreground our self (Hepburn, 1980: 14; Nussbaum, 2001: 54); but our being there, our wondering, is felt along with the wonder-full. As a result, we do not just *live* duration, but also *feel* that we are doing so, and are thus able to experience the contrast with chronological time.

This contrast is enhanced by another aspect of the temporality of wonder, an aspect related to its 'object'. Wonder ultimately pertains to the mystery *that* something is, and that it is as it is – that is to say it highlights the mystery of something's presence 'now', appearing for you, and with that also its embeddedness in the flow of time, of becoming (see Malpas, n.d.). Wonder is an experience of contingency, of the non-necessity and in that sense miraculousness of things, and this has an inescapable temporal

3 We may be entirely *absorbed* in the experience, but my point is that the experience *includes* a sense of ourselves-in-relation.

aspect, a quality of temporal depth. This becomes most clearly defined in cosmic wonder, in which we view the world 'sub specie aeternitatis' (see Vasalou, 2015: 154ff.; Vasalou, 2020).

Closely connected with wonder's temporality is its temperament. Emotionally wonder is quiet, slow, and calm; though it may be intense and powerful, it is not a 'hot' emotional state. Compared to active, seeking curiosity it is patient and receptive.[4] In wonder we 'sit with' or 'dwell with' things (Hansen, 2011: 68; Hepburn, 1980: 4). Sometimes we are 'immobilized' (physically and lingually) – when we are 'wonderstruck'. But on the other hand "there is what seems an equally appropriate image of a kind of mental restlessness – of a mind wandering, uncertain of its bearings" (Lloyd, 2018: 16). To some extent these contrasting images can be harmonized in the idea of wonder as a 'pause in thought' that is also a 'pause for thought' (Lloyd, 2018: ch. 1 and 41ff.). But we should also acknowledge that experiences of wonder can differ phenomenologically, and that whereas in some the mind's or the imagination's attempts to somehow grasp the ungraspable is a significant aspect, in others it is virtually absent. In either case the wonderer 'stands back' at a distance that might be called a respectful distance, and is stopped in her tracks. The experience of having come to a halt is there, regardless of whether the mind is at rest or restless. Whereas our stream of consciousness flows (often randomly) from one thing to the next and in our activities we often move from one goal to the next, spending only so much time with and attention on things as the needs of the moment demand, in wonder we dwell with things, we do not glance over them, do not just identify them and categorize them according to its utilitarian value, but we *see* them – and this takes (its) time, and therefore feels like an escape from time.

A final point to notice is that both wonder's temporality and its temperament are connected with a 'zooming out' – again most conspicuously in cosmic wonder, but not just there – that tends to be accompanied by a re-evaluation of the importance of things.[5] Because we are drawn out of, and disconnected from, the 'normal' context in which things and activities have their meaning and value, in wonder we often come to re-evaluate their importance. Wonder, therefore, relativizes or raises questions about the sense of importance – and, often, urgency – attached to the things that in everyday life successively demand our attention, things

4 See the nice example of a professor's musings on this, cited in Hansen (2011: 68): For me the difference between wonder and curiosity has something to do with tempo. When I am curious I am a kind of uneasy and restless. Wonder is slower. Where curiosity is about getting answers to some questions, like 'How is this connected?' – I think wonder is more like… [long pause] …that it will always be about how it relates to me in one way or the other. Or me and 'it'…".

5 See again the discussion of the topos of cosmic flight in Vasalou (2015: 154ff.). See also Gallagher *et al.* (2015: 33): 'perspectival shift', a notion with moral content: 'a dawning of a moral sense (…) a sense that can lead to a renewed responsibility towards other'.

sacralized discursively in 'deadlines', 'targets', and distinguished from things that are a 'waste of time'. This is not to say that wonder gives us a *true* or objective perspective on the value or importance of things; but it can help us regain a sense of perspective that we lost as a result of excessive 'zooming *in*' or absorption in our activities.

3. Wonder's educational value

Generally speaking, wonder is educationally valuable, 1) because it draws our attention to the world and (re)awakens or sustains our interest in the world; 2) because it makes us vividly aware of the limits of our understanding; and 3) because it stimulates us to imagine alternative possibilities – whether alternative explanations of phenomena, alternative ways of looking at things, or alternative ways to do things, individually or collectively. But to what extent is its educational value related to its temporality and temperament? And can we say more about wonder's educational value when we consider it from that perspective?

As we have seen wonder is experienced as a slowing down, even a sudden coming to a halt; it interrupts chronological time as well as as any flow we are caught up in. We are removed from the hustle and the din of daily life, from our interest-based, goal-oriented appraisal of the meaning and significance of things. Instead we are left alone with something wonder-full – whether it is a beautiful or a disturbing mystery or both, we must attend to it and forget all the rest. There is probably no other type of experience that so strongly makes us *attend* to the world as wonder does; that makes us attend to the world, moreover, in a way that brackets our preconceptions and opens our minds to different perspectives. Wonder is an experience of *otherness*, in which both the 'specialness' and ultimate elusiveness or incomprehensibility (or incomplete comprehensibility) of the world sink in. This metaphor – 'sinking in' – expresses an important part of wonder's educational value rather well, capturing also the fact that education is both a cognitive *and* an affective matter. And it is closely connected with wonder's temporality: it is only when we stop rushing, when we exit the stream, that things can sink in.

I began the previous section with the example of a historical object. (Deep) historical objects – swords, fossils – are examples of objects that relatively easily evoke wonder. For educational purposes, they are useful *triggers* of wonder; but in most cases they will not themselves be the *object* of wonder. You hold a sword, feel its weight and its coldness, the gritty sharpness of its edges; its history is preserved in dents and scratches, stains and stories. The object can (sometimes) accomplish what bare 'knowledge' (knowledge *that* medieval kings depended for their military power on armed and armoured cavalry, knowledge *that* knights used lances and swords) cannot: a sense of the *reality* of this past, a *felt awareness* of it (Hadzigeorgiou, 2020: 204). This is likely

to be, or to involve, an experience of wonder, combining an element of admiration (admiring wonder) with an element of puzzlement (Ibid.: 189; see also Di Paolantonio, 2019)[6].

Following that example in the previous section I asked you to imagine two situations, one in which 'you take nothing in', and one in which 'you take it all in'. From an educational perspective it might seem that the two situations could not be further apart – and there *is* a real difference, of course – but if the knowledge and understanding gained in the second situation are not accompanied by a form of *realization* in which their reality sinks in they remain second-hand and in a certain sense superficial – they remain 'inert'. This realization may pertain, as in the historical sensation, to the past reality that is abstractly represented in the textbook, or to the reality of historical reconstruction (the process that led to the narrative in the textbook), or both; and the one opens the door to the other.

We need to *pause* to 'really' or 'truly' see (or hear, or feel), and this is part of what makes wonder so important. A pupil or student is in this regard not much different in his or her relation to the world than a doctor is in relation to his or her patient: both need to take time to watch and listen, and this begins with time to calm down, to get rid of distractions, so as to be able to focus in a receptive manner – to be *there* with and for the other, to *care*. To call forth this type of attention is a contemplative exercise; when we are wonderstruck we are saved the effort and thrown into that contemplative mode of consciousness. As Di Paolantonio (2019: 218) notes, following Heidegger, curiosity differs from wonder with regard to this contemplative and caring quality: "Curiosity (…) has a particular frenzied *temporality*, which does not allow us to sustain any *care* or engagement with the world".

In wonder, then, we can come to a fuller awareness, a deeper understanding, whether of new or of familiar things. Moreover, its receptive, care-full quality links wonder to intellectual virtues such as open-mindedness, conscientiousness and intellectual humility, which means that experiences of wonder may have a more lasting influence on education as well. But another educationally important implication of wonder's bringing us back to the world has to do with the element of puzzlement that characterizes wonder. This epistemic element comes with a strong awareness of the relative, provisional, and imperfect nature of one's understanding of the world. In wonder we notice that things were not as we thought they were, or that we did not fully understand them after all. Wonder defamiliarizes the familiar, showing us that their familiarity was in a sense an illusion – or, at any rate, that

6 Yannis Hadzigeorgiou's empirical work contains some great examples of this quality of depth and feeling that wonder adds to pre-existing knowledge. E.g.: "Although I knew that gravity was the weakest of all forces and I could see that in the numbers on that table about the relative strengths of all forces in nature, it was after that simple and very easy-to-do experiment that I understood it better". (Hadzigeorgiou, 2012; 2020: 205).

the concomitant sense of knowing or understanding them was exaggerated at best.[7] Wonder thus makes us wonder, it makes us stop and think; as Di Paolantonio (2019) argues, it 'guards against thoughtlessness'.

This holds not just on the side of students, but also that of teachers. As educators, "armed with technical-rational jargon and approaches for assessing and determining student performance (…) we can get pretty thoughtless about what we do to each other through an education" (Di Paolantonio, 2019: 224). In that jargon and in those assessment, approaches are embodied a linear conception of time: students are to be pushed onwards and upwards, and we are to prevent stagnation. We assess students according to which learning targets they have attained, and this tells us (or so we delude ourselves) how far they still have to go. When we look at our pupils or students in wonder, however, we see them *now*, but this now is, in a sense, an eternity (d'Agnese, 2020: 28). When a teacher enters the classroom for the first time of the year (s)he sees the pupils "crouching at the desks, indiscriminately flung together, the misshapen and the well-proportioned, animal faces, empty faces, and noble faces in indiscriminate confusion, like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all" (Buber, 2002: 112). We do not *know* them, and should not presume to know them, nor what they are capable of, after a month or a year. Our judgements should remain provisional, open to revision. When educators approach their students with wonder, education is much more likely to occur – "It is not the educational intention but it is the meeting which is educationally fruitful" (Ibid.: 127).

Despite educators' and education researchers' efforts to annul this feature, education remains inherently unpredictable. It is not simply a cumulative or additive process, but entails a *transformation* of perspective. This is not just an external observation; students' *feel* it, they notice that something has changed, that *they* have changed (see the examples in Hadzigeorgiou's work, for which see footnote 6 above). Teachers may prepare the ground for such epiphanic experiences, but they cannot make them happen – and nor can students themselves. For example, a student may have read and heard many times that the sun is *a* sun, one of trillions of such objects in the universe, but the reality of this fact may never have sunk in; until one day, triggered perhaps by a teacher's well-chosen words, or by the sudden sensation of warmth on her skin as the sun reaches her desk, it suddenly does – and from that moment on the sun is never just the sun anymore, and her outlook on the world and herself has changed (if ever so slightly, since the demands of ordinary life are of course quick to reimpose themselves, and these ask for a different mode of attention)[8].

Experiences of wonder such as those falsify linear conceptions of learning – conceptions that may have few advocates among those who studied

7 See Egan (2014: 153, 157); Willmott (2018: 24) calls 'defamiliarization' wonder's 'central knowledge effect'.

8 I have adapted this example from Schinkel (2020a).

the temporality of learning, but still underlie common approaches to teaching and assessment. For in such moments a restructuring and integration of 'information' processed at various moments takes place. Things you had 'known' for a long time suddenly become meaningful, or lose their meaning. You see something 'as if for the first time', but much of the significance of the experience – much of its educational value – lies precisely in seeing something *as if* for the first time, while you are *not* seeing it for the first time. This 'temporal interweaving' – the reactivation and synthesis of earlier experiences, their coming to significance now, in a gap in time – contributes greatly to wonder's educational value. The interweaving takes place on another level as well, because in wonder 'objects' are lifted out of their ordinary chronological context and perceived at the same time as eternal wholes *and* as evanescent instances of the process of becoming – and yet we remain at some level aware of what they 'normally' are. Similarly, once we have left the mode of consciousness we call wonder and returned to our 'normal' perception of things, we remain at some level aware of what they looked like in wonder – and this leaves the world a more interesting place, more worth getting to know and understand (to the extent that we can).

4. Concluding remarks

I have argued in the above that wonder's temporality and temperament help explain its educational value; and that to some extent its educational value is closely connected with its temporality and its temperament. Much of ordinary life, including education (in the common, descriptive sense of the term) has a temporality that is at odds with care-full attention to the world and allows us little time to think and reflect on the meaning of things or our own actions. Wonder interrupts that stream; it arrests our attention, lets us dwell with things, gives us pause for thought. It thus facilitates truly educational experiences that transform our outlook on the world, and whose temporality falsifies the idea of learning as a linear, additive process.

The transformation of outlook effected in and through wonder is educationally valuable – it may even be considered the hallmark of education (as Richard Peters did) – but does it last? Is the transformation likely to be permanent? It seems to me that we can hardly expect a single experience of wonder to have large and lasting effects – though at the same time we should be careful not to assume a simple quantitative and additive effect ourselves, since experiences of wonder may differ greatly in intensity and significance. Still, from an educational point of view it seems that *dispositional* wonder would be particularly valuable – a wonder that is not constantly as intense as the occasional experiences of wonder that have been the focus of this paper, but nevertheless constitutes an enduring modification of one's awareness, a permanent tone in the background that may at any moment come to the fore. As I argued elsewhere, when wonder becomes dispositional,

> this means that everything comes to be seen, as it were, under the sign of the possible. It is, mysteriously, but might not have been – while in another sense it was perhaps inevitable. This fosters a richer understanding, since it extends the connections we dimly perceive between things into the deep past, into the deep future, and into the realm of unrealized possibilities. (Schinkel, 2020b: 122)

If this makes sense, then dispositional wonder entails a *permanent* interweaving of different temporalities: on the one hand chronological time and duration governed by the clock (as when we are absorbed in our daily work), and on the other hand wonder's duration; a temporally ordered stream of events and a gap in time; a fleeting now and an eternal now. We need, somehow, to integrate or combine our ordinary perception of the world with our wondering perception of it, but this involves an impossible blending of temporalities. What we are left with is a reality that is like a misprinted postage stamp, in which two differently coloured but otherwise identical pictures that were supposed to blend perfectly into one are slightly misaligned. The downside of having our outlook on the world transformed by wonder is that we may never feel entirely at home again in the everyday world; but the educational value of this may well be worth this sacrifice. It renders the world inherently interesting, makes us permanently aware of the limitations of our knowledge and understanding of the forever 'other' that we encounter, and stimulates a creative search for alternative ways of thinking and acting when we find ourselves at a dead end. It may also sensitize us to the fact that the world *is not our home*, but that we are merely passing guests, and that we cannot behave in the world as we please.

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