

Persephone College

Background

What is Philophonetics?

Philophonetics means Love of Sounds, the sounds of human speech, consonants, vowel, their combinations and intonations. It is a rephrasing into Greek of Rudolf Steiner German term: 'Leut Stimmung', which will be translated into Sound Feelings, or Sound Moods. In the frame of reference applied here the sounds of human speech are considered as the fundamental building blocks of the human Life Body (Chi, Prahnah, Ether Body), according to Anthroposophical psychology (Psychosophy) all memories are stored. 'Philophonetics - Love of Sounds' therefore means intimate relationship to one's own storage of experience, in the same sense that Philosophy means intimate relationship to wisdom in Greek. Philophonetics therefore practically means: "methodical path of awakening to awareness of one's own experience". It facilitates for building a solid, first hand, authentic foundation of self-knowledge as the basis of knowledge of the world.

Philophonetics claims that awareness of one's own experience means two major activities:

- a) direct contact with any layer of experience by re-experiencing it, and
- b) a perspective created out of reflecting on the re-experience. This newly created perspective becomes in turn a 'window' into awareness of the surrounding world. Before that perspective is created – one is bound to project one's unowned experience into it, coloring all perceptions with one's past imprints. Objectifying one's own experience leads to the ability of observing the world objectively.

In every human being lives the potential for a full awareness of one's content of experience. Layers of absorbed experience, digested and conscious as well as indigested and unconscious - are all present in the inexhaustible storage capacity of the subtle vibration-based human Life Body. From thence these stored experiences emerge to awareness in two major ways:

- 1) either into the forefront of awareness, as sought or as spontaneous recollection; or
- 2) from the 'back' of our consciousness, by controlling emotions, imbuing feelings, triggering reactions, coloring perceptions, and influencing our thinking, without declaring to our awareness the source of the influence.

Both these ways of accessing stored experiences are passive as far as our choice making awareness is concerned. You might as well say: these are two ways in which experience is accessing our awareness, as its own 'choice', triggers and stimuli, rather than ways in which our awareness is accessing our experience at our own initiative, choice and time. We are at the mercy of our past experience most of our waking time.

If we are to establish a venue for active exploration of our experience, then the starting point for it could not be the reflective dynamics of our mind. The layers of experience which evade reflection do not exist in concepts and ready-made memories, and they cannot be accessed through thought alone. *A re-experience of our experiences is required in order to access them to consciousness.* The only mode of consciousness which is relevant to communication with our experience is one which is akin to the dynamics of

experience themselves. Experience is not stored in shadowy concepts, but in the living, vibrating dynamics of the human Life Body. They live in its constant movement, colours, shapes, dynamics which are accessible to simple bodily sensation. In the same way that we are capable of sensing hunger or pain, satisfaction or craving, vigour and fatigue, with the same mechanism we can sense the imprints of experience in the vibrational fabric of our Life Body.

For experience-awareness a sure path must be established for the accessing and the processing of these subjective sensations of the life of our soul in our bodies. Starting from sensing, the patterns, movements, shapes, vibrations and colours of the Life-Body imprints of our souls - can become accessible to us through the activities of movement, gesture, visualisations and sounds.

Philophonetics is an active, participatory, methodical and free path of accessing one's own experience at one's own choice, time for the purposes of self-knowledge, creation, healing and communication. Its major tools for the creation of direct communication between people and their own experience include: Body Awareness, Movement, Gesture, Visualisation and Sounds. All of them are ordinary, normal faculties every functioning human being possesses. On that basis Philophonetics can make the following claim:

Every human being can access at a choice every aspect of his/her experience, from any level, period, type and age, and make them completely conscious, integrating them into the growing spectrum of one's self-awareness.

Background and sources for the development of Philophonetics

Since it fell to me to form and to articulate the methodology of exploring human experience called Philophonetics, and the methodology of psychotherapy and healing called Psychophonetics counselling & psychotherapy, the story of its development is somewhat interwoven with my biography. Acknowledging this I will outline the major streams of human striving that have lead me to this creation.

In retrospect, now that this path is articulated enough to become an available path for others, and in observing on a daily basis for the past 10 years what it stimulates in people who experience it, I am aware that Philophonetics is primarily a poetic deed, the deed of becoming aware of and of naming internal realities so that the world surrounding the inner life can find in the soul its reflection. It is a path of awakening to the inner life through the outer life, and to the outer life through the inner. As such it is an echo of Steiner's definition of Anthroposophy:

“A path of knowing leading the spiritual within the human being to the spiritual in the world”

And indeed, I see Philophonetics as no more than one expression of Anthroposophy.

For me it is primarily an extension of my work with poetry, a path of transformation, creation and healing that carried me throughout my life since the age of 14: to cope with life, to grow and to heal through the creative act of forging the name for the inner reality. I found that the act of shaping consciously the dynamics of the inner life through words, movements, sculpting and sounds liberates me from their confines, while at the same time creating a bridge of knowledge into the world of which I am originally made. Poetry was an act of bridging, breathing and broadening for me. The creation of Philophonetics

became an extension of my poetry. It became a path of encouraging people to name their own reality, to do their poetic deed.

Three streams of my personal, spiritual and artistic striving lead me to the formation of Philophonetics as a methodology of human experience:

1. An attempt at self-knowledge, self-mastery of my soul forces, spiritual unfolding, and, more concretely, my desire to find a practical way of moving towards the fulfilment of the 7 conditions of spiritual development, at the foundation of the path of development laid down by Rudolf Steiner in his founding work “Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its attainment” (renamed as How to know higher worlds).
2. A practical striving to make sense of the approach to dramatic theatre as a path of awakening to the reality of human beingness. This possibility has ignited my enthusiasm and my commitment as I encountered it in my late 20’s at an Anthroposophical centre of adult education (Emerson College, Sussex, England). Yet in my further exploration of what has evolved out of his indications in the circles of his followers I had to realise that this vision was not evolving. As a frustrated but creative young man I had to embark on my own journey of exploration, experimentation and understanding of this futuristic possibility. A foundation for the future development of drama as a path of transformation and self-knowledge was laid by Steiner in his course of lectures called “Speech & Drama” in September 1924, together with the prediction that conditions at the time are not ripe for the development of this path, and a hope for future generations undertaking it when they are ready for it. I felt ready for it when I picked it up in London in 1984. It was clear to me then that what he put forward 60 years before has not yet practically started. This journey has led me to the discovery of Philophonetics.
3. Having explored the development of humanistic, existential and transpersonal approaches to human development in my youth, alongside my study of Steiner’s Spiritual Science, I came to expect a synthesis between the obviously enlightened and liberating aspects of the new psychology and the spiritual context of such striving for freedom, as it was articulated by Steiner at the dawn of the 20th century. I could not find an established path of Anthroposophically based psychology, psychotherapy and counselling among Steiner’s followers. I was recovering from a severe personal crisis in my late 20’s, and I needed such a path for myself. In Steiner’s foundation for an Anthroposophically based psychotherapy which he named Psychosophy, as well as in his critical writing about psychoanalysis, I found a starting point for the development of such a path. I found in Psychosophy, when taken in context of the rest of Steiner’s teaching, the most comprehensive, insightful and practical approach to the exploration of the human soul I have come across by then. I had to realise that, like his approach to theatre, it has hardly started. Philophonetics-Counselling became my response to this challenge.

The exploration of these indications given in Psychosophy took place at the same time as I was trying to make sense of Steiner’s approach to the development of the actor. Drama research became for me the laboratory for the practical exploration of Psychosophy; Psychosophy became for me the conceptual background, the frame of reference and the

psychological language for my research in drama. My ongoing attempt to integrate my soul life so that it becomes an expression of my spiritual being enthused and motivated my research and constantly grounded it and gave it living human reality. Together these streams converged and conflued in the formation of Philophonetics as a path of exploring human experience, self-knowledge and creation, and of Philophonetics-Counselling as a path of human transformation, healing and growth.

Psychophonetics (Philophonetics-Counselling) is the application of Philophonetics to counselling & psychotherapy. It has evolved during the 90's in Australia, primarily in Adelaide and Melbourne. It combines counselling, artistic expression, body-awareness & self-observation as parts of the therapeutic process of which the client is in charge, being the sole source of information, observation, choices, direction and action. It is an innovative process which specializes in the modes of non-verbal communication which enables people to go beyond the limitations of verbal expression and access directly feelings, emotions, reactive patterns, old defences & new potentials, embedded in the deep layers of the living body. It can be applied effectively to a wide range of issues in the areas of personal development, relationships, emotional, mental, psychosomatic and spiritual dynamics including: recovery from addictions, craving & dependencies; abuses; reactive patterns of behaviour; depletion, exhaustion & fatigue; panic attacks; fear & anxieties; sexual issues; depression and grief. It provides effective, short term, client-centred strategies of counselling, with long term self-management skills for clients. The approved professional training courses are based in Melbourne (Australia), Johannesburg and Cape Town (South Africa).
