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# MARC SPOELDERS: HOMO PEDAGOGICUS, A CONTRIBUTOR

## TO EDUCATION FOR WISDOM AND HARMONY

### A Search for and a Message of Wisdom and Harmony

*Fernand Vandamme & Anne-Marie Cotton*

#### **Abstract**

Wisdom and harmony must be approached from a pedagogical perspective as multi-layered, dynamic processes. We will discuss these different layers from the perspective of Marc Spoelders' commitment and dedication during his so fruitful professional career.

We particularly want to look how Marc Spoelders was a pedagogical innovator and motor in stimulating dynamic harmony in these multi-layered processes.

#### **Samenvatting**

Wijsheid en harmonie dienen te worden benaderd vanuit een pedagogisch perspectief als multi-gelaagde, dynamische processen. We zullen deze verschillende lagen vanuit het perspectief van Marc Spoelders' inzet en toewijding gedurende zijn zo vruchtbare professionele carrière, bespreken.

Hier wordt nader bekeken hoe Marc Spoelders als pedagogische vernieuwer en motor de dynamische harmonie in deze multi-gelaagde processen heeft weten te stimuleren.

#### **Résumé**

Sagesse et harmonie s'abordent par une perspective pédagogique conçue comme tant de processus dynamiques à couches multiples. Nous élaborerons ces étapes successives comme les abordait Marc Spoelders avec le dévouement et l'engagement qui le caractérisaient tout au long de sa fructueuse carrière professionnelle.

Nous analyserons de plus près ce qui nous permet d'établir que Marc Spoelders était un innovateur pédagogique et un moteur qui a stimulé l'harmonie dynamique entre ces différentes strates.

#### **1. Introduction**

The challenge of Pedagogy is to support people in different phases of their life cycle to help to develop themselves as individuals and as group members in their environment, to more wisdom and harmony.

Knowledge in its many forms plays an important role in this challenge. However, is knowledge as such sufficient? To what extent is wisdom more important, or harmony more relevant? Or both, wisdom and harmony?

Marc Spoelders, in his career, was the incarnation of the Pedagogue, who in his research and practice, in his training of pedagogues, has taken to heart at all levels this basic objective of pedagogy.

Important to him was the consciousness that wisdom and harmony must be approached from a pedagogical perspective as multi-layered, dynamic processes. We will discuss eight different layers from the perspective of Marc Spoelders' commitment and dedication during his so fruitful professional career. These different basic layers are the following:

1. Dynamic harmony of theory and practice.
2. Dynamic harmony between input and output processes.
3. Dynamic harmony between use of tools, language and communication for development of oneself, groups and environment, taking into view the danger of alienation through these tools.
4. Dynamic harmony between individual, group and environmental development in the several layers of competences and the integration in the several groups and ecosystems one belongs to.
5. Dynamic harmony between cooperative and protective behaviour mastering, surviving and controlling the challenges of the hypocrites or dyssocials which disrupt the social environments and destruct its basic progress and growth in the individual as well as group lifecycles.
6. Dynamic harmony between the several main types of intelligences which as well on an individual level as on a group level are vital for sound growth and development.
7. Dynamic harmony between the different processes and roles of education and learning of the actors: children, students, adults, teachers, evaluators, pedagogues.
8. Dynamic harmony between the social interactions and the digital platforms.

Let us very shortly comment the possibilities, challenges and perspectives on each of these layers of the dynamic harmonic processes characterising wisdom. We particularly want to address the role of Marc Spoelders as an innovator and motor when stimulating dynamic harmony in these multi-layered processes.

## **2. Some elaboration of the layers of the dynamic harmonic processes characterising wisdom**

### **2.1 The dynamic harmony between practice and theory**

Wisdom is always grounded in action, in practice in a specific environment. This environment can be defined, described, analysed in different ways. In “theory” development, the practical experience, the practice is generalised to more general environments.

It is obvious that the more widely applied “know how”, “know that”, “know what”, etc. have to be tested again and again, when used in a new environment, whatever minimal the change in environment is.

This cyclic aspect of knowledge development -especially on the level of wisdom in knowledge- may never be forgotten or neglected. The practice, the applied dimension, the action is and has always to be the starting point and the ultimate target. Whatever the number of intermediary stages introduced in this process, one may not forget this basic truism. Intermediary stages we are referring to are amongst others: testing, assessing, developing adequacy requirements, meta-theoretical features as aesthetics, statistical modelling, etc.

We would however stress the danger of a double jeopardy: on the one hand too much attention is paid to this meta-theoretical level, neglecting the practical environment, the actors, the wellness and wellbeing resulting from the cycle. On the other hand, theoretical activities are often granted a higher social appreciation. The ultimate aim is to be aware of a harmony between these different levels and processes of efforts, elaboration, in their very dynamic form.

From the start of his research and professional curriculum, Marc Spoelders combined practice and theory<sup>1</sup>. This is the reason why he taught in primary school to test innovations and traditional teaching in arithmetic and language etc. in order to ameliorate the theoretical perspectives and elaborations. The experimental primary school founded by Prof. J. Verheyen therefore offered him the unique opportunity to generate and evaluate in an ‘ecological’ valid way pedagogical knowledge on a daily base. Marc Spoelders experienced this unique setting bringing the combination of teacher and researcher in one single person. He conceived this constructivist approach as closest to the optimal experimental research. He described the team working in the experimental primary school as “plural amphibian”: mastering both, empirical and nomological research, and education. For him practise and applied linguistics and pedagogics were the natural strategies as well as the culmination for fundamental research. The cyclical process of theory and practice was a normal target. He claimed that pedagogical practise cannot be without theory, however it hosts implicit theory as

well as common insights emanating from education science. He together with his collaborators has released a lot of paradigm shifts in research inspired by the problems, and experiences based on the action field of teachers and educators. In this view the role of statistics were considered by him as important and relevant tools, which needed to be based and calibrated in the practical field. He was strongly opposed to statistical methods which are derailed into aesthetic impressive elaborations, for its own sake. Quantitative approaches are useful and necessary on condition that they are based, calibrated and returned into qualitative views and experiences.

Educators are often paying a lot of attention to students with learning difficulties. These views are frequently linked with problems of behaviour and intellectual dysfunctions. One major problem which is mostly neglected is the situation where the dysfunction is related to the “highly talented “children and the many unpleasant and disturbing cultural, social and dysfunctional impact this has for such children, and even adults. In his target of harmony between theory and practice, it is interesting to refer here to Marc Spoelers’ studies and work related to the “talented” children. A focus which gave him the opportunity to address a public highly involved in this area on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the German association for talented children, Pifficus, co-founded by his colleague Renate Eichhorn in November 2011, and to highlight the importance of practice based theory. Reflections the reader will find as a Coda in this issue dedicated to fundamental pedagogy.

## **2.2 The dynamic harmony between input and output processes (f.i. reading and writing)**

The challenges of this specific harmony are enormous. Each of us has to pay attention to his environment, to observe, to test, to try out, to read, to analyse, to understand, to theorise about our live, our work, about the solutions, the changes, the constructions and destructions which are going on...

As important as being open to listen, to look etc. to our environments, our colleagues, our adversaries, our enemies, we must also try to elaborate our own understanding, try to make syntheses, to formulate solutions, to try out new approaches, to explain it to others, to try to convince others: to talk and write about our own views, perspectives, futures, to construct our own future and our own environment in dialogue with the other.

The basic principle consists of the continuous flow of interaction on the long term between both processes of input and output to get harmonised, as harmonisation is not realised at once. Harmonisation is a non-ending cyclic process, nurtured by new challenges, new attempts, avoiding the appearance or even the insurgence of deep and irrevocable destruction and chaos. If nevertheless chaos is created, it has to be identified and dealt with at its early emergence as an isolated intermediary stage for realising higher level of harmony.

Marc Spoelers in his own work, but also in the support of his collaborators and students paid a lot of attention to reading and writing: their acquisition and their application. He was very consciously taking care of the challenges in harmonizing the efforts (a) for recognition: the required concentration for listening, reading, getting acquainted to the ideas, work, views, innovations etc. generated by others, and (b) for production: oral, written, and conceptual: elaborating new tools, new tests, new exercises. For sure, it is wise when developing new ideas, to look at and be inspired by the solutions of others. Still, it is vital to elaborate own views, intuitions, perspectives. The potential inputs are infinite. Therefore one needs to dare to elaborate own output based on the personal experiences, even when grounded in others’ input. Marc always reminded to remain humble as “*we all stand on the shoulders of our predecessors*”, but he challenged to be as genuine as possible as he was allergic to re-production as illustrated by the cartoon: “*10 articles, a pair of scissors, some glue and Bob's your uncle, the 11th is done!*” (see p.).

In respect to his view, the ultimate goal is learning and mastering the skills to realise both: inputs as well as outputs, through third party delegation. Marc stressed the ambiguity of this co-creation process: respecting the autonomy, creativity, and freedom of this third party, being his collaborators, alumni or students, but still having

some control and carry some responsibility on the quality and the quantity of both the input and output processes. This dimension will be addressed and developed in the second issue of *Scientia Paedagogica Experimentalis* dedicated to literacy acquisition.

### **2.3 Dynamic harmony between processes involving the use of tools, language and communication**

Wisdom has an important layer consisting of communication processes. We can differentiate or elaborate the communication processes with or through tools, with or through language, with or through non language symbols. In and through these communication processes, we change ourselves, our relations and interrelations with the other actors, and our physical, social and psychological worlds.

Again at each level, individual, social, and environmental, we have to be aware of the ubiquitous necessity to realise and keep a minimal level of dynamic harmony between these several communication processes. We always need to get above a minimum dynamic threshold of harmony.

In self-education and education of children, adults, seniors (60+) or even nestors (75+), we have to be aware of the threat of alienation. As for example, when a didactic (f.i. the use of tools as computer games) gets autonomic, instead of being one out the wide range of learning strategies, it could become a fetish, an enslaving, a compulsive dominant autonomous process. When this happens, it inevitably leads to the destruction of the individual or the group where this type of communication process has started.

In education and learning in general we need to be alert to avoid that the use of tools is triggered in an autonomous dominant isolated process. Only dynamic harmony between the large scale of tools, language and communication strategies can lead to success, progress and wellbeing. Moreover we have to be aware of the relative autonomy of the production processes and of the interpretation processes of communication, of language and even of the use of tools in the narrow sense<sup>ii</sup>.

We are accustomed to neglect this relative autonomy and the specific learning life cycle of each of the interpretative and productive processes of use, application, development, elaboration, fine tuning of each of these. As a matter of fact, the autonomy is relative in the sense that although in the long run one is able to recognize the language, the communication, the use of tools, and one is able to produce, there will always be an important gap between both. Those who are involved in education and training can better be conscious of this gap in order to intervene and help individuals or groups to harmonize their interpretative as well as productive skills for language, communication and use of tools in the narrow sense.

Marc Spoelders often referred to metaphors to explain complex concepts. Let us follow his steps and make a simple parallel with sports to illustrate the fundamental difference between the interpretative versus the productive skills of use of tools. A trainer, a coach of a football team, of a boxer, etc... is meant to perfectly understand, interpret, and evaluate the productive skills of his trainees, although his/her own production skill and quality are much lower.

In his whole career, Marc Spoelders paid a lot of attention to the critical and conscious use of tools in the narrow and the large sense. He welcomed new initiatives but kept in mind they also could lead to possible abuses and negative impact when used in too one-sided, uncritical way, especially when they tend to become a fashion (e.g. computer games) which strongly overshadows the positive potential by the extreme one-sided use, maximizing its negative effects.

Marc has initiated, stimulated, elaborated a lot of research on the use of tools and above all about the harmonic integration of different tool-uses and tool-skills, language skills and communication skills. To illustrate the way he embraced this approach, we refer to his reflections related to the use of Jules, a doll used by teachers in kindergarten. He developed three reasons why using this doll equals to apply a “developing education” approach (‘ontwikkelend onderwijs’), which means you as a teacher don’t follow the children’s development but you offer situational settings helping and motivating these children to realise more compared to the result they would have obtained without (alone). A doll is an ideal tool to achieve this aim, although it remains a tool only. What matters is not the tool, but the interaction with the adult able to create such a learning environment. The doll itself doesn’t act: it

needs the action of the teacher animating it. The doll becomes the prolongation of the teacher. Secondly, such a class-doll answers to the learning path of young children: by ritualised imitation. The doll closes the gap between adults and children: it makes it possible to tell and explain within the imaginary world generated by the doll. Finally, the doll also is part of the leading activity of young children: playing. The class-doll perfectly fits into this development stage. However Marc fully supported teachers to deal their experience and knowledge with “Jules the doll”, he was supporting the idea of using a ‘doll’ at school, not the brand ‘Jules’ and its marketing derivatives. He warned for the danger of generalising isolated positive effects to an entire branded strategy referring to the fact that the penetration level of a method does not necessarily imply a quality benchmark. He also focussed on the contextualisation of the didactic tools: what is successful in a classroom will not automatically be duplicated at home. A class-doll is not a business model generating benefits for a company, it is an educative tool which does not need to answer to aesthetic criteria. As Marc explained once: *“Take Grand Dad’s sock, fill it and stitch two buttons as eyes; what matters is that the doll itself wets and sometimes disobeys to facilitate the identification”*. He rejected the mass-productive education methods which kill the teachers’ inspiration and creativity and make them dependent by taking their confidence in their own competences. Quoting Marc: *“Why would we all be eating the same pancakes from the supermarket while home-made pancakes taste better?”*

Indeed Marc Spoelders was very well aware of the relative autonomy of interpretative and productive use of tools, language and communication skills in particular. He therefore emphasised the harmonic development of both: interpretation and production. Marc also reflected on the non-verbal communication as a tool for supporting, strengthening, ameliorating, innovating the educative as well as learning processes.

#### **2.4 Dynamic harmony between individual, group and environmental development.**

Wisdom requires the ability to consider own actions and their consequences, in relation to the dynamic harmonious development of oneself: the individual. Still each individual is a part of several groups (e.g. family). Moreover each individual and each group he/she belongs to are part of an ecological environment. Amending one of these building blocks has repercussions on the others. This means that one has always to try to keep in mind the harmonic development of each of these. The individual may not be sacrificed for the group, or for the development of the environment, nor vice versa.

Moreover one has to take care, to consider each of these constituents in view of their lifecycle. The role, the perspective, the care, etc. of f.i. an individual as a baby, as an adult or as a nestor in view of a dynamic harmonic development of the whole is fundamentally different.

Marc Spoelders had the special gift to map the individual as well as the social dimension of development, growth, education, learning and blooming. He considered the individual as the beginning and the final phase of each development. However, Marc also was aware and he stressed that the group, the social environment -with its different stratifications- is not only but a background, an environment, as it also is the beginning and the final phase of each stage. The metaphor of the individual rose which doesn’t exist without the rose-branch, and vice versa, which on its turn is necessary to create the rose-bush, and we can carry on until the rose-garden, perfectly illustrates this dynamic harmony between the individual and the group.

#### **2.5 Dynamic harmony between cooperative and protective behaviour in view of handling hypocrites or dyssocials**

In all cultures, past or present, we see a lot of attention was paid in their myths to handle hypocrites or dyssocials. We find that back in the myths and stories of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, in Indo European, American Indian, Islamic, Hebrew, Christian cultures, etc. (F. Vandamme, 2013).

Hypocrites, also called dyssocials, are individuals (sometimes groups) who simulate kind to very kind, friendly, social behaviour. This pseudo friendly social behaviour is a cover-up for attempts of destruction of other actors’, groups’ or even cultures’ ideals or aims.

Although they pretend to promote the others' ideals or aims, they actually try in a hidden fashion to make these impossible or even to destruct their constructions. They seem to promote peace (e.g.), while in fact they do their utmost to promote war, etc. Therefore, technically, hypocrites can be called "dysocials" referring to the Greek term "dys", which means "difficult". In short, they are "difficult social people" that is contrary to what they look like. For this reason, although wisdom is a corner stone in cooperating with others, it is as crucial never to forget or to lose the protective, defensive dimensions of action to avoid that dysocials or hypocrites exploit that cooperation in order to destruct the future of the intended cooperative ideal or aim. This is why it is necessary to find a dynamic harmony between cooperative behaviour and protective, defensive behaviour. Both types of behaviour are vital for survival. Also wisdom is characterised to an important degree by this harmonic equilibrium between both behaviours. Anyway handling hypocrites/ dysocials is an ultimate challenge for and a characteristic layer of wisdom.

In his professional life, as so many others, Marc Spoelders has been deeply influenced by his struggle with and against dysocials. As a matter of fact, he has been thoroughly hindered and obstructed in his academic career by dysocials. Indeed, over the years, several of his initiatives, even his structural achievements for realising better and more efficient pedagogical research, practices, teaching and training, have systematically met attempts to destruction and annihilation. The same dysocials have managed to hamper the development of his normal professional curriculum. They have also hampered the professional growth and progression of his collaborators. Even a long tradition of University pedagogical innovation and leadership has been halted. Nevertheless he went on, on all levels of activities: be it in his research, publications, national and international participation in congresses, colloquia as participant, be it as organizer to display his skills, views and contributing to dynamic harmony. To his students, to his colleagues, to his collaborators he has always given the example not to give in. The future will teach us if through his numerous students and collaborators dispersed over the world his ideas and teaching will survive and be blossoming again. It is a challenge for all of us.

Contrary to most people, who in their confrontation with dysocials, be it a dean, a member of the board of directors, etc., very anxiously support their oppressor, execute what they expect he/she wants from them, make stronger the position, the influence, the impact of the hypocrite who will faster and faster rise in the hierarchic pyramid and even more efficiently been able to do his destructive work, Marc always acted, reacted, defended his views and others without hesitation but wisely. As he ironically stated: "*the lighter they are, the higher they climb in the hierarchy of middle management*" or, as illustrated by the cartoon: "*The lighter the head, the easier the cap fits*" (see p.).

Marc Spoelders is one of these rare people, who openly dared to battle the hypocrites. He exemplified that it is our duty and it is possible to act and react against hypocrites/dysocials. Even if on the short term it means loss and destruction of good institutions, successful structures, valuable collaborators. Not undertaking any action would make the destruction by the dysocial hypocrites only worse as it would be deeper involved into the structures of the institutions.... Although the personal damages to his career have been severe, he has managed as a person, as a teacher, as an educator, as a professor, as a researcher to prove to his students, collaborators and colleagues that it is worth to stay authentic and to do what is needed to withstand the dysocials and their destructions and harassments. We can learn from his life path that the most constructive attitude is to develop wisdom for structural immunity against hypocrites/dysocials. Even better is it to be able to transform dysocials to constructive actors<sup>iii</sup>.

## **2.6 The dynamic harmony between the several main types of intelligences**

There are a lot of different types of intelligences and to Marc Spoelders, there was not something as a hierarchy between them. He fully agreed with the principle that the dynamic harmonic integration and use of the different types of intelligences is crucial for wisdom.

In general when one talks about intelligence, one has in mind rational intelligence. This is rather a meta-theoretical notion related to efficiency of thought and /or action. The same is true for storing intelligence (efficiency in use of memory, spare tools etc.) There are however a lot of more formative and creative intelligences. We can refer here to intelligences related to empowering and use with energy, with emotion, with sexuality, with care...even with action. Other types of intelligences are related to religion, in the etymological meaning of religion. It concerns transcendence and integration in the meaning of becoming independent of the immediate time and place, needs and challenges, in order to raise quality...

A short characterisation of the main types of intelligences follows. This overview starts with the empowering intelligences, followed by the meta-intelligences, and ending with supra-intelligences of transcendence and integration.

### **Caring intelligence**

First, we pay attention to caring intelligence which plays an important role in many phases of development. Caring intelligence is the basis for trust in each other, for feeling secure. Hence it is a basis for self-confidence and willingness to open up to others, for the future.

Caring intelligence includes attention to the other, to the environment, to the needs of each, in the short and long run. It not only includes attention, perception, and feeling but also action and looking ahead to what needs to be completed, or how things are developing. It foresees possible dangers and threats, focuses again and again on anything and everything with unlimited willingness to take action... Caring intelligence is an ongoing challenge...

### **Energetic intelligence**

Energetic intelligence is the basis of life both at micro level for monitoring, controlling the major energetic power flow, as well as at macro level, in order to sustain life and regenerate it. Energetic intelligence is whether or not cyclic, whether or not periodical: it is interactive. It sometimes is symbolically represented by the four elements (better known as the four basic energetic processes): fire, wind, water and earth. Energetic intelligence also constitutes the core of processes, interactive with the other intelligences in their many forms.

Energetic intelligence is in some approaches to culture extensively treated and described. In contemporary Western approaches, relatively little attention is paid to energetic intelligence, except from a limited information technical perspective... However we should first of all be attentive for the complex processes of energy within the individual and his integration, interaction and involvement of many individual energetic processes of energetic intelligence within the complex cultural-energetic intelligences of the group. More specifically, it is important to pay attention how the macro-energetic intelligence can stimulate and / or break the individual energetic complexes. How it leads to collective and individual energetic intelligent prosperity or on the contrary to mortification.

We frequently see how in complex macro energetic conglomerations, local deployment, expansion and self-sacrifice are generated to enable global harmony and progress. This then has an impact on the development and shaping of the other types of intelligences. This is not only true for humans but also for many other species of animals, mammals, as well as insects, birds...

We like to further examine this matter, considering its fundamental importance. Very striking and important is that a person sometimes is humbly active in the background. However, if for some reason in the culture, organization of the group he / she becomes responsible, we see that he / she will emerge as a highly intelligent leader with insight and efficiency. The energetic macro process can lead to above normal intelligence and efficiency. Others, however, are brought to sub-intelligence, to become rather passive actors, followers, who make the overall survival and the growth of the community possible. Of course, this may be accompanied by differentiation and specialization. One can be very actively and intelligently busy in certain phases, tasks and become a blind follower in other tasks / phases... This energetic intelligence can lead to conflict reduction and strengthen creation of unity / harmony which may be a prerequisite for local or global creativity and improvisation, at least temporarily...

In many cultures, in some religions, energetic intelligence is associated with the holy, the sacred, the sacrum: sacral bone or tail bone (the bone consists of the union of the five vertebrae of the lower part of the spine). According to some, the sacral bone is so named, because that part of the animal sacrifice was



offered to the spirits. Another way to say the same thing probably is that this portion of the skeleton protects the genital organs of male and female: the egg and sperm. This sacral bone has the suggestive shape of a dagger. It has also the shape of the tree of life. It is a symbol of immortality, resurrection, recreation, energy (Buddhist, Arabic "Aldabara", Hebrew "Luz": that is what is hidden, i.e. the core, the seed. It also refers to the light). The base of the spine, the sacrum, symbolized for example by the evergreen pine, decorated and enhanced with light, supports, complements and strengthens the power of the sun. It participates and contributes to the divine in the many senses and meanings of the word.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence determines the first and fastest response or reaction to external and internal inputs, it also influences on both external and internal developments and dysfunctions. Emotional intelligence is a first positive as well as negative "warning system" on events. It is therefore a first reactor and contributor to and for balanced internal or external integration of forces and interactivities. Emotional intelligence is frequently symbolized by the "stomach", even though it is usually a total physical expression, perception, detection and signal system. Besides stomach reaction, sweating, vomiting, etc. are signals from the emotional intelligence.

As both a positive and negative warning system, emotional intelligence can inhibit processes, strengthen, slower, accelerate, increase or decrease the attraction or repulsion...

Emotional intelligence also plays an important role for therapeutic interventions as well as for the correcting of partial, total or global dysfunctions.

### **Sexual intelligence**

The symbol for sexual intelligence is the skin: the largest organ of the body. Central to the skin is the feeling, the sensory pleasure arisen from and targeting the sexual pleasures in a weaker or a stronger degree. For the sexual intelligence the other senses are important too: sight, hearing, taste. Sexual intelligence uses the different types of physical feelings, sensations, and expected sensations, seasoned with the other forms of type of intelligence.

Not only do we have a very large variety of possible physical sensations. Also, the place of the body that is approached or treated is important. Even though it is true that the 'alpha and omega', or 'dildum and yoni', or put another way, 'the penis and vagina' or their equivalents 'flower and stamen' can / will play an important role in certain phases. Equally important in sexual intelligence is the ability to give, but also to receive feelings, sensations in the broad perspectives of the processes. Managing to dose the surrender to feelings, but also to maximize them in function of the collective unity, harmony, transcendent unification in its multiple forms of intelligence and symbols, is one of the challenges of the sexual intelligence.

### **Action intelligence**

The action intelligence is related to rituals. Ritualization is crucial to uplift action and experience above arbitrariness and chance. Rites are filters that purify actions without letting them degenerate into absolute norms, standards or essences.

The ritualization of action leads on the one side to generalization. On the other side by confronting actions with other actors, we get interiorisation but also objectification and more explicitness. This has an impact on internal physical, psychological and emotional forces and processes. Action and especially its ritualization is thus the way par excellence for better harmonious development, living together, for individual and collective well-being and tranquillity.

### **Rational intelligence**

A more supportive intelligence is rational intelligence. It is rooted in the emotions and the emotional intelligence. In addition it causes a lot of emotions... Yet, rational intelligence is an important factor in support and maintenance, as long as it is not too dominant or at least is not too long dominant. After all, rational intelligence without any embedding in emotional and other intelligences is sterile. This becomes clear when we understand the rational intelligence.

Rational intelligence deals with efficiency, economy and thrift in employing resources and means to achieve goals. In other words, it deals with optimization when using resources. The choice of the goals or the targets as well as the acceptability of the chosen means, are beyond the rationality and are provided by the many other intelligences.

Rationality is important, to the extent that economy or thrift and efficiency to achieve goals with present acceptable means, does have relevance for the stability and safe growth and development of the partners, stakeholders (family in the narrow and broad sense) and their environment.

### **Storing intelligence**

This intelligence concerns persistence, maintaining reserves, making the bridge between past, present and future. The storing, protective intelligence is vital for both micro and macro systems. The wealth, the luxury, the price of what is saved is not so important. Much more important is their value, their relevance for the existing, the relevance as a testimony of the past. The storing intelligence is also crucial for the continuity, appreciation, relevance, concern for the present with an eye also for a secure future with expansion and growth. The latter not for the growth itself which would indeed be destructive, nor for pseudo splendour, pride or deliberate self-destruction! That is why preservation and storing intelligence, although this should never be a goal in itself, should, is and remains very important.

### **Transcendent and integrating intelligences**

The transcendent and the integrating intelligences are cornerstones for action, wellness, well-being and living together. Usually, one takes into account all other types of intelligences except the two above-mentioned. Yet, take transcendent intelligence first. It influences in all processes where one transcends oneself and his group, for the sake of the utility, the good, the future of the other individuals and the group. Sacrifice, self-transcending, self-development for the other, the others, the universe, for all that one appreciates and loves. We are as individuals and as a group capable to make incredible efforts and actions of sacrifice and self-transcendence.

The transcendent intelligence allows to transcend the immediate in time and space. The transcendent intelligence is a purifying intelligence. This transcendence may take many forms but remains aware of the world here and now although through its exceeding of the *hic et nunc*, the here and now, it also is the basis for creativity, for encouraging diversity, but most of all for unification over and through the diversity, transcending the day and the night, the action and the rest. Transcendent intelligence encourages, nourishes, points at and harmonizes with the other forms of intelligence. The transcendent intelligence gives expression to the different ways to experience the concept of 'together' -knowing together, feeling together, learning together, wanting together, doing together...- in short to connect 'together' in beauty, strength and unity.

Along with the transcendent intelligence, integrating intelligence culminate above all intelligences. Creativity, strategy, self-development, self-sacrifice, compassion, understanding, analysis, labour, suffering,... they all happen for the sake of integration, harmony, unity. The integrating intelligence is the intelligence whereby synthesis, integration, harmony can be created. If this integrating intelligence is not dynamic, it is not. These processes are always in movement, always evolving, yet always improving in vitality, in depth, in level: harmony, synthesis, integration of the first, second and  $n^{\text{th}}$  level, in theory and in practice.

The harmonizing and integrating intelligence has to do with the art to recover and improve quality and quantity of harmony. This requires important, intense interaction and action at every level, at any place, at any time, in any dimension in this globally harmonizing and unifying perspective, without losing sight of the diversity and local uniqueness, growth, dynamics and evolution. It even stimulates them.

In his personal life and in his interaction with his students, collaborators, friends and relatives, Marc Spoelders exemplified how important it is to develop these several types of intelligences and at the same time to be aware of the relevance of stimulating the harmony in applying, exploiting and using the different types of intelligences. He illustrated this by his personal activities and life. But also in stimulating research, as well as educative and learning practices. He paid a lot of attention to the challenges linked to the development of this harmony but also to a better understanding, testing,

measuring of the different skills related to these different types of intelligences. He dedicated a lot of energy to stimulate attention and endeavours to develop them. His students and all those who participated in the numerous projects he initiated and conducted will for sure remember his pregnant first question: “*Why?*”: *Why approaching this issue this way? Why having this posture toward this specific problem? Why taking this source for granted? Why being supportive for this concept?...* Followed by the second step: “*Did you ever think of...?*”. Marc obliged everyone who dared to start the dialogue to engage in reflective thinking, to a critical perspective, to an in-depth approach. His dialogical strategy aimed to address the different types of intelligence in order to reinforce ones opinion.

He often referred to the tactic he used to oblige himself to think twice: “*Take your pipe, fill it with non-flavoured tobacco, light your pipe: by the time you can start smoking, your ideas will be well structured, you will be able to master your emotions, your answer will be rationally constructed, and you will even be able to add a flavour of irony which will give you the advantage on the opponent who had to wait...*”

## **2.7 The dynamic harmonic integration of different types of education and learning roles as a basic challenge of wisdom**

Each individual has different roles. In the on-going education learning process, we identify the role of “child”, “learner”, “educator”, “teacher”, “assessor”, “controller of the educative processes”, “certification processor”, “analyst”, “researcher of education and learning”, etc. It is crucial that we very consciously execute several of these roles. By executing and fulfilling them we do ameliorate our understanding and enhance the performance of these roles and their underlying processes. At the same time, we have to take care that these several roles can be developed in a dynamic harmony.

Marc Spoelers had a lot of feeling for the variability of the educative roles, and the relevance of shifting from one to another role. He focused on implementing and developing as well implicitly as explicitly strategies for stimulating, motivating and colouring the educative and learning strategies with role management. Based on his solid theoretical expertise and rich experience of the praxis, he emphasised the role of education in academia. He fully enjoyed teaching, inviting his students to actively take part in the learning process. He decided not to immobilise knowledge in a handbook, but deliberately shared articles, book chapters and books with them, challenging their reflective thoughts with his incomparable tone of voice and building together a unique body of knowledge. Education and learning had to have this level of intimacy and trust in order to reach the ultimate pedagogical aim: the learner surpassing the master.

Beginning of October 2013, by defining educational discourse, Marc emphasised for the last time the fact that a teacher’s role continuously evolves. He defined that by performing specific activities, teachers become “teaching” students. This implies a high degree of responsibility which, when the educational discourse becomes dialogical, is shared by teacher and students, the latter becoming more and more aware of their own responsibility with regard to their learning. Educational dialogue *pur sang* resembles to a certain degree, a *colloque singulier* among partners who share knowledge about the rules of the game, the purpose, and the modalities. The term “educational discourse” refers to the specific formal and informal social-communicative practices which are activated when it comes to give an answer “in real time” to the educational question *par excellence*, i.e. what content is worthwhile to be transmitted and what is the best way to do so? (Cotton & Spoelers, 2014).

## **2.8 The dynamic harmonising of the direct social interaction and the digital supported social media**

The last ten years we noticed accelerated progress and growth concerning the technical supports for social interaction through the internet and its digital platforms. The latter perhaps becoming a threat for real life social interaction. For sure, technical support for social interaction is as old as mankind. We already find it within the eldest forms of civilisation (cf. Stonehenge). Still, the danger of dominance of the technical supported social interaction with its external control and guidance, and its commercial exploitation has never been that influential.

This means that the dynamic harmonisation of real life social interaction and technical supported social interaction becomes more challenging and hard to achieve although it is crucial for the progress of wisdom.

Marc Spoelders has paid a lot of attention on the paradox of the technical supported social media. He was aware and conscious of both: on one hand its enormous potential, on the other hand its dangerous power for “suffocating” the growth and the development of the individual. But more worse however is the danger of eliminating, substituting social physical interaction (touch, feelings and physical warmth) by electronic pseudo social interaction. This electronic interaction creates rather loneliness and the danger of getting lost in a large pseudo electronic social world. Or at least it enlarges the danger of substituting physical social interaction by electronic interaction. This can lead to weakening the physical interaction, to a narrowing of contacts, to isolation without physical contact but with a pseudo or imagined other...

As Marc defined the aim of the educational discourse to become dialogical, shared by teacher and students, the question may be raised what the impact is of ‘outsourcing’ educational activities to the digitalised surface. Is not one of the characteristics of digital media “...their ability to remove, or at least rearrange, the boundaries between public and private spaces, affecting our lives not so much through content, but rather by changing the ‘situational geography’ of social life?” (Papacharissi, 2009) Are educational policies and practices not fundamentally challenged by social media to encourage and sustain civil discourse related to critical social and personal issues? The study into the effects on educational discourse, on the learning results and teaching practices of ‘New Information Technologies’ has become an ever expanding field of investigation. The chorus of ‘Pros’ has recently been challenged by some prominent ‘Cons’ (e.g. Nicholas Carr, *The shallows. What the Internet is doing to our brains*; Manfred Spitzer, *Digitale Demenz. Wie wir und unsere Kinder um den Verstand bringen*). Will they remain calling in a desert of digital diehards? Or will they stimulate the practitioners to find out for themselves, within their definition of what good teaching should be, what added value which digital platforms might offer, when, and how?

For genuine educational discourse it is hard to survive in the social media arena. It is evident that educational discourse to fulfil what it is expected to do -,i.e. make for effective teaching and deep learning-, needs a firm basis of real life basis educational contexts, settings, and people willing to assume their responsibilities. (Cotton & Spoelders, 2014)

### 3. Conclusion

Wisdom has always been very important for surviving and creating, protecting and safeguarding happiness, wellbeing and most importantly humane societies and lifestyles. Today however the challenges and threats are enormous. The number of people on this planet earth is growing very fast. We are depleting, destructing our stocks and supplies. Moreover by our wars and clashes of ideas, ideals, targets and cultural and economic divergences we are very quickly destroying our ecological environments. One of the dominant technological cultures today is the Indo-European Culture. In the Indo-European Culture we have a very dominant, strong anti-harmonic view with the strong destructive slogan:” Who is not with me, is against me”.

This is fundamentally in opposition to the view in favour of dynamic harmonic development. Nevertheless only Wisdom with its multiple layers of search and targeting dynamic harmony, can help us to find and create a future for humanity and for most of the ecological systems.

According to Marc Spoelders, the field of pedagogy needs an in-depth resourcing which implies to strongly and satisfactory define its ‘*Grundlagen*’ or legitimacy. The leading value should emanate from the

ongoing expansion of pedagogy as a science and from faculties of pedagogy, and not from isolated individuals.

We are confident that the impact of Marc Spoelders teaching, research, practices, studies, publications and above all his wisdom and personal harmony will have an enduring influence and stimulate educational and pedagogic amelioration. Be it that his collaborators and students are scattered and distributed over the whole world and perhaps isolated in his own mother institute. Nevertheless they will give new strength and stimulate blossoming to Marc Spoelders harmonic wisdom in the pedagogic, educational and learning fields.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> An inconvenient truth which appeared the first day he started to teach Dutch literature to 15 years old boys in a professional secondary school: confronted to their down to earth reactions following his declamatory reading of a poem (“*Bloedworst en kaas*”, J.H. Speenhof), he realised the didactic tools he was taught could not be identically applied to all kind of learners.

<sup>ii</sup> With tools in the narrow sense we mean tools like dolls, computers, I-pads etc. used as didactic material, as support in general. Tools in the large sense include the use of languages (common language, specialized languages, children language etc. / oral and written).

<sup>iii</sup> To illustrate Marc’s strong belief in true meritocracy and his disdain for mediocrity, we quote the French philosopher Michel Onfray: « *A l’opposé du machiavélien pour lequel peu importent les moyens, pourvu que les fins triomphent, le magnifique accorde autant d’importance au trajet qu’au but, au chemin qu’au havre. Car il n’y a pas de voie d’accès médiocre qui conduise à l’excellence* ».  
« *Or l’idée de grandeur fait peur, aujourd’hui, en vertu de la vulgate démocratique qui préfère la médiocrité assurée pour tout le monde plutôt qu’un ordre permettant l’excellence, donc justifiant son opposé, la petitesse. (...) mais il n’est pire excès que celui du milieu* ».  
(M. Onfray, 1993, p. 133, *ibid.* p. 131).