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SPECIAL THEME SYMPOSIUM

Rudolf Steiner and the Psychological Therapies – Part II

Guest editors – Richard House and John Lees

Robert Sardello on therapeutic awareness

John Lees on client as healer and clinical activist

Michael Lipson on transforming emotion

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Contents

Self & Society: International Journal for Humanistic Psychology, 46 (1), 2018

Rudolf Steiner and the Psychological Therapies – Part II

4 Editorial - *David Kalisch* & *Gillian Proctor*

5 Guest Editorial – *Richard House* & *John Lees*

7 *Robert Sardello* – 'Therapeutic awareness'

13 *John Lees* – 'The client as healer and clinical activist in anthroposophic psychotherapy' [peer-reviewed paper]

21 *Michael Lipson* – 'Thoughts too deep for tears: the transformation of emotion into feeling'

27 *Ad Dekkers, Henriette Dekkers* & *John Lees* – 'Anthroposophy as an enrichment of psychotherapy'

30 *Richard House* – 'Steiner, therapy, he(art): Ensconcing the heart at the centre of "beyond-modernity" therapeutic work'

37 *Karin Jarman* & *Pauline Marksteiner* – 'Oasis: a support group for living creatively'

44 'Psychophonetics, Rudolf Steiner and the Psychological Therapies – Part II' – *Robin Steele* interviewed by *Richard House*

56 **Retro review-interview:** 'Steiner meets Winnicott: The "Mind Object" and the case against prematurity' – *Paul Atkinson* in interview-conversation with *Richard House*

Book reviews:

60 *John Lees* reviews *The Counsellor... as if Soul and Spirit Matter: Inspirations from Anthroposophy* by William Bento, Edmund Knighton, Roberta Nelson & David Tresemer

62 *Richard House* reviews *A Psychology of Human Dignity* by Ad Dekkers

65 *Martin Large* reviews *Post-formal Education: A Philosophy for Complex Futures* by Jennifer M. Gidley

68 **Student Pages:** *Karen Bateson* & *Clare Whitworth*

Independent articles:

71 *Isabel Clarke* - Release the potential within spiritual crisis

75 *Thurstine Basset* – Reflections of a Survivor

78 Interview: *Rachel Freeth* & *James Davies* - Humanizing psychiatry

82 Poem: 'For Jo Berry' by *Jay Ramsay*

84 Obituary - Alix Pirani - *Peter Hawkins*

85 *Stuart's political diary*

88 *Chair's page*

Psychophonetics, Rudolf Steiner and the psychological therapies: Part II

Robin Steele, Consultant, supervisor, Psychophonetics psychotherapist (semi-retired), Melbourne, Australia, interviewed by **Richard House**, Educational Consultant and Campaigner, Stroud, UK

RH: Before picking up on some key points arising from this fascinating insight into the nature of Psychophonetics, Robin, can we just do a little conceptual ground-clearing for our readers, as there are several anthroposophical terms in your text from part 1 of this interview which will perhaps benefit from a little more elucidation for readers unfamiliar with Steiner's cosmology. Specifically, I've identified seven notions from your previous answer about which our readers might like a bit of background and/or more depth – viz.:

1 the four-fold structure of the human being
2 sheaths
3 Thinking, Feeling and Willing
4 the spiritual dynamics of cognition of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition
5 the 'I'
6 the seven life processes
7 Anthroposophical Ethics

I hope this isn't an unduly 'bean-counter' question for you, Robin, but could you just say a little more about each of these, perhaps in relation to their relevance to a holistic therapy approach.

Also, could you say something about Steiner's speech and drama course which you mentioned in part 1, and Steiner's uniquely spiritual and artistic perspective on the nature of human speech?

RS: THE FOUR-FOLD STRUCTURE OF THE HUMAN BEING: To begin with, we are more than just a physical body. Rudolf Steiner's four-fold model of the human being includes the dimensions of the **Physical body** as the form, and compared this as being in common with the minerals; the **Life or Etheric body** as the movement, fluid and life processes, the living and growing force in our being – as being in common with plants which have a physical and etheric body like us; the **Astral body** is our inner experience, sensing, desiring, instincts, our emotions; sympathies and antipathies; pain and pleasure – which we share with animals who have physical, etheric and astral bodies like us; and the 'I' or 'I am' consciousness is our self-aware, awake, reflective level of consciousness – as the unique human aspect in us.

The dimensions often called the subtle bodies in holistic approaches are what Steiner defines as the astral/sentient and the etheric/life dynamics which overlap each other, operate simultaneously and are interdependent. "Human experience is imprinted or registered in the subtle bodies that lie in-between the physical body and the mind, in the ether/life body and the astral body (the body of emotions, desires, feelings)" (Steele, 2011, p. 13). The **'I' or 'I am' consciousness**, which Steiner refers to as the ego and is eternal (this is not the same as the

Freudian ego), and which other approaches may refer to as the core Self, or our unique individual essence, can help us to heal and connect us with the transpersonal and transcendent aspects of spirit. These bodily layers, or sheaths, develop throughout our life as we continue to work through these layers with inner forces of soul and spirit (Steele, 2011).

The relationship between the physical, life, and astral bodies, and the 'I am' is described by Rudolf Steiner (1972, p. 30),

> Without the presence of the ether body, the physical body would decay. Without the illumination by the astral body, the ether body would sink into unconsciousness. In like manner the astral body would have to let the past sink, would sink, again and again, into *oblivion*, were it not for the 'ego' ['I am'] to carry this past over into the present. What death is for the physical body, and sleep for the ether body, *oblivion* is for the astral body. One might also say that *life* belongs to the ether body, consciousness to the astral body, and memory to the ego ['I am'].

THINKING, FEELING AND WILLING: In Anthroposophy, an understanding of the human being is based on understanding that our soul activities consist of thinking, feeling and willing. Rudolf Steiner describes the threefoldness as being expressed in the head and nervous system; the trunk and rhythmic system; the limbs and metabolic system. This threefold activity is expressed in thinking, feeling and willing. Rudolf Steiner describes different conditions of consciousness during our waking life, that we are awake in thinking and knowing, are in a dreaming condition in feeling, and in our will we are asleep (Steiner, 1996: Lecture 6).

From the holistic therapeutic perspective, in the normal operation of the soul Thinking, Feeling and Willing enable the 'I' to be present in our soul life, and difficulties in Thinking, Feeling, and Willing can be seen as presenting issues for psychotherapy, with the potential of them creating a higher purpose beyond presenting issues for therapy.

Psychophonetics sees this as an opportunity to activate inner reserves of soul to overcome any limitations. For instance: *Thinking* – facing self-doubt by accessing reserves of creativity and imagination, to become more orientated in Thinking; *Feeling* – by transforming any hatred or feeling of emptiness in life, by accessing reserves of love and compassion, to become more connected with inner resources; *Willing* – confronting fear, by accessing reserves of courage to become more empowered.

Doubt in thinking, hatred in feeling and fear in the will can become opportunities to experience ourselves at a deeper level, and potentially evolve higher faculties of perception. In this process, we can go deeper into our soul life to make more conscious connections with the senses, to wake up to the body and its wisdom. In psychophonetics, this is done through sensing, gesturing, visualizing and sounding. And we have to go into higher aspects of the soul to develop empathy.

IMAGINATION, INSPIRATION, AND INTUITION: Our normal senses cannot perceive the reality of another person from their own point of view. The soul needs to expand from dealing with its own personal concerns to the higher concerns of humanity. Empathy is needed as an important aspect in any relationship, especially in a meeting between a counsellor/therapist and client. The need for empathy means developing the capacity to – See me, Hear me, Know me. In doing this we have to include the evolution of three new higher perceptive capacities: Imagination (pictorial thinking), Inspiration, and Intuition. Psychophonetics engages these spiritual capacities in the faculties of developing empathy, by developing a deeper perception of ourselves. On that basis, we can evolve an inner eye, inner ear and inner knowing, making it more possible to perceive the reality of others from their own point of view.

For the counsellor/therapist, 'deep empathic

listening is an ongoing conscious development of awakening the faculties of imagination, inspiration and intuition. For me, it is also a practice of developing the heart, as love in action' (Steele, 2011, p. 47), and with a heightened attentiveness inner shifts of consciousness can occur with new possibilities emerging, allowing something new to be created. Conscious self-understanding and transformative empathy that support us to connect with each other, with imaginative thinking and heart thinking with feeling are needed for the future (cf. House's paper, this issue).

From the Psychophonetics perspective, Yehuda Tagar (2007) says that activating our imagination allows us to evolve and transform conventional thinking. In the process of activating deeper resources in Feeling we can develop inspiration, as a higher transformation of the feeling life. In the process of developing deeper resources of courage, intuition can be developed as a higher power of perception, transforming the Will.

THE LIFE PROCESSES: The life processes underlie the foundation of psychosomatic connections and thereby of all holistic therapies. However, Rudolf Steiner made the distinctions clearer for us by naming seven processes inherent in life that influence how we process our experiences – breathing, warming, nourishing, secreting, maintaining, growing and reproducing, and indicated how they can impact on our health, life and well-being (see Steiner, 1990, 1996b). In terms of adult therapy and learning, Coenraad van Houten describes in his book *Awakening the Will* (1995) how the life processes can also become available as forces for conscious soul work and change, as perceiving (observing/taking in), relating (connecting), digesting (assimilating/distinguishing), individualizing (sorting/questioning), practising (exercising) in daily life, growing/developing new faculties, and creating something new.

Or to put it in another way, these processes can be seen as polarities of *breathing in*, in how we perceive the world, through the more inward processes of taking in/observing, relating and digesting; and of *breathing out*, in how we become more creative in life, through the more outward processes of maintaining/exercising, developing faculties and creating something new, with individualizing/sorting as a mediator in-between, which can make a difference.

My longitudinal research study on clients' experience of therapeutic change shows that clients go through a number of phases in the process of change which are connected with the life/soul processes. These processes occur all the time, within a session, as well as over a longer period in the process of learning and changing, and are always inter-weaving and overlapping within us, rather than sequentially. The process of therapeutic change incorporates our ability to digest our past, present and future experiences, through these seven processes; and being aware of how these processes are working within us is important for conscious development.

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL ETHICS refers to the following seven principles that provide a spiritual context for the practical activities of Psychophonetics, and for practitioners, as a path of knowledge based upon awakening to our own humanity, and committed to the freedom of the individual as the foundation for the re-creation of community. Many of these principles are also shared by a growing number of other approaches. The following is a brief summary adapted from a more detailed version found on the website, and in my book on Psychophonetics, which also has a list of the main source of books and lectures by Steiner underlying these principles (www.psychophonetics.com.au):

1. *Inner Equipment:* Human beings are potentially equipped for the journey of their lives.
2. *Inner Guidance:* Guardianship and inner guidance are inherent to the human soul.

In practical terms, this means there are opportunities and safeguards provided in the therapeutic process for the individual's internal guardianship and internal guidance to manifest from a potential within their inner life into their conscious life.

3. *Self-Knowledge:* The client is the one who knows the meaning of their experience. Meaning is not given but is a creation of the human spirit.
4. *Teamwork:* each session is based on the teamwork of two equally important partners. The client is considered an active member of the therapeutic team.
5. *The 'I Am':* The client's 'I Am' (core Self) is to be given every possible opportunity to enter the process, to guide, to make choices, to know, to take charge (freedom of choice). All professional choices in the counselling process are governed by this principle.
6. *Higher Accountability:* a commitment and striving to review our psychological dynamics, concepts and personality, from the standpoint of our innermost spirituality, inner higher authority, rather than adherence to an imposed interpretation. This internal higher authority is of a universal nature, its interest is all human, although its presence emerges to the individual from the core of their individual humanity. Rudolf Steiner named that inner authority 'the Universal Human Being'.
7. *Seven Conditions of Personal and Spiritual Development:* Rudolf Steiner (Chapter 5 in his *Knowing higher worlds* – Steiner, 1994a) and applied in Psychophonetics:
    - Commitment to health and well-being, on all levels – developing self-care;
    - Commitment to seeing the other from their point of view – developing empathy;
    - Commitment to regard thoughts and feelings as realities – developing experience-awareness;
    - Commitment to distinguish our inner identity and truth from external realities, expectations, truths and pressures – developing Self-awareness/identity, boundaries;
    - Implementing the connection between resolution into action – developing Self responsibility;
    - Developing the feeling of Gratitude for all that we receive – developing unconditional positive regard/ gratitude;
    - The unity (integration) of all the previous six conditions – developing consistency of inner character.

These seven principles reflect, within the practical steps of the psychotherapy and group processes, the unique attitude to human potential, dignity and freedom.

Richard, you also asked me whether I could say something about Steiner's speech and drama course which I mentioned, and Steiner's uniquely spiritual and artistic perspective on the nature of human speech. Well, in 1924, Rudolf Steiner gave 19 lectures to a group of professional actors and others about the renewal of the art of speech and drama. In these lectures, he offered a spiritual path of activities with practical suggestions, activities and meditations, which lead from imagination through to inspiration and intuition. A central aspect of Steiner's suggestions to actors was about raising speech and acting to an art, based on a new awareness of the cosmic, providing an opportunity for actors/speakers to also practise their own evolution in a conscious way.

Steiner's indications in *Speech and drama* describe how to build a character from consonants and vowels, which can lead to more profound dimensions of characters, and the experience of the Word and sounds as a living, healing and creative power. The following verse by Rudolf Steiner to his

wife, Marie Steiner, captures the depth of the task:

> The Stars once spoke to the Human.
> It is world destiny that they are silent now.
> To be aware of the silence can become pain
> For the Earthly Human.
>
> But in the deepening silence
> There grows and ripens
> What the human speaks to the Stars.
> To be aware of the speaking
> Can become strength
> For the Spirit-Human.

Steiner indicated the importance of understanding the consonants and vowels. The consonants, which are related to the emanations connected to the zodiac, are expressed through the overlap between the astrality and the 'I', and are the more conscious aspect of speech. The vowels, which are related to the emanations from the planets, are expressed in the overlap between the astrality and the life-body, and are the less conscious, more feeling oriented, intimate aspects of speech. For example: Aries – V; Mercury – 'ee'; Venus– 'ah' (Steiner, 2007).

Steiner provided a way of recognizing the nature of the activity involved in the sounds by classifying them into the four elements of fire, earth, air and water. For example, the sound 'f' has a fiery quality, 'r' an airy, 'l' liquid; 'b' solid and dense. Just playing with and observing the individual sounds can inspire us artistically, and to make sounds more consciously, such as in a fiery and effective way. Since Steiner's time, Psychophonetics has developed the qualities of sound and gesture into a process that makes the expressive range of the four elements available to therapists as a guide for sound-naming gestures of a client's specific experience (Tagar, 1997; Steele, 2004, 2011).

Hearing and speaking sounds is how we first get to know the sounds, and through them we can connect with the archetype of a particular sound and its spiritual quality. For example, Ah – opening, wonder; U (oo) – narrowing, deepening; K – breaking through a barrier, cutting; mmm – nurturing; T – pointing, penetrating; D – consolidating; G – guarding, fending off; B – embracing, holding movement (Steiner, 2007, 1982; Crowley & Crowley, 1994).

Steiner referred to the first stage of exploring the sounds by sensing the energy and movement active in creating them as the *imaginative* level of cognition. To enter the activity of the sounds we need to experience the qualities of movement with our whole being so that the sounds become alive, and can create substance in the space. Steiner offered suggestions for working with sounds, gestures and the breath as a way of developing the perception of the beings who express themselves through gesture and sounds, which he saw as a spiritual path to inspiration and intuition.

The following extract gives a sense of the substance that can be created by a group of actors, The Persephone Players, who performed a play in Berlin called 'I have spoken'. William Bento reviewed it, and wrote the following:

> It was evident to me that their power came from lived experiences. It was this exceptional offering of soul substance on the part of the actors that transcended the dimensions of ordinary time and psychological dynamics. For me, as an audience member, the whole play resonated with a sense of timelessness and nuances of super-sensible consciousness. The words spoken were continual pleas to see more deeply, and to hear more earnestly. This was augmented by a sparse set with a few potent visuals and atmospheric music that was simple and singularly sustaining the inner tones of what was spoken. The silent intervals between word, tone and gesture were richly filled with the sense of a spiritual presence. I felt embraced by the entire audience, for in the last moments of the play

> there were no boundaries to be felt between actors and audience. I believe this outcome is what Rudolf Steiner hoped to achieve with his Mystery Dramas. (Bento, 2011, p. 2)

About 60 years later, the lectures on *Speech and drama* were a source of inspiration for Yehuda Tagar, who researched and further developed Steiner's indications in drama performance and also in psychotherapy. In his research, Tagar found that the consonants and vowels are forms of vibration which can echo human experience in the body similar to the vibrations of speech – when our experience is expressed in a gesture, we can find its counterpart through a specific combination of the sounds of speech. 'Our subtle bodies, etheric and astral, are like the resonance chamber of the sounds... the sounds are the hidden language of our inner life' (Tagar, 1995, p. 23).

Steiner indicated that sounds have shapes, movement and direction, and Psychophonetics sees that the shapes made by experiences in the subtle bodies echo with the shapes created in us in response to sounds. The experience of these forms or shapes of the imprinted experiences in the subtle bodies can be sensed through bodily sensation, and expressed through bodily gestures, movement and sounds. Using the sounds as an instrument of creation can also bring images through the sound.

In the therapeutic context, Psychophonetics psychotherapy starts from the person's own experience, and the sounds and sound combinations are created to match each individual's specific experience, and used in a way which that that person needs at that particular time, such as to shift, change, heal and transform. Sounds used consciously for such activities as unblocking, creating boundaries, nurturing and so on can become a living, healing and creative power, with more 'I' presence.

Marie Steiner writes in her foreword to *Speech and drama*: 'Provided our vision is free and unclouded, we shall be able to recognise in the sounds of speech our divine teachers, and to know the very breath of man as cosmic substance actively at work within him' (M. Steiner, 1960, p. 9). This gives us a challenge and a path for now and the future, to be explored more deeply. From Steiner's indications, Psychophonetics has taken up the task, as one way of reaching a wide variety of people, to make a contribution towards educating others and ourselves, in how to clear our vision to learn more about the power within sounds beyond ordinary speech, creating a more artistic feeling for sounds, as a way to practise our evolution consciously.

RH: Phew!... – I dealt you a difficult card there, Robin, and am feeling somewhat guilty! Thank you so much for such a careful and detailed reply, which will be so helpful for our non-Steiner readers (and for me, too). There are just so many avenues I'd like to explore from the deep wisdom you've shared here, but alas space constraints are upon us! Can I ask you one final question, however, and in doing that try to create a space where you might cover at least some of those avenues that I find myself wishing to pursue?

I'm wondering about paradigms of therapy, Robin, and also notions of truth and what's real (so that's an easy one, then!). Specifically, as you've so clearly articulated, Rudolf Steiner offers us a significantly different 'model of the human being' than is commonly assumed (explicitly or implicitly) and worked with in pretty much all other approaches to therapy. So, what are the implications of this, I'm wondering? For example, let's assume for a moment that Steiner's model is objectively 'true'. One might then legitimately ask, given that healing *does* presumably happen in other kinds of approaches to therapy, does this suggest that healing can happen *in spite* of the particular (faulty) model of the person that many/most therapists work with and are assuming? – for example, one could argue that any approach will likely contain something that overlaps sufficiently with what is true such that it will have at least some success therapeutically.

Or alternatively, and from a more 'postmodern' viewpoint, is Steiner's model just one plausible 'story' amongst many others, such that the success, or otherwise, of any therapy doesn't so much depend upon the accuracy of the model of the person being assumed, but more on the healing processes that are triggered in/through the work, and which perhaps transcend all models and approaches? And with regard to the many fascinating issues you've raised that I've not been able to pick up on, perhaps our readers might like to send in some letters to the editors, to which we could invite you to respond.

RS: Thank you for this challenging question, which is not so easy to answer. As there are over 400 types of therapies available and a number of different paradigms, and even with a vast amount of research showing best practices, there is not one theory that is seen as the most effective. We are therefore left with a dilemma: how do we discern what is true and real? – how do we choose which one suits us best? Clients come to therapy for all sort of reasons, depending on how they see who they are; and healing, in this respect, can happen with many approaches and at various levels of healing. In our search for truth as counsellors/therapists, we can reflect on what we do to see if what we do is helpful, and how we might improve. We can also say that healing is potentially available and accessible for everyone, as it is connected with an enduring world wisdom, with life forces giving everything its aliveness. On this basis, many approaches may be healing.

However, I would have to ask what sort of healing is taking place, and how conscious is the healing? This reminds me of an example given by David Tresemer (2015a) in which he says there are two important aspects to remember when working with energies, such as in vibrational sound work and hands-on healing. The aspects of transformation and replacement are crucial processes so as not to leave any removed unwanted energies floating around, and that the remaining space left has to be filled with something different and stronger. He asks, 'Where is the healing spirit in this?' – and concludes that the true spirit of healing is not external; it is within each of us, and can be accessed by developing our sensory awareness and a more sensitive perception. Imposing on others, and not understanding our spiritual nature fully, is not creating real healing. Finding the 'I am' as the healing spirit and inviting its presence into each and every meeting can be healing.

Contemplating the following verse by Rudolf Steiner gives us a sense of what is meant by finding the spirit of healing:

> More radiant than the sun,
> Purer than snow,
> Finer than ether, is the Self,
> the spirit of my heart.
> I am this Self
> This Self am I.[1]

If no one approach covers the whole gamut of issues that brings a client to therapy, perhaps the differing needs in people at different times have encouraged the creation of the many approaches and theories! The research literature shows that the client is actually the single, most potent contributor to the process and outcome in psychotherapy (up to 40 per cent), with relationship factors 30 per cent, placebo 15 per cent, and models/techniques 15 per cent (Duncan & Miller, 2000, pp. 57–58). What is real is that we can interfere with people's lives on the basis of a personal theory, analysing, telling people what to do based on our perception of reality, and basically becoming something for them that they should become for themselves. Whatever paradigm or approach we are aligned to, I suggest that rather than going into the details of comparing which approach may be best, the most important thing for us as counsellors/therapists is to remain true to oneself, which of course may change as we gain experience and develop. This means aligning myself with my own basic beliefs and with a theory of counselling that includes a view of the human being.

My way of being, and task as an educator and therapist, is developing capacities to create conditions within every unique relationship in which therapy/learning can happen. I share my own experience as an example. Initially, I worked as an early childhood teacher for over 20 years up to the early 1990s, and during this time I witnessed many years of dissatisfaction experienced by parents when taking their children to psychologists/counsellors; so I decided to complete a post-graduate course to become an Adlerian counsellor and parent educator. In my experience, children do not need to be given labels, and can be better supported within the Kindergarten group setting by being in an environment of care and encouragement which in itself is creating a healing/therapeutic benefit.

This worked well until I experienced a calling at 42 years of age, to become a Psychophonetics psychotherapist, feeling more aligned with that approach, especially with its focus on the whole human being as body, soul and spirit, the 'I am'; honouring the client's experience and choice; and including non-verbal (sensing, movement/gesture, visualization and sounds) and artistic media as ways of entering and communicating soul consciousness... using a language I knew well as a Kindergarten teacher. In the following 20+ years of practice and teaching in adult education, I realised that for conscious soul development, the therapeutic process also needs to be an educational learning experience!

Staying close to direct experience as a way of knowing makes sense. Steiner's model of the human being offers an expanded approach that encourages us in being open to experience, engaging in an ongoing development in self-awareness, and questioning our own sense of reality. A client gathers courage to release her voice in speaking her truth: 'We had to work through it sort of like a puzzle and then the pieces... came together and it all felt like the truth. Releasing my voice to express just myself generally was great, that clarity there too, 'cause that felt the truth' (Steele, 2005, p. 265).

Rudolf Steiner stated and gave methods in a number of his books and lectures to the seeker for truth to learn and know for themselves through their own soul experience. If we accept Steiner's approach as true, then some implications of this are that:

- a spiritual dimension is essential in making sense of the world, in the context of the evolution of human consciousness;
- we can develop deeper and richer perceptions of the whole human being, of the world around us, the cosmos, and of their inter-connectedness and inter-dependence;
- care of soul changes when we expand our view to include not only past lives, but future lives as well – connections with others take on new meaning; and
- spiritual beings are around, supporting and helping us.

In addition, Steiner provides solid ground and methods for entering the spiritual world, and how to discern between illusion and genuine spiritual experiences. The aspects described in response to the previous questions are also valid in this context. This then calls for a whole new approach to psychotherapy which prioritizes soul consciousness and the 'I am' as embodied practice.

As an exercise, ponder on Steiner's four-fold model of the human being (that I outlined briefly earlier), and observe what levels of development might be inferred by a client's presenting issues, including what their sense of self is at that point. Also, ponder on why is one hour, or 50 minutes, fixed as the time allowed for a counselling session – who decided this, and does it work when living in soul time? How does it affect our practice?

The Psychophonetics practitioner learns to be in the unknown, seeing another human being as a living mystery rather than as an object in need of fixing! Seeing the other as being body, soul and spirit, an 'I am', affects how we meet and work with each person's lived experience. Learning to observe

experience with an open mind and our senses (Steiner describes twelve senses – see Sousman, 1990/2006) can lead to them becoming gateways into a bigger picture of awareness. David Tresemer says:

> When you touch the possibilities of a larger picture you realise, 'Every moment and every thought is important. I'm in a streaming current of moving energies. There is a through-line beyond my present circumstances. My through-line is partly in this day and week and lifetime. And it goes beyond all those. I can and must ponder my next lifetime; everything I do or think or feel affects that lifetime. I can do my very best to attune to what is streaming through me, and do my best not to obstruct, nor sabotage, nor harden that sacred life streaming force. (Tresemer, 2015b, p. 142)

With this extended vision, we can ponder more deeply... – what if the relationship between the counsellor and client is part of their destiny? This creates a different focus on the person and also on their relationships; developing the qualities needed to meet others in life.

A client comments on her relationship with the counsellor: 'I like the spontaneity that has occurred while talking to you. This way of talking leaves me free which suits me as a person, I love finding out the secrets of who I am' (Steele, 2005, p. 28).

In particular, the psychosophy lectures by Steiner (1999) give a depth to understanding the soul that many other approaches don't have, as a psychology of freedom. The Psychosophy lectures on soul stand between the lectures on body and the senses, and the lectures on the spirit, the 'I am'. Soul consciousness creates a different way of being within oneself and with others. From the psychosophical perspective of soul, complaints are seen as an opportunity for initiation, not for fixing. This gives the possibility of a higher purpose behind presenting issues for psychotherapy. With a spiritual perspective, a richer picture can be gained of other approaches as well.

Psychosophy is worthy of study, especially as Steiner describes how we can become more conscious in soul by direct observation of self and others, through the experience of inner soul life. Steiner also goes into depth about how we can awaken to and strengthen our sense of *a time current coming from the future*, of becoming more conscious in the 'not-yet' as a living possibility, in not-knowing! This is where Steiner differs from those approaches to psychotherapy which focus on the past as *causal*, or look to the future in a goal-oriented way, and are trying to fix or control problems. Psychophonetics sees the human being on an initiatory path, developing soul consciousness through learning, in a process of *coming-into-being*.

We then have to question what we are doing. What if the focus on symptoms in therapy is a diversion from reality? What if these soul disturbances are calling for us to become more attentive to soul, that we actually need to develop new capacities of perception to strengthen soul, rather than focussing on symptoms?

A client discovers the importance of *being in* feeling: 'Sometimes there is a certain amount of sadness there as well as the healing, it's like I can't do anything about it, it's just like a healing in itself, just to be present with it... I don't have to do anything about it' (Steele, 2005, p. 280).

Based on accepting Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science as true and real, ideas of destiny, karma and reincarnation can be re-instated in our community in an educational and healing way. 'In this paradigm, the soul can be understood as living simultaneously in body and spirit... as – I am soul, you are soul, the world is soul – living indivisibly as a whole reality waiting to be [re-membered and] re-cognized out of the spirit' (Bento, 2007, p. 14).

Finally, beyond modalities and theories, in the spirit of the meeting between two people, and of the

evolving human being, let us re-member to keep finding our knowing afresh:

> Let no one assume that they have already found the truth. Let us seek it together as something that none of us knows. Because we can seek for it in love and peace only if we forgo the bold assumption that we alone have found it and possess it. If, however, I cannot expect that much from you, at least allow me to listen to you and to talk with you, as with people that I do not presume to know. (St Augustine, cited in Wehr, 2002, p. 260)

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to your interesting and challenging questions, and hopefully my responses are of interest to your readers.

RH: Gosh, Robin – we could go on almost indefinitely with this! – again, so many themes you've raised here that I'd like to pursue. In closing I'll just flag up several things that struck me particularly strongly in your previous answer.
You wrote that (and this is worth repeating!) –

> we can interfere with people's lives on the basis of a personal theory, analysing, telling people what to do based on our perception of reality, and basically becoming something for them *that they should become for themselves*. ...the most important thing for us as counsellors/ therapists is to remain true to oneself, which may of course change as we gain experience and develop. This means aligning myself with my own basic beliefs and with a theory of counselling that includes a view of the human being. (my italics)

I think this is a beautiful answer to my challenging question; and to make explicit and in great detail (as you have done here) what our view of the human being actually is, seems to me to be central – and in my experience, many if not most therapy/ counselling trainings just don't do this nearly sufficiently. Oh, for therapy trainings that go into approaches to human consciousness and the nature of the human being in the depth that Steiner did! (e.g. Steiner, 1994b; Neumann, 1954; Barrett, 1986; Tarnas, 1991; Grof, 1993; Tallon, 1997; Osmond, 2003; Martin, 2006; Moreland, 2014; Crisp et al., 2016 – and so on). (One wonders just how many trainees would be able to stand by, and accept, the model of the human being implicit in CBT if it were fully articulated, for example!) Indeed, perhaps a major (re-)connection of therapy with philosophy is long overdue.

We also have a fascinating biographical parallel, in that I'm also a trained (Steiner) Kindergarten teacher and early years campaigner, and worked in Steiner early childhood settings for nearly a decade – material for another interview there, perhaps!

You also wrote, 'I realised that for conscious soul development, the therapeutic process also needs to be an educational learning experience!' – I couldn't agree more, Robin, and am reminded of a paper written by my old boss Del Loewenthal and colleagues, which speaks directly to this issue (Rose et al., 2005).

And this: '...The Psychophonetics practitioner learns to be in the unknown, seeing another human being as a living mystery rather than as an object in need of fixing!' In this sense, Psychophonetics is clearly in line with most if not all transpersonal approaches, which both respect and revere the deep mystery of the soul, and which eschew psychopathologizing discourses.

And finally: '...This is where Steiner differs from those approaches to psychotherapy which focus on the past as causal, or look to the future in a goal-oriented way.' How refreshing to find an approach to therapy which seeks to transcend both the implicit causal determinism of psychodynamics and also the simplistic proceduralism of solution-focused, cognitivist approaches.

Robin, this co-created two-part interview has

been an immense pleasure for me; I've learnt a lot from you, and I'm sure our readers will have done, too. And I'm sorry if I've set off a few more hares running here that you'd like to respond to! There will be another time... Thank you again!

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Note

[1] Steiner Archive online, in 'From the Contents of Esoteric Classes', Archive No. 6912; accessed at goo.gl/iWURFr (13 September 2017).

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