



ECOLOGY OF SOUL: Introduction

with Psychophonetics

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Human beings are the most complicated eco-system on Earth. It is time we apply the highly evolved and ever evolving 20th & 21st centuries ecological/environmental awareness to the multi-levelled human individual constitution, as a foundation for deeper understanding of human relationships and human social systems.

For many years, under the umbrella of growing ecological/environmental awareness, science, formation of policies and political discourses, were focused on the physical environment surrounding us: air, water, sun, soil, oceans, pollutions of every kind, trees, animals and human impact in the ecosystem of every part of the land. Later on, the economy, generation of energy, distribution of wealth, human rights, war and peace, ethnic and gender equality, penetrated the environmental discourse, and of course, more recently, global warming, its causes and preventions are uppermost in every policy making debate around the globe.

Parallel to all these concerns about the external natural environment, it is time we realise that every human being is a unique and complex eco-system in itself, as is every kind of human relationship. They both comprise a constant interaction of various beings and elements resulting in a combined outcome, just as it is in the natural environment. The health and sustainability of the three systems: the individual,

*The forest is not so many trees.
It is the space between them. (YT)*

the social and the physical environment, depends on the balance between their components. For any development towards the sustainability of the human eco-system, these components have to

become visible and conscious.

In the complex individual human system, the major components, at the very minimum, comprise body, soul, spirit, biography, personality, natural drives, education, role models, unconscious realities, economy and, of course, relationship. In the complexity of personal relationship, all these components multiply in the complexity of interactions, in addition to cultural and social norms, cultural, historic, ethnic, family history, economic, political, national and international realities. All this is fairly obvious, but on top of this, a new reality is being formed between the individuals involved in any social/relationship interaction: the reality of the *space in-between people*, the *interpersonal*

environment, invisible to the physical eye, but decisive and consequential in its reality and impact. Just as it is with the physical environment, the level of environmental understanding and awareness of these individual, social and interpersonal dynamics determine their level of sustainability and further development.

Look for a moment at the complexity of the human physical body as an eco-system in itself: our physiology comprises eleven complicated living systems in constant interaction and interdependency:

- 1) Circulatory - cardiovascular system
- 2) Digestive system & Excretory system
- 3) Endocrine system (hormones)
- 4) Integumentary-Exocrine system: skin, nails, sweat
- 5) Immune & lymphatic system
- 6) Muscular system
- 7) Nervous system
- 8) Renal & Urinary system
- 9) Reproductive system
- 10) Respiratory system
- 11) Skeletal system: Bones.

Add to these:

- the life force dynamics (Chi, Prana) which grows, underlies, organises and maintains all these system in a living organism which multiplies the complexity;
- the soul life of the individual, the emotional and cognitive realities which effect every aspect of our physiology; and
- the individual-spiritual dimension of one's life: the sense of meaning, purpose, morality and inner guidance.

If you can hold all these four dimensions of the human constitution for a moment at the same time, then you will get a glimpse into the human individual eco-system.

If all that is not complex enough, you meet another human being with the same level of complexity, in an intimate relationship, everything in one person effects everything in the other, and the space in between becomes the third eco-system: the ecology of the meeting of two souls, two spirits, housed in two bodies.

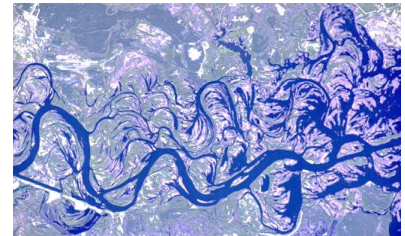
Who has a chance to manage well this level of complexity?

Those people who can start to observe their own complexity have a chance to manage it well.

Psychophonetics appreciates the complexities of the human form. It conceives of humans as multi-modal and it respects people as ecological beings. It is an approach which offers possibilities to healers working in Africa as it recalls the fullness of what living could be. (Professor Stan Lifschitz, Head of training for Clinical Psychologists, University of South Africa, Pretoria)

Psychophonetics counsellors, consultants and trainers, can contribute to the ecological understanding of all the systems mentioned so far, in addition to the huge and growing body of knowledge regarding them: Psychophonetics can offer an awareness of *An Ecology of Soul*—making the invisible factors and dynamics within individuals and in between individuals—visible to themselves, and therefore manageable to themselves. Psychophonetics processes are designed to transform the invisible, and therefore unconscious human dynamics into visible realities to observe and manage.

When I studied environmental science at Flinders University in South Australia in the late 1980s, we looked at the Murray River which is the longest river in Australia. The catchment areas of the Murray and all its tributaries of the Murray-Darling basin cover about one-seventh the area of the Australian continent, from Queensland through New South Wales and Victoria all the way to South Australia and the Southern Ocean. You can see the water, the banks of the river, the wet and the dry lands and the cultivated area, forested and deforested, wetlands and saline (salty) wasteland areas on its two sides, *but you cannot see the river system!* It is not visible. You have to *think* it first, and then you can start to see it.



Likewise, a human relationship is not just the sum total of a man + woman. You can see the man, you can see the woman, but the space between them is mostly invisible, even to themselves. My major role as a Psychophonetics consultant in couple counselling is to make the invisible space between two people visible to them. That enables each one of them to start and take personal responsibility for their contribution to it and to possible change.

Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate (Carl Jung)

You cannot take responsibility and act responsibly in regards to an invisible reality, be it a river system or a relationship system, but you can wake up to it and start to see it. The development of the new 'eye' with which to start to 'see' the invisible relationship eco-system starts inside: starting to see the invisible reality within oneself: the ignored feelings, reactions, projections, wounds, desires, frustrations, past traumas, blocks in developmental phases, past relationship and the traces they left behind, the lasting effects of family of origin and spiritual and professional aspirations and frustrations. All these and more form the *internal eco-system* of the individual and it has to become visible to each of the partners individually, as the precondition for being able to see and manage better the interpersonal eco-system.

Awareness of human society as a system, sociology, has already been well established since the second part of 19th century, and social anthropology, since the end of the first world war¹. Awareness of the multi-levelled human constitution of the individual as a Body-Soul-Spirit eco-system is lagging behind in modern science. This results in, for example in the field of medicine, the growing list of unsolvable medical symptoms, such as, the growing list of Auto-Immune disorders. There are about 100 types of them, some say 300. Most of them have only been diagnosed in the second part of the 20th century: *“Medical historians identify the mid-20th century as the time when the scientific and medical communities acknowledged the existence of autoimmune disease.”*².

These, as well as Chronic-Fatigue Syndrome and many other modern conditions, are symptoms of disorders in the **whole** human eco-system, not just in one sub-system or organ. A growing awareness of one’s internal eco-system can throw a clearer, deeper, more practical light into the reality, the healing and the developmental potential of human relationships and on social systems.

At the same time, during the past 50 years, ecological/environmental awareness has been expanding worldwide. From a concern of alternative thinking people in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, it has grown into a major political, economic, national and international topic, often the top of the agenda in world news. More and more governments are chosen, rise and fall in connection to their environmental policies proposals and performance. No project in the world can be approved without an acceptable environmental impact report. Environmental awareness, global warming, saving the planet from us, the people, is now uppermost in most of people’s minds. This is a huge development, one of the most remarkable in the 20th century, alongside women’s rights, de-colonialization and international law. It is a forerunner of what, in my view is the great developmental wave of the growing trend of individualization and the development of empathy: ecological awareness *IS* empathy with the earth.

During the same period in the relatively new science of psychology, the awareness, skill and importance of soul, psychological complexes, psychosomatic realities, personal therapy, relationship, social, parenting and personal/spiritual development also took place. In 1899, psychoanalysis as a discipline started and in 1909, the first chair of psychology was established in Cornell University USA.

It was only in 1951, when the focus of modern psychology started to shift from the authority of the *scientific* expert to the authority of the individual patient through Humanistic psychology (unfinished) revolution founded by Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and their colleagues, the founder of *Person-*

¹ Founders of Sociology: August Comte, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Emil Durkheim, George Simmel, and the rise of Social/Cultural Anthropology between the two world wars.

² ‘Autoimmune disease: Conceptual history and contributions of ocular immunology’ Curtis E Margo & Lynn E Harman, National Library of Medicine, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27131478/#:~:text=Medical%20historians%20identify%20the%20mid,as%20autoimmune%20disorders%20much%20earlier>.

Centred Therapy, Empathy and the profession of Counselling. Psychophonetics is a radical 21st century form of Person-Centred Therapy and Humanistic Psychology.

However, these three streams—the environmental awareness, social awareness and psychological/conscious personal development, all major expressions of the same Spirit of our Time—have not yet fully met. I believe they have to meet now, because they need each other for the next stage of their healthy development. At the *Round Table* of environmental concerns, social development awareness already has a respectable partnership seat, as is powerfully expressed in the growing acceptability of the Triple Bottom Line³ which justifies the economic project only if they are responsible and accountable for both the profitability of their financial bottom line and for the benefit of their environmental and social impact on the society in which they operate. In 2008, Corporate Social Responsibility became an official government policy in the new South Africa through the new regulations to the Companies Act.⁴

Personal development as a major factor in human ecology has not yet got a seat around that table of sustainability concerns. Human beings are four dimensional: bodily, environmental, social and individual/spiritual—human civilization is not completely human until its structures, values, priorities and operations reflect the complete multileveled reality of the human constitution, comprising a living body, a living soul, an individual spirit *and* sustainable economy.

In 2003, I published an article called: *The 4-Fold Bottomline*. A defining document in Persephone Institute (Australia), with a short version also published in the in the Tasmanian Green Party Magazine: *The Daily Planet*, in which I put forward the idea that *the 3-fold approach to evaluate developmental projects has to be made whole by the 4th element: human individuality and its unique environmental needs*. Because *The Ecology of Soul* is made of the constant interactions between the above four components, it is not acceptable any more to conceive of social sustainability without considering individual sustainability, which entails: the conditions required for sustainable personal sustainability. In that article,⁵ I list the 7 fundamental conditions required for individual development *inside* any social structure: relationship, family, community and workplace.

³ See 'The Threefold Bottom Line' approach to human development: "The triple bottom line is a business concept that posits firms should commit to measuring their social and environmental impact—in addition to their financial performance—rather than solely focusing on generating profit, or the standard "bottom line." It can be broken down into "three Ps": profit, people, and the planet". Kelsey Miller, Harvard Business School Online. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-the-triple-bottom-line#:~:text=The%20triple%20bottom%20line%20is,%3A%20profit%2C%20people%2C%20and%20the>

⁴ "Corporate Social Responsibility is no longer merely a "nice to have" as it finds itself referenced expressly in black and white law in regulations to the Companies Act No. 71 of 2008. The extent to which corporate social responsibility now finds itself amongst issues to be taken seriously by boards of directors is evidenced by the growing amount of attention being paid by companies to determine the scope and ambit of their corporate social responsibilities". Neil Kirby, Werksmans Attorneys, <https://www.werksmans.com/legal-updates-and-opinions/whats-really-right-corporate-social-responsibility-as-a-legal-obligation-in-south-africa/>

⁵ 'The 4-Fold Bottomline', Yehuda Tagar, <https://www.yehudatagar.com/post/the-4-fold-bottom-line>

A short historical context

The development of ecological/environmental awareness has been incredibly fast. Having its roots in the Romantic movement of the 19th century, it found its voice through the protest movement of the late 1960s, in reaction to the Vietnam war and nuclear armament, stagnation of universities, sexual, gender and human rights revolutions of the 1970s and the fall of communism of the 1980s. Individuals around the world found empathy and their voices also in regard to the degradation of our natural environment.

To give one example of this rapid development in its political manifestation of The Green movement: the German Green party (Die Grünen) was only founded in January 1980. It channelled civil and student movements concerned with preservation of the environment, anti-nuclear, anti-war, civil rights, gender equality and social justice, active since the 1960s. In the 1983 federal election it won 5.7% of the national vote and entered the Bundestag with 27 seats. It was the first time that an environmental movement had become a formal parliamentary political party in the world. From 1985, it became close to impossible to form a coalition government in Germany without the support of the Greens. In the last federal election of 2021, the Greens won 14.8% of the national vote with 118 seats in the Bundestag! During the same period in the European Parliament the 'Green–European Free Alignment' grew to now have 21 MEPs, having received 20.5% of the German votes in 2019. This is a meteoric rise of historical proportions. The development of the 'Green Agenda' is not limited to the parties called 'Green': it became a major topic in the formation of the platform of parties across the political spectrum, throughout Europe and the rest of the democratic world.

On a parallel path, psychological awareness rose rapidly in the 20th century, ahead of the environmental movement. From **one** major approach to psychology and psychotherapy in 1909 with one professorship in one university—psychology now has at least 6 major schools of thought and is taught in all the major universities in the world and is a profession protected by laws of parliaments. It is still trying very hard to be recognised as an established science, with difficulties. In the alternative/complementary field there are many hundreds if not thousands different types of psychological, psychotherapeutic and personal development approaches, including the traditions of indigenous cultures, shamanism and mysticism. We have been very busy with the new science and art of psychology in the 20th century. But the three streams have not yet fully met.

In conclusion

I am looking forward to a time in which around the 'Round Table' of environmental concerns—human sustainability will also have a chair and a portfolio. What is it that makes human life and relationship sustainable and what destroy it? While our numbers continue to rise (8 million and growing)—our general health is in decline.

Example: Stress in the workplace

Burnout is a result of excessive workplace stress. 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress...It is not the job but the person- environment fit that matters. (AIS: American Institute of Stress)

We have just probably survived a global pandemic that according to the World Health Organisation was the direct caused of more than 3,000,000 untimely deaths and created a shockwave in the world economy and in everyone's life worldwide. Some still attribute it all to a virus that escaped a laboratory in Wuhan city, but to me it seems obvious that the *real cause* was the global weakening of human immunity, which, in turn, is caused by an unsustainable level of stress in the workplace, worldwide. Chronic stress suppresses the immune system through permanent high levels of the 'Stress Hormones': adrenaline and cortisol. According to the American Institute of Stress (AIS)⁶ 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress; 76% of workers report that workplace stress effect their personal relationships, and Companies spend around 75% of a worker's annual salary to cover lost productivity or to replace workers. 'Homo Sapience' is fast becoming 'Homo Accentus'.

However, stress is a *subjective* experience! Even though external factors matter a great deal, different individuals will be differently stressed by the same external situation. The subjective factors of stress, forming most of it, are potentially controllable:

*Stress is a condition or **feeling** experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize. (American Institute of Stress (AIS))⁷.*

Controlling and managing one's level of stress can drastically change one's sustainability, but in order to change the subjective stress-factors—they have to become visible and conscious for the individual concerned. Making the invisible dynamics in human reality is the contribution that Psychophonetics can make to human sustainability on all levels.

People who develop awareness of the *internal eco-system* of themselves become more sustainable. These are the people who will wake up to the *relationship eco-system*, will develop further their *Empathetic Intelligence*, EmQ, and make human relationship on all levels more sustainable. These people will inevitably become more aware of the natural environmental sustainability in which they live. Environmental awareness starts inside.

We are dominated by everything with which our self is identified (Roberto Assagioli)

⁶ www.stress.org

⁷ Ibid

As a growing number of individuals everywhere start to wake up to the complexity of their own, individual internal eco-system, patterns of interpersonal relationship are changing in front of our eyes. We can no longer learn everything from our parents about what it means to be a man, a woman, a parent, a partner in relationship and marriage. There is nothing for us to follow anymore. Each one of us and each couple has to find their own way. To find it, each one of us has to develop the *inner eye* and the *inner ear* with which to see and hear oneself and each other from the inside.

As I wrote in a previous article (Vitalita, August 2022): '*The New Neanderthals—saving our relationship from ourselves*'⁸—to do it consciously, methodically, responsibly and consequentially is the task of Methodical Empathy. For this, Skola Empatie was established in Slovakia in 2013.

Late last July, was the first introductory retreat seminar on the *Ecology of Soul* in Zajezova. This article is the first in a series of further articles and further retreat-based seminars under the title: *Ecology of the Soul*. The following articles will focus on: The ecology of relationship: Methodical Empathy for Couples; The Ecology of Sustainable Parenthood: Methodical Empathy with Children; Humanising the Workplace: Workplace as a Human Eco-System; The Human Soul as an Eco-System; and The Eco-System of Psycho-Spirit-Somatic interactions—all in the practical light of Psychophonetics.



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⁸ *The New Neanderthals—saving our relationship from ourselves*. Online: www.yehudatagar.com/post/the-new-neanderthals-saving-our-relationships-from-ourselves