

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

FROM ILLUSION TO REALITY IN HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Methodical Empathy: Its Reflective, Imaginative, Inspirative, Intuitive & Transformative Modes
Three illusions and three potential realities in understanding other people¹

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*The falling old instinctive bridges between people cannot be repaired.
They must be replaced by new consciously created bridges from within. YT*

ABSTRACT

The ever-accelerating process of individuation combined with the continuous decline of traditional and instinctive structures of social cohesion, results in a progressively dysfunctional human communication capacity on the personal, professional and theoretical levels, at least since the post-war era. The chronic endemic shortcomings and the 'optical error' in reliance on the verbal/objective/intellectual dimension of human communication are exposed here in a historical context. Empathy, emerging as an ideal in 1951, is proposed as a growing evolutionary counterforce to this habitual surface of human communication. Empathy is presented not as mere intention, attitude and personality attribute, but as an emerging new *power of perception* of human reality: a form of Radical Phenomenology. The possibility and methodology of *Methodical Empathy* is outlined, explained and highlighted in its historical, philosophical and evolutionary terms, as a new power of perception requiring new emerging psychological/spiritual faculties that were unavailable to our predecessors: *Pro-Active Reflective Empathy, Imaginative Empathy, Inspirative and Intuitive Empathy and Transformative Empathy*. Embedding this development in the context of Idealistic and Continental Philosophy, including the early epistemological-psychological insights of Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy, not as a belief system but as a potential, the largely unknown foundation of a futuristic, idealistic, monistic, integrative approach to a mostly unfamiliar approach to philosophy, psychology, education phenomenology, which are the theoretical/methodological foundation of psychophonetics, Methodical Empathy, and associated advanced communication skills.

Empathy & Methodical Empathy

Empathy is a new term for a newly emerging human capacity. Coined in 1909 by Edward Titchener, as a rephrasing of its German predecessor 'einführung' (coined by Robert Vischer in 1893), it was first given its present meaning and published in 1951, by Carl Rogers. It quickly became a global term because it was needed: the old instinctive

¹ A development & extension of Yehuda Tagar's chapter: The Seven Types Of Empathy: Illusion, Reality and Methodical Empathy 21st Century Report on the Progress of Empathy, in *Promises, Pedagogy and Pitfalls: Empathy's potential for healing & harm* (2016) > [Methodical Empathy: The seven types of empathy](#)

² Psychophonetics: A modality of counselling, psychotherapy, psychosomatic therapy, organisational consultancy & participatory medicine created in Australia in the 1990s by Yehuda Tagar, as a development of Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy, Initiatory Theatre, Radical Phenomenology & Person-Centred Psychology. Taught professionally in Slovakia, UK & China.

³ <https://scientificandmedical.net/events/mystics-and-scientists-conference-2024/>

bridges between people are continuously falling apart, as an inevitable consequence of irreversible individualization and cannot be repaired. They must be replaced by new consciously created bridges from within: empathy. Unlike sympathy and antipathy, empathy cannot evolve instinctively. There is no unconscious empathy. It is a step in the evolution of human consciousness. It has to be cultivated methodically like any other consciously acquired human social skill.

The idea of Methodical Empathy, the core component of the Psychophonetics⁴ based professional training of counsellors and psychotherapists, intends to transform the notion of *empathy* from being an ideal, an expected virtue, a natural human attribute, an intention and an attitude—into a methodical path of conscious development aiming at the progressive cultivation of empathic faculty, potentially for everyone. For the purpose of this paper, *empathy* is defined in the simplest way as: The ability to perceive and to understand the reality of others from their own point of view.

In Psychophonetics-based Methodical Empathy, the empathic process leads through five chapters:

Three in *Conversational Counselling*—the *Wish*, *Action Phase*, and *Homework*.

The *Conversational Counselling* that leads to the *Wish* is comprised of two major parts—

- 1) *Perceptive Empathy* aiming at the perception, both by client and counsellor, of the present reality of the client from the client's own point of view;
- 2) *Transformative Empathy* aiming at the encounter between the client's innate will for change and the client's own present reality.

The *Conversational Counselling* chapter consists of four levels of Perceptive Empathy aiming at the perception of the four major components of the client's consciousness:

- 1) *Reflective Empathy* for the perception of what the client already knows and chooses to present (identifying the presenting issue;
- 2) *Imaginative Empathy* for the *Seeing* perception of the active mental-pictures which underly the conscious forms of the client's verbal expression;
- 3) *Inspirative Empathy* for the *Hearing* perception of the deep emotional meaning to the client, of the client's expressions;
- 4) *Intuitive Empathy* for the perception of the client's deep intention in presenting the content which is the topic of the counselling conversation: the individual-spiritual *context* of the Presenting Issue which gives it its meaning in the context of their life as a whole. "*There is nothing out of context*"⁵, stated Jacques Derrida, the great Algerian-Jewish-French philosopher, phenomenologist and founder of Deconstruction. Content out of context is meaningless in human communication, and there cannot be any real meaning of a person's expression outside the context of their own 'I' reality. To perceive that context, Intuitive Empathy is required.

⁴ >[www.psychophonetics.com.au/attachments/2/Tagar-EmpathicIntelligence-from illusion to reality2018.pdf](http://www.psychophonetics.com.au/attachments/2/Tagar-EmpathicIntelligence-from%20illusion%20to%20reality2018.pdf) <

⁵ Jacques Derrida. *Afterword* (1988, p.13)

The Imaginative, Inspirative and Intuitive levels of empathy take empathy to much deeper levels of understanding another human being, but the clarity and accuracy of perception on the Imaginative, Inspirative and Intuitive levels of empathy depends to a large extent on the clarity and accuracy of the first level of empathy in this process: *Reflective Empathy*— what the client already knows about him/herself and wishes to communicate as the starting point for the counselling/communication process. On the face of it, it appears to be the simplest ready-made level of good human communication for which good intention and activating one's *normal empathy* should be enough. In reality, this first level of empathy is a threshold that requires a transition from normal interpersonal communication which I call Pre-Empathy communication-intelligence to *EmQ—Empathic Quotient*. It is practically impossible to develop an accurate perception of a person's experience and meaning on the Imaginative, Inspirative and Intuitive levels without getting the first level of empathy, the *Reflective Empathy*, right.

With our sense-perceptions, our waking thoughts, we reach no further than the surface of things... If the mind is to become active, it must first be able to perceive the concept in question, and this calls for the concept sense, which is exactly as much a sense by itself as is taste or smell.

Rudolf Steiner, *Wisdom of Man, of the Soul, & of the Spirit*, Part 1: Anthroposophy lecture 1: The Human Senses, 1909 GA 115

The Concept-Sense—the hidden reality of the *Sense of Thoughts*

In this paper, I wish to name, define and highlight a cognitive reality that is mostly hidden from view yet chronically confusing human communication on all levels: the perception of the thinking process and reality of others, what is called in Psychosophy: **The concept sense** (sometimes *The Sense of Thought*)—the sense which enables people to perceive the thoughts of others. The observation I wish to share here is that the dynamics of perceiving other people's thoughts is invisible to most, requiring a special conscious development to be understood. Physical objects, including people's bodies, are visible to us; we know they come to our perception from the outside. People's thoughts expressed in words and concepts tend to melt into our own existing mental picture by automatic connotative association, becoming invisible to us; we tend to unconsciously replace *the meaning that they give* to their expression with *the meaning that we give* to it, not knowing that we do so, mistaking our meaning for theirs.

My thesis here is that to truly perceive the real personal meaning of the conceptual expression of other people, a special conscious effort is required, in the absence of which inevitable misunderstanding, conflicts and destructive tendencies of interpersonal relationships on all levels are inevitable. That special conscious effort we call at Psychophonetics Institute *Methodical Empathy*, for the past 23 years, and as a trainer of professional counsellors, I am becoming more and more aware of what it takes to do it.

Furthermore, I posit that resulting from the combination of ever-growing individualization, untethered dominant materialistic-mechanical, cognitive-behavioristic view of the true nature of human beings, especially in academia, and the normalisation of limitless greed-based egotism in the economic sphere of the past 100 years—the tendency of interpersonal relationship in western-European dominant societies is chronic antipathy, as the

default program. To mitigate against these destructive tendencies, we invented the ideal of *empathy* in the middle of the 20th Century, but this is only in its infancy now.

I would not have become as conscious of this chronic deficiency in normal interpersonal communication by observing only my own struggles in my own interpersonal relationships, which I regularly do. What is making me more and more aware of the above chronic problem is many years of counselling people, both individually and in couples, regarding their communication challenges. What makes me even more acutely aware of this mental deficiency is many years of teaching professional counselling in a few countries over the past three decades. I am constantly striving to become more skilled and effective as a trainer, in my attempt to help counselling students make the difficult shift from ordinary interpersonal communication to what is called in Psychophonetics training: *Methodical Empathy*.

The capacity to understand other human beings from their own point of view has only started to evolve in Western humanity very recently. It has been named *Empathy* only since 1951. This is a new term, not to be found in any dictionary before that date. It just was not there amongst us as a concept, let alone as an established faculty. A new profession had to be created for that purpose: *COUNSELLING*. It has not existed as a profession before.

I, as an individual, can construct many concepts about another person's thoughts, feelings, experiences, and reality. But these are *my* concepts, not the concepts of the other. To perceive the actual thoughts and reality of another person, I must *perceive them* first. That requires a particular organ of perception designed for the purpose, just as the sense of sight is designed for the perception of forms and colours and the sense of hearing is designed for the perception of sounds.

According to Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy, the theoretical foundation of Psychophonetics, 12 ordinary sense organs operate in the human organism of every normal human being, not all of them are grounded in a distinctly formulated physical organ. Some of them are based on a specific capacity of the whole organism, like the sense of touch.

The 12 senses are:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 'I'-sense – sense of the 'I' of another2. <i>Thought Sense (or concept-sense)– sensing the thoughts & meaning of another</i>3. Word (or Sound) Sense – sensing the intonation of another's speech4. Sense of Sound/Hearing5. Sense of Warmth6. Sense of Sight | <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Sense of Taste8. Sense of Smell9. Sense of Balance – sensing one's own state of balance in relation to gravity10. Sense of Movement – sensing one's own movement & space orientation11. Sense of Life – sensing one's own body & the life processes within it12. Sense of Touch |
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The *Concept sense* or the *sense of thought* is one of these 12 ordinary senses: the thoughts of another person are being perceived by us through a specially constructed sense-organ, designed for this purpose. It is not limited to spoken words but includes thoughts communicated non-verbally, including conscious gestures:

For with your thought sense you could perceive thoughts in external spatial gestures, just as easily as in spoken speech. Speech only mediates for the thoughts. You must perceive the thoughts in themselves through a special sense.⁶ Rudolf Steiner

Only the surface of reality is available for normal sense perception, the whole basic 12 of them, not the reality itself. Not the reality of other people from their own point of view. How then can the reality of other people be perceived by their fellow human beings? To start with, true Empathy is not possible as far as the normal powers of perception are capable of. A limitation is placed on the ordinary capacity of perceiving the reality of each other by the normal conditions of our recent evolution. This is not a mistake. This limitation is created for a purpose: the real capacity for understanding each other from the inside, on which the reality of *all* human relationships depends, must be acquired consciously if *individuality* is to develop further. We were in our past phases of evolution capable of instinctive understanding of each other inside our tribes and family in the *group soul* which is our fast-fading past. The inevitable evolution of individuality requires a separation of our individual reality from one another, a separation that can be bridged only through conscious effort. This is where we are now:

During the present cycle of evolution, as well as everything else that has been described, we have to develop the true relationship that should prevail between one human soul and another.⁷ Rudolf Steiner.

Three major common illusions in contemporary human communication

I wish to make conscious three major failures of human communication that follow inevitably from the above realities of human interaction in our time:

- 1) the inevitable, unstoppable decline in the instinctive, unconscious tribal group-soul understanding of each other *inside* the separate groups (nations, races, languages, religions, families), and
- 2) the diminution of human consciousness into the narrow band of intellectual reflection devoid of real human reality, dominating the intellectual life of the West, and, progressively, of the world.
- 3) Reflective intellect alone cannot bridge the growing gap between individuals any more.

Another kind of perception and intelligence is required for that—the new slowly emerging culture of empathy.

⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *The Study of Man*, GA 293, Lecture 8, 29 August 1919

⁷ Rudolf Steiner. Lecture 10 (Oct 25, 1915), Human consciousness between objective and subjective reality, in *The Occult Movement in the Nineteenth Century*. GA 254

1. First illusion: intellectual *communication* in personal relationship

We start and conduct personal relationships primarily through verbal intellectual communication. Deeper and more intimate dimensions enter the interaction as the relationship forms, but the exchange of thoughts remains the major medium.

Because we share language, vocabulary, common space and common history, we assume—most of us most of the time—that we mean the same things with the same words. Most of us rarely question that assumption. We tend to regard the words and concepts shared with us to be identical with the echo and the mirror image that they create in us. We regard the reality created in us in response to the reality shared with us, to be the same as the original reality shared.

This is the first illusion: echo chambers and inner mirrors are unconsciously creative. The mental pictures created in response to the shared content *are not* the same mental pictures at the origin of the shared content. They *cannot be*. They have a completely different origin, raw material, intention, emotionality, meaning and intentionality. The concepts shared with me in words are *not my* concepts and *not my* words. They come to me from you – from the outside of me. I am reflecting on them automatically, giving them, to start with, my own meaning. But as stated in a previous quotation in this paper: “*With our sense-perceptions, our waking thoughts, we reach no further than the surface of things*⁸”. Your words are not my words, your thoughts are not my thoughts—they are *perceptions* for me like any other perception originated in the outer world: colours, sounds, smells, tastes. You are not me more than the tree is me. With the tree, *I know* that the impression is coming to me from the outside. With another human being speaking to me, I tend to mistake the spoken impressions to be synonymous with me. They are not.

This is the major source of all relationship misunderstanding, reactions, domestic arguments, conflicts, disappointment and separation. If we knew that we were talking about completely different realities, we would have the chance to listen again and to verify that we get the original meaning of the expression. Because we assume that we get the original meaning *and we don't*—the communication breaks down. The breakdown starts with the automatic attachment of the associated mental picture that rises in me provoked by the shared content—to the shared content, assuming that *this* is the meaning of it. It is not. Those automatically attached associated mental pictures *do not* originate in the other person but in me.

As a result, I conceptualise *my own* mental pictures, not yours from you who is speaking to me. The familiar words and concepts create the illusion that my associations *are* your expressions. I *conceptualise* mental pictures assuming that they are *yours*. On that basis, I form the reality of what you mean. I assume now that *I know* what you mean, but I don't.

What is required to actually *hear you* is a shift from the perception of your *words* to the perception of your own *mental pictures*; what is required is a change of habit: The words and the concept that I hear from you

⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *Wisdom of Man, of the Soul, & of the Spirit*, Part 1: Anthroposophy lecture 1: The Human Senses, 1909 GA 115

are *not* what these words and concepts mean to me. They are percepts, coming to me from the outside. To really hear you I have to try to grasp *your* mental pictures that are producing them, not mine; I have to attempt to conceptualise *your* reality, not its echo/mirror in my soul.

What would it take to go beyond the automatic meaning that I tend to attribute to your expressions (not only words and concepts but also intonation of voice, facial expression, and body gestures)—and to perceive your meaning?

- It would take at the very least, my acknowledgment that to start with, the meaning of your expression is *not* the same as the meaning that I automatically give them.
- Next, it would require perception of *my own* provoked meaning, observation and removing them from my observation of you.
- Next, it would require an attempt at a direct perception of *your* original mental pictures which produced your expression, and the making of a *new* mental picture of that, of your reality.
- Then, and only then, can I hope that the reality I construct in conceptualising the meaning of your reality, is truly yours, and not mine projected.
- Even then, checking it up, verifying with you that I got it, would still be necessary.

That is so far away from normal communication in personal relationships. Yet that is what is required to truly communicate with another human being. In Psychophonetics we call it: The Art of Conscious Relationship. It is a new possibility for most people.

2. Second illusion: Intellectual communication in counselling and psychotherapy

The second illusion regarding understanding people is in the field of counselling: Counselling is a new art, new profession, and new developmental path for the counsellor. Invented by Carl Rogers in 1951 (the same birth year as the term Empathy) because he was the first psychotherapist who was not a medical doctor, it is still new. Counselling as a profession is still in its infancy. When I negotiated the inclusion of our counselling course at Matej Bel University in Central Slovakia we could not find an equivalent term for *counselling* in the Slovak language. The closest is poradentsvo, meaning: advise giver. That is nearly the opposite of what true counselling is. So that day in 1918, a new word arrived on the Slovak lexicon: Counselling, in the form of a Graduate Diploma in Counselling for the Workplace, a collaboration of the Economy Department of MBU and Psychophonetics Institute International. This was four years ago.

Counselling is a new profession and the core competencies that make up this profession are still in developmental conversation. Ten years earlier, when I was a member of the group of adult educators advising the South African Department of Education (SITA—tertiary workplace-based professional training) on the competencies that are essential for the first government-sponsored diploma of counselling in South Africa, I was there as a representative of a private provider of counselling training, and insisted that Empathy be included as a core competency in this diploma that we were creating. There was resistance from the officials—*How can you train*

people in empathy? Next, you will tell us that you can train people in integrity too. Thanks to the support of a professor of psychology from the University of South Africa who was also a member of this advisory group, the term empathy was included. They did not know until that point that empathy *is* what counsellors do.

At Psychophonetics Institute in Australia, South Africa, UK and at Skola Empatíe in Slovakia, we have been cultivating a methodical adult educational process called Methodical Empathy.

Methodical Empathy: What is it?

Let me define first, what it *cannot* be: an intellectual reflective-analytical effort to *objectively* understand what is happening in the *lived experience and the personal meaning* of another human being, who is not an object at all—cannot constitute a real understanding of that person’s reality. To know it, constitutes an honest truth. To assume that you can understand another human being’s reality on that basis and even to be paid for your labour, constitutes presence. It is not a crime, but constituting a true understanding—it is not. I defined it in the book chapter: *The 7 types of empathy* (2016), as: Intellectual Empathy, one of the three Empathy Illusions, because: “*with our sense-perceptions, our waking thoughts, we reach no further than the surface of things*⁹.”

The sense-perception of another person’s verbal expression with the faulty instrument of ***the concept sense*** is just that, another sense perception dynamic that is capable only of the perception of the surface of things, people included. But a real understanding of a human being’s personal meaning of their own personal experience just cannot be gained through intellectual reflection on the surface of things. Such real understanding must penetrate through the surface into the reality of the being that expresses him/herself. Sense perception (of words), reflection, the formation of mental pictures and the automatic association of these mental pictures with one’s pre-existing concepts – do not make a real human understanding. This is an illusion, a normal human interaction, but an illusion of real communication nevertheless.

3. Third illusion: passive study of theoretical, wisdom and spiritual literature

Most people I met in my life had some exposure to spiritual, esoteric literature, teaching or teachers. I know this is representative only of the kind of people that I tend to meet, but the same would apply to the future readers of this chapter, so I am speaking to ‘us’. Despite the dogmatic thought-control of the dominant scientific and academic of the past 100 years – the factual reality, and spiritual dimension of every human being’s soul expresses itself in such interests. For some, this is a passing phase in their growing up or youth, for others, it becomes a permanent formative force in the shaping of their further development as adults, life, relationships, ideas of self and work. I am obviously one of those and therefore these are the kind of people that I am interested in and attract to my life. That, in the mature phase of my life, is forming in me a peculiar observation:

⁹ Ibid

Most people who I have met and meet don't *perceive* the thought of the spiritual teacher—they replace their own individual creative thinking with the thought forms of the teacher. Once the credibility of the spiritual teacher, teaching or theory was established in their mind as real—the above-mentioned **concept sense** tends to be neutralised in deference to the thoughts of the spiritual/theoretical teacher. That is the equivalent of taking food material from the outer world straight into the bloodstream, like wine, by-passing one's metabolic track and process. The typical result of that is a typical dual tragedy: (1) their own thought process with all its richness, power of originality, creativity and integration is being neutralised, and (2) they miss the most enriching potential of true teaching: understanding it through one's own growing creative thinking, in most cases missing on its central gift.

They become *followers* and *believers* of the spiritual/theoretical teacher, with a *followers-believers mentality*, rather than as co-creative colleagues. That is an irreparable loss, damaging to the true potential of both the student and the spiritual teaching itself. Every time a spiritual/theory student becomes a follower, one more creator is being lost to humanity and the *congregation of the faithful* has grown; while the *colleagueship of researchers-creators is being diminished*—the whole *cultural economy* suffers as a result.

Over the past half a century of being a student, co-creator and teacher of some aspects of what some call *spiritual science* (as opposed to *spiritual belief systems* in 20 countries, I met this tragic loss again and again with the ever-growing desperate Shakespearian Macbeth experience of:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.*

Creative people can only be truly understood by creative people. It has been my agony during the past few decades to observe how one of the most creative thinkers of the 20th Century, Rudolf Steiner, became for most of his followers, a figurehead of a collective belief system, instead of becoming the stimulus for a new intellectual, philosophical, scientific, cultural and educational impulse that he so clearly intended it to be. I painfully observed the numerous basic misunderstandings of his teaching made by intelligent people and endlessly repeated by intelligent people who suspend their common sense in favour of some assumed superior knowledge coming to them from the outside. But that given knowledge is not being considered by them as a sense-perception of that mysterious sense-organ: **The Concept Sense** (or *The sense of Thoughts*) requiring their own individual reflection, thinking and sense-making, but as a ready-made truth, not subject to their normal intelligent reflection and integration. The cultural result is not *Spiritual Science* at all, but yet another *Spiritual Belief System*, which they all know is not what it was meant to be.

This phenomenon is widespread, preventing the richness of cultural diversity that can only be based on the free thinking of independent individuals. I observed it primarily (but not only) in close quarters in regards to the

traditional treatment of the teaching of Rudolf Steiner by his own followers, who by and large transformed it from being considered as a legitimate contribution to 19th and 20th centuries Idealistic (Continental) philosophical epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetic and Goethean phenomenology (in the sense that these classic branches of philosophy are normally defined by mainstream literature)—into a form of belief system. This, in my view, is one of the biggest tragedies of 20th century cultural development, alongside the marginalisation of everything Central European and Continental in Western thinking altogether. It all became dominated during the past 100 years by reductionist, analytical philosophy, strictly materialistic science, positivism in research, deconstruction in literary critical studies and Cognitive Behaviorism in psychology. Central European spirit has not recovered from that demise and destruction by the devastating impact of the First, Second and Cold Wars, and by its artificial division between East and West—until today.

Anthroposophical teaching (an integral development of Idealistic Central European Continental philosophy) or any other spiritually/theoretically originated teaching for that matter—can never constitute *Spiritual Science* or *any science*—unless the imported *concepts* are considered to be *percepts*, not ready-made *concepts*, yet to be reflected on, digested and integrated independently by the reader's own thinking—and *only then* be considered part of one's individual, independently created knowledge.

I am using Rudolf Steiner's inspiring literature in this paper, in a sense alternative to the above dysfunction: his teaching does not form for me and my creative work a *belief system* but an inspiration for creative work originated from the rich source of the cultural giants of 18th, 19th and 20th centuries in Central Europe. I am asking the reader to read it in this light.

The transition from illusion to reality in human communication

It is time to move into the potential reality of true hearing and understanding of others. Each of the above-listed 12 senses can operate in both passive and active mode: all it takes to see colours and shapes is opening the eyes, the ears can never be shut at all and smell from our environment invades our sensibility whether we choose it or not. All these impressions enter the soul all day long and leave their mark on it, consciously or not. That is *Passive Sensing*. *Active Sensing* can be activated at any moment of waking life through the conscious act of *Attention*: enhanced awareness can direct the focus of the human 'I' to enter deeper and pro-actively into the impression of any phenomena through the *windows* of each of the 12 senses: a chef and a wine-taster develop a heightened *active sensing* of the sense of taste, a perfumer, of the sense of smell and a musician, of the sense of hearing. *Attentiveness* can activate each of the senses from the passive mode to the active mode of operation on the *outer boundaries of the Soul*.

Over and above the ordinary 12 senses, lives in every human being today the potential for three more sense organs, which can operate *only* in an active mode of sensing: In Applied Psychosophy/Psychophonetics they are called: Imaginative Perception, Inspirative Perception and Intuitive Perception. These three higher senses can penetrate *beyond the surface of things*, closer and closer to their inner nature. No matter the object of

observation: the natural phenomena of minerals, plants and animals or human experience and human consciousness—deeper internal reality exists beyond the external façade that is perceptible to the 12 senses. This deeper reality can only become perceptible when the organs of perception which lie dormant in the depth of the human soul, are being consciously activated.

Self-Empathy—the pre-condition for Methodical Empathy

Before turning from the multiple kinds of illusions regarding human communication into what has a chance to really understand other people's reality, let's focus for a moment on the crucial turning point between the two: surprisingly what can *break through the mirror* of reflecting on external sense perception is *self-perception* leading to *self-empathy*. As I pointed to in the chapter on: *The 7 Kinds of Empathy* (2016), the new faculties required today for the actual perception of the inner life of others are dormant in the unconscious depth of everyone until being consciously awakened. What can awaken them is the conscious attempt to consciously perceive one's own subjective inner life—objectively. This conscious attempt activates a capacity previously dormant in the human psyche: making the invisible visible, the silent reality audible and the unknown known. How could this be possible?

A historical/philosophical interlude (*feel free to skip it*)

There is a possible dimension of human consciousness which lives beyond the surface of the division between subjective and objective realities, for which there is a potential organ of perception in the human constitution. After all, both the dualistic and the monistic world views, both the Continental and the Analytical approaches to philosophy, and even both the old Platonian and Aristotelian approaches to ontology—there still lives the old Socratic assumption that Wisdom exists and that a fundamental intimate relationship with it is potentially possible for the human mind. He called it *Philo-Sophia*, namely *Philosophy*. Based on the axiomatic assumption that the human constitution comprises *body* and *psyche* alone—there is no possibility of unity between the objective and the subjective, the external and the internal dimensions of reality. This surface two-fold axiom keeps plaguing the division between Central European *Continental philosophy* and Western *Analytical philosophy* for the past 100 years, and continues. Based on the two-fold approach to human reality, there is no bridge in sight. If a human being possesses only body and soul, duality is inevitable, but also confusion, because the missing third component is constantly there, conceptually homeless. Only the Triad of Body, Soul and Spirit can bridge the gap in an inclusive way. This axiomatic division dominates European thinking, mostly unconsciously, since the 9th Century domination of the Dyadic dogma replacing the earlier Triadic worldview. In the early 19th Century, in Central Europe, a bridge started to form with the emergence of *idealistic Philosophy*: Fichte, Hegel, Goethe, Schelling, Schiller, Brentano, and Steiner, leading to Husserl and Heidegger's Phenomenology, Existentialism, later Humanistic Psychology and later-later, *Participatory Epistemology*. All of them are still *Alternatives* to mainstream philosophy, ontology, epistemology, psychology, medicine and cognitive science.

The Philosophy of Freedom, Psychosophy, Psychophonetics and Methodical Empathy, amongst many other 20th and 21st Centuries bridges—are continuations of the above-marginalised streams, now going through a revival. Based on a model of the human constitution that includes *Body*, Soul and individual *Spirit*—a bridge is possible between the subjective and the objective dimensions of human cognition. That enables the development of *Self-Empathy*, the threshold and enabler of *Methodical Empathy*.

Back to the three foundations for real perception of another person: Methodical Empathy

Five levels of real human communication

Five levels of perception are required for the development of Methodical Empathy—real perception of the human reality of others: Pro-Active Reflective Perception; Imaginative Perception; Inspirative Perception; Intuitive Perception; Transformative Perception. These are the 5 levels of Methodical Empathy that have the potential to lead from illusion to reality in understanding other people.

1) Pro-Active Reflective Perception

To this initial level of Methodical Empathy, I dedicated the first half of this paper: The **Sense of Thought**, in its normal sensory function leads inevitably to reflective cognition that attaches one's own existing mental pictures to the new impression. That is, *The Surface of Things* as described above. Observation of the automatic stream of one's own mental pictures that are being magnetised to the expression of the other, is the start of overcoming the passivity of the *Sense of Thoughts*. It is like cleaning one's lenses while watching the frontal view. Letting the thought impression of the other reach one's awareness without being constantly coloured by the stream of one's associations, restores and awakens the genuine *Sense of Thought* to perceive the mental pictures of the other. It is a shift from hearing what you *want* to hear, what you *fear* to hear, what you *assume* you hear, and what your *associations* tell you—into hearing what the other person *is actually trying to tell you*.

To be able to do that, attention must be paid to one's own surging reality. This is what we call in Methodical Empathy *Parallel Processing level 1*. That is, the ongoing cultivation of the *Sense of Thought* as an organ of empathy: *Reflective Empathy*.

2) The sense organ of Imaginative Perception: See Me.

Once activated, this sense organ is progressively capable of perceiving the otherwise invisible life dynamics which activate the bodily reality of all living beings. In human interaction, Imagination is capable of perceiving the mental images which are formed by and are the formative forces of *meaning*. Without activating even to an initial degree this pro-active perceptive capacity—the actual mental images behind the expression of the one we are listening to will remain invisible to us. Instead of perceiving the genuine mental pictures of the one who speaks—the triggered existing mental pictures of the listener will dominate the act of listening, colouring the perception of

what is actually meant by the speaker—with the projection of the listener’s meaning. That is the opposite of empathy, and is completely normal in ordinary human communication.

To remove this obstacle to a real understanding of the other, two conscious acts are necessary:

- The *second act* is the perception of the original mental pictures of the speaker which underly his/her expression. They have to be *seen*. That requires a certain degree of development of *Imaginative Perception*;
- In preparation for that second act, the listener’s own mental pictures that automatically get provoked by the speaker’s expressions must be acknowledged, *seen* and neutralised. One’s own mental pictures cannot be neutralised and removed from the act of listening to another person unless they are being *seen* first by the listener. He/she has to *see* his/her own mental pictures first.

The major turning point discovery on the path of creating the process of Methodical Empathy was the realisation that paradoxically, it is the *objective perception* of one’s own *subjective experience* that leads to the possibility of *objective perception* of another person’s *subjective experience*! This is the actual reality of the process. Obtaining *Imaginative Perception* is not a one-off act. This new capacity must be renewed with every act of perception. It is not a physical organ sense organ; it is a pure dynamic of conscious *Super-Sensible* activity: the mental images of the inner life of the speaker cannot enter a passive sense organ as is the case with the sense of sight or hearing. Conscious creative activity of image-making on the part of the listener is required to *see* the mental images of the speaker. *The activity of Imaginative sensing itself constitutes the continuous creation of that sense organ!*

Observation and acknowledgement of imaginations caused by one’s internal dynamics and not by the new impressions of the other, must be continuously observed and cleared. This is *Parallel Processing level 2*: The ongoing cultivation of **sense organ number 13: Imaginative Empathy.**

3) the sense organ of the Inspirative Perception: Hear Me.

The voice of the inner reality of the other person must be heard for the person to *feel* heard. The only instrument for that perception is the inner resonance of one’s own soul—used as a *resonance chamber* for the perception of another. Inside the inner space of one’s own feelings, emotions, deep experience, and character, lives the potential space for *hearing* the same of the other. We call it *Inspiration* because of its Latin root: *In-Spiritum*: the spirit inside. Allowing the reality of the other to resonate inside oneself.

It takes a subject to hear a subject. Using an objective mode of listening to another is like trying to see voices or smell sights. It takes inner resonance to perceive inner resonance. Of course, the differentiation between one’s own emotional resonances and the emotional resonances of the other is the major challenge. Special training is required, comprising primarily of a deeper observation and intimate awareness of one’s own emotionality. That is the very instrument for the *hearing* of the reality of the other. That is *Parallel Processing level 3*: The ongoing cultivation of **sense number 14: Inspirative Perception.**

4) the sense organ of the Intuitive Perception: Know Me.

In light of Idealistic philosophy, the human 'I' is not a concept, psychological theory, product of biology and biography, or a product of life. It is a being that knows itself. Psychosophy altogether can be summed up in this statement: "The human 'I' is a Source". Every human being knows oneself as an 'I' and no one can use this term designating anyone else but oneself. Stating 'I am', 'I am here' or 'Me', is a unique individual statement that refers to oneself only. It is not a concept but a direct undeniable intimate experience every time it is spoken. Established as a central postulate of philosophical ontology by the founders of German Idealism (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Goethe, Brentano, Steiner), the Idea, the experience and the centrality of the human 'I' in the formation of identity is until today at the core of what is collectively named Continental Philosophy, and less philosophically articulated, of Existential and Humanistic (Rogerian) *Person-Centred psychology*.

One's 'I' knows oneself intuitively, namely, *from the inside*. In-tuition means practically, *knowledge from the inside*. To feel known to you—the other person needs to know that you come close to experiencing their reality from the inside of their self-knowing. The deepest longing in human existence is to be known. For self-knowledge to evolve, we need to be known by significant others who can reflect us to ourselves, not only in childhood, but for the duration of our lives.

Reflective, Imaginative, and Inspirative levels of empathy are perceptions of *expressions* of a person's being. *Intuitive Empathy* is the striving to come to know the *being itself* from the inside. That is the most demanding challenge for clarity of boundaries: being able to distinguish the reality of one's own 'I' from the 'I' of the other. It requires a more intimate awareness of oneself than the previous levels. This is *parallel processing level 4*: leading to *sense number 15: Intuitive Empathy*.

5) Transformative Empathy—engaging the human will in the process of understanding oneself.

This is the most active form of empathy and potentially the most threatening to the integrity, autonomy and self-authority of the other. At its best, it is a form of encouraging and mobilising; at its worst, it is a form of dominating, consciously or not.

Engaging the will in the act of empathy is not only *Perceptive*. It is *Transformative*. In Methodical Empathy, we can call it *Transformative Empathy*. This phase includes *Challenging*, *Concluding*, formation of the *Wish* and the *Action Phase* of the process. Special training in self-awareness and conscious boundaries is required to develop Transformative Empathy professionally and safely. In Psychophonetics /Methodical Empathy professional training, this is the outcome of the third year of the training, prepared for by at least two years of Conversational Methodical Empathy.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, written as the background and for the follow-up of my contribution to the Scientific & Medical Network online conference, Mystics & Scientists 2024: Love, Forgiveness & Compassion, I have outlined and

explained the possible transition from *illusion* to *reality* in contemporary human communication. My major point is that ordinary human communication is largely an illusion, real human communication is potentially possible, but requires the conscious cultivation of higher and deeper dimensions of consciousness, a conscious evolution. Others may give such a development various names. At Psychophonetics Institute International and in its Slovak branch Skola Empatie, we call it: Psychophonetics-based Methodical Empathy.

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