

CENTRE PROFILE: TEMENOS

The History of Temenos

Louise Embleton Tudor and Keith Tudor

We founded Temenos in October 1993, a year after we moved from London to Sheffield and five months after the birth of our son Saul — in many respects Saul and Temenos have grown and developed alongside each other. Both of us had had previous associations with Sheffield and were excited to move north, for both personal and professional reasons. While we were thinking about establishing Temenos in Sheffield, we came across a journal of the same name, devoted to the 'arts of the imagination'. (This journal/review, published between 1980 and 1992, has now been succeeded by an Academy of Integral Studies, based in London. According to its departing editor, Kathleen Raine, in a valedictory leaflet inserted in *Temenos* 13, 1992, the Academy offers a programme of education founded on 'the age-old Platonic trinity of the True, the Good and the Beautiful, the sacred ground of every civilisation'.) In a 1987 issue David Maclagan published a number of templum drawings whose central image was of a square 'precinct', the

setting up of a 'frame' or *temenos*. We made contact with David who, it transpired, runs an art therapy course — in Sheffield! We met him, bought three of his templum drawings, and used one of them (with his blessing) as the inspiration for our logo.

As regards our relation to other organisations, from its inception Temenos has been an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling (BAC) and its RACE Division. Through our local contacts and our common experience in the mental health/illness field, we met Dr Jim Gomersall, Senior Lecturer in Psychotherapy at the Centre for Psychotherapeutic Studies at the University of Sheffield, who became our honorary consultant psychiatrist. He welcomed us to Sheffield, took an interest in our work and acted as our psychiatric consultant until his death in 1995. His generosity, warmth and width and depth of interest across different therapeutic approaches was refreshing, non-sectarian and appreciated by many. Although we only knew him personally for a couple of years, we miss him: he influ-

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enced us and is part of our history.

Our current consultant is Professor Alec Jenner, an experienced and well-respected psychiatrist who amongst his other activities is the editor of *Asylum*, a magazine for democratic psychiatry. Our choice of consultants reflects our experience and our interest in and commitment to the tradition of radical and social psychiatry. Other organisational relationships include the fact that we enjoy a mutual consultative relationship with the Institute of Person-Centred Learning. We have and are developing links to other local and national organisations, particularly those advancing person-centred philosophy and practice. Temenos is also a member of the international Association for the Development of the Person-Centered Approach, which marks our commitment as an organisation to the person-centred approach (PCA), and we have contributed to its journal.

With the foundation of Temenos we created an identity as a small organisation that is separate from our personal identities, dividing the 'clinical' therapeutic and supervisory services which we each offer individually from the range of services in the field of human relations which Temenos provides: training, personal and professional development, consultancy and research. Of these, we have concentrated our efforts over the past five years on in-house training and, specifically, the establishment of a three-year, part-time diploma course in person-centred counselling, of which we are both directors, together with Mike Worrall. A postgraduate diploma in person-centred psychotherapy is planned to begin in 1999 and this will be directed by Keith. The first two

years of the counselling course are academically accredited by Sheffield Hallam University (and negotiations are continuing as regards the modular advanced year), a substantial piece of work undertaken by Max Manin, administrative director of Temenos.

Details of courses and workshops Temenos offers are available from the address at the end of these articles. Here we focus on four aspects of Temenos which reflect developments and changes over the five years, and also on our philosophy (see also next section).

Participation

The initial cohort of trainees/learners began the course in February 1994. Ever since the first counselling course meeting in April 1996 course representatives (one from each of the three years of the course plus one representing the year in between the end of the formal course and the diploma exam) have participated fully and equally with staff in decision-making about the course, including, importantly, the assessment criteria.

In view of criticisms and concerns about various aspects of the BAC, and interest in alternative perspectives on individual and course accreditation and individual registration, we held a meeting earlier this year of all those concerned with Temenos (then just over 50 people) to discuss whether or not we should apply for course accreditation. The ballot held following the meeting resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of applying.

Duration and structure

We encourage each trainee to take the time appropriate to them to complete their

journey through the course. Some complete only the foundation year, which provides a thorough grounding in the PCA; others take time out between years and each trainee takes the diploma exam when they have fulfilled the registration requirements and when they are ready in themselves. Most trainees thus take more than the minimum three years to complete their training; indeed this year, in December 1999, four years after the beginning of our first foundation year, we shall have three graduates. In this, as with most aspects of organisation at Temenos, the structure follows and supports the process.

Generally the design of the course may be likened to that of an opening flower. The foundation year is a closed training/learning group facilitated by a tutor who works with the group for seven of the ten (two-and-a-half-day) modules. The focus of the intermediate year is on applications of the PCA, includes a comparative component; and is facilitated by a number of trainers. The advanced year is shaped by the training group who collectively with two members of staff determine the year's programme and their individual pathway through it. Most of the advanced year modules are open to the wider learning community of counsellors and others interested in the PCA. Although this level of openness (and the consequent lack of a continuous, closed training group) has been difficult for some, there is a general recognition and appreciation of the desirability of open learning experiences.

Realism

One of the most serious criticisms of counselling courses and also (although not always accurately) of the PCA is that they

pay (and it pays) insufficient attention to the assessment of clients. Given the background and interest of the directors, and in response to this criticism, the course takes a positive and critical view of assessment, introducing it in the foundation year and applying it to the trainee's assessment of possible therapists and supervisors. In this and in promoting person-centred approaches to assessment we view assessment as necessary, mutual and reflexive.

We take a similar approach to the reality of mental illness and the necessity of its study. Whilst we agree with Rogers' (and others') criticisms of diagnosis and the medical model, we present and require trainees to study different understandings of mental illness, including recent and exciting developments in the PCA concerning illness, dissociative, fragile and psychotic processes, and pre-therapy. One of the requirements of the psychotherapy course is a psychiatric placement.

Philosophy

Temenos is a small organisation and in many ways wishes to remain so. However, whilst 'small is beautiful' and offers distinct advantages in terms of contact between staff and trainees, we also suffer from a negative economy of scale in that our overheads are the same as they would be if supporting greater numbers of trainees. The practical results of our philosophy — for example our training groups comprise no more than 12 trainees and we sometimes have two experienced facilitators working with such groups — have financial implications and we are currently discussing how to increase our income without losing our integrity.

We are keen to promote the collective

sense of Temenos and to devolve even more responsibility for its development and direction. With this in mind, and consistent with the tradition of the PCA, and also to coincide with our fifth anniversary celebrations, we held the first of what will probably become an annual community meeting day in October 1998, facilitated by Colin Lago. This day had an open agenda and was an opportunity for all those involved in Temenos — directors, tutors, facilitators, past and present trainees and graduates (now a total of over 80 people) — to discuss matters of interest and concern to them. Two trainees participating in the day, Liz and Patrick Bond, identified eight streams of discussion which flowed in and out of each other on the day: the five years, celebration, 'we'-ness, identity, community, communication, vision and purposeful growth. The outcome of the community meeting day was the creation of a number of networks which will take forward these themes.

The future

Although to date we ourselves have directed the development of Temenos, we have also brought in a number of people to help us with both the day-to-day running of Temenos as well as its establishment as an organisation with a foundation and a future. Key in this is Max Manin, our administrative director, who, since joining us in 1994, has done far more than his extensive job description demands. Whilst at present we retain directorial control of

Temenos, we share with Mike Worrall the direction of the counselling course. Mike is an invaluable colleague whose facilitative abilities are respected and appreciated by trainees and staff alike and are matched by his keen advocacy of the PCA. Since September 1998 he has been taking a further role in the direction of the counselling course. In addition to the directors our present staff group comprises Penny Allen, Fiona Purdie, Jasvinder Singh and Pam Winter (Dominic Davies recently resigned after two years as a course tutor). All the staff have contributed — and continue to contribute — enormously to the development of Temenos, the counselling course, its structures, procedures and life. Our external support structures include Brian Thorne as complaints mediator, Tony Merry as courses consultant and Terri Spy as external examiner, as well as a number of individual and joint regular supervisors and occasional consultants. Our choice of personnel is characterised by their understanding and appreciation of the PCA, their experience and ability to apply the philosophy of the PCA to their practice and to their role as facilitators; their enjoyment of helping to develop people and theory; and, importantly, their independence. We want staff sufficiently independent of us as directors in order to promote good and critical, reflective practice and to prevent Temenos becoming a closed, introspective and incestuous organisation. One result of this policy is that we enjoy long and lively course meetings!

The Philosophy of Temenos

Keith Tudor and Louise Embleton Tudor

The philosophy of any organisation rests initially on the vision of its founders, subsequently on how that vision develops over time, and ultimately on how the organisation survives their departure. The philosophy and conceptual ground of Temenos springs from three principal sources: the archetypal symbol of *temenos* itself; the principles of the person-centred approach (PCA); and a political view of therapy and education/training which locates these as socio-therapeutic activities.

In our clinical and educative practice we both regard ourselves as reflective practitioners, in that we are concerned to explore and understand the theoretical and conceptual basis on which we (and others) practise, and to make explicit the underlying assumptions of practice and theory. We are also intentional practitioners, in that we are explicit and intentional about our culture and social context, as Keith aimed to show in a 1997 article (with Jasvinder Singh) in the *Person-Centered Journal*. Our courses are primarily designed to educate and train people in practice as professional and ethical practitioners and we do so by promoting a high standard of knowledge and comprehension of that practice. We enjoy writing about and developing reflection on practice and theory: between us we have published two books and over 30 articles and chapters on mental health, social policy, counselling and psychotherapy. We are also active in our encouragement of

others to express themselves in this and other ways.

As regards affiliation, we subscribe to the various codes of ethics of a number of professional bodies and associations to which we belong. We encourage trainees to develop their own personal code of ethics and to view critically the range of professional bodies/associations and independent networks relevant to therapists and the growth and development of counselling and psychotherapy — again, encouraging independence of thought and spirit.

'Temenos'

The word *temenos* comes from the Greek *temno*, meaning to cut or draw a line. Before a temple was built, a single furrow was drawn at the edge of the precinct of the future temple precinct to separate and define the sacred ground. Thus 'temenos' means a piece of land cut or marked off from common uses and dedicated to a god or sacred purpose. Whilst the origins of the word and usage date back to the early Epic period of Greece, the concept of 'a place set aside' appears both in Jung's writings as a symbol of the self and in Adler's as the *vas* or crucible inside which transmutation takes place. 'Temenos' as a crucible for transformative change is an appropriate image for an organisation based in Sheffield which, despite the decline in employment in the steel industry due to its political defeat in the 1980s, now produces more steel than it ever has and, as a city, is

in a period of regeneration, the subject of a number of governmental initiatives including health action zoning.

The retaining of the Greek word honours its origins and reflects a transcultural and transhistorical tradition, both of which we view as essential to the theory and practice of therapy. Bounded and sacred spaces appears through the centuries and in different cultures: in India, for instance, *akasa* (space) is according to Malekin traditionally regarded as 'the subtlest of elements'; in Islam the plan of the *temenos* includes a fountain which has developed as the court of the mosque with the ritual washhouse in the centre. By retaining the Greek word we are also, as Keith's chapter in *Integrative Counselling* will describe, associating ourselves with other concepts essential to therapy or healing: *metanoia* (change), *kairos* (time) and *koinonia* (community).

For us, the concept of 'temenos' represents the importance of the external boundary around the place set aside — in this case for therapeutic purposes. In *Psychology and Alchemy* Jung comments on the 'establishing [of] a protected *temenos*, a taboo area where [the client] will be able to meet the unconscious'. More recently Haule has seen this as a sacred space, separated from 'the realm of profane social interactions' by an invisible wall which encourages the emergence of the 'we' (the 'I' and the 'you' of the therapeutic relationship). Given our political backgrounds and concerns, it is important that our own *Temenos* is not an isolated place set aside, but rather one which is located in and part of the community: temples and shamans may be 'set apart', but are nevertheless still integral to their immediate society.

The concept and experience of 'space' is essential to therapy and its associated activities (supervision, training, consultancy), whether as extra-psychoic space in the form and provision of the external, material space or setting in which therapy takes place, or as intra-psychoic space, that is, the client's experience of their internal therapeutic space in which they may explore and/or resolve their distress or dis-ease. It is important that the external surroundings of *Temenos* reflect this: indeed, Malekin suggests that it is 'the fundamental job of architecture to manifest *akasa*'; the garden, the premises, the kitchen, the sofas, light, warmth and flowers — all represent a journey into the space set aside.

The person-centred approach

Although both of us trained in other approaches (Keith in gestalt and then transactional analysis at *Metanoia* and Louise in humanistic and integrative psychotherapy at the *Minster Centre*), we have both over the years since our initial trainings come back and moved on to the person-centred approach. We are committed to promoting its integrity and depth, including the necessity and sufficiency of its six therapeutic conditions. Despite popular myths and misunderstandings about its insufficiency we find in the PCA a comprehensive view of the person and of personality; a theoretical framework which includes perspectives on child development, on psychopathology or psychological disturbance as well as on 'psychosology' or health, and clear views about the nature and process of change in terms both of individual personality and in (as well as of) groups.

Historically the PCA was one of the first theoretical approaches to develop a concept of the therapeutic relationship; indeed Rogers first referred to his (then) newer psychotherapy as 'relationship therapy'. Unlike many other therapeutic approaches, it has a well-developed theory of adult education and has a history of application in the wider social world, especially in cross-cultural communication and conflict resolution in the context of oppressive social and political relations. Here we briefly outline key areas of the PCA and their implication for the philosophy and work of Temenos.

Assumptions about the 'model' of the person

The assumptions of the PCA about the model or image of the person are that people are basically trustworthy and that, in common with every living organism, we have an inherent tendency to actualise: to grow, to differentiate and to develop. Human beings are—or become—open to experience, trusting in their organism, focused on an internal (rather than external) locus of evaluation, and willing to be a process (rather than a product). The implications of these assumptions for Temenos are that we trust the person or the trainee, for instance, to trust their experience of learning and that they best know their own way, style, and pace of learning. Thus we have developed a system whereby trainees plan their own reading, and, as long as deadlines are met, decide in which order to hand in their assignments (case studies and essays). When trainees question and challenge staff, the course and its structures, we acknowledge their genuine motivation: all behaviour, according to

the PCA, is the needs-driven and goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as perceived. Over the five years, changing decisions concerning policy and practice on courses reflect our own increasing trust in our organisms, those of others and in the organism and organisational development of Temenos.

The nature of the processes of personal change

This is represented in the PCA by the necessary and sufficient conditions of personality change and the theory of the process of change, which reflects a movement from fixity and rigidity (of experiencing, relating, personal constructs and so forth) to fluidity. The nature of these processes of personal change is paralleled by the nature of change in and through an educational setting such as the counselling course. Thus the learning is process-centred, with the learning group, in collaboration with their year tutor and facilitators, having an increasing degree of autonomy over the course content.

Assumptions about the link between the inner (psychological) and the outer (social/political) world

For proponents of the PCA, the fully functioning person is essentially a social person and thus there is a strong link between the inner world of the individual and the outer world of that individual's immediate environment and the wider social/political environment: for us, the PCA is more sociocentric than egocentric. Small and large groups are a crucial part of learning/training in the PCA and the forum for much personal as well as professional development work. Having established a

foundation in the theory and practice of the PCA, the second two years of the counselling course are concerned with its wider applications and its comparison with other approaches to individual, collective and social psychology. With much of the modular advanced year being open, trainees are encouraged to learn from other practitioners interested in the PCA and, beyond that, to network with other person-centred groups and organisations both nationally and internationally. Over the years, as Keith has described in *Person-Centred Practice*, the PCA has developed from its original focus on client-centred therapy (and the inner, intrapsychic world of the individual client) to wider, social applications such as large group experiences and community-building as well as understanding current social/political events.

At the same time as promoting the integrity of the PCA, we also acknowledge that we live in a pluralistic world and, indeed, that a part of being a reflective (or reflexive) practitioner in this world is being able to deal with different frames of reference, to translate and to present and explain our theory to others. This is the basis for introducing comparative theory and for the course requirement that trainees make two presentations on subjects of their choice.

The person of the therapist and relationship between therapist and client

In many respects these areas are the core concerns of the PCA — indeed Rogers first referred to his 'newer' psychotherapy as 'relationship therapy' — and are areas in which the PCA has made a major contribution to the therapeutic community. The mutuality, genuineness, openness, respect

and understanding which characterises both the person of the therapist and their relationship with clients is paralleled in the educative/training relationship. The philosophy of education/training at Temenos is informed by perspectives on adult education such as Rogers' own work on learning and that of others such as Paulo Freire (rather than a model based on child development), and is thus andragogic rather than pedagogic. This, in turn, is consistent with the 'model' of the person, the necessary qualities of the therapist and the conditions of the learning/therapeutic relationship.

Who is the work suitable for?

Our belief is that with necessary and sufficient education/training, most people are capable of doing this work of 'soul healing' and that those who have been psychologically damaged in some way have particular potential for helping others heal. However, working as a counsellor/psychotherapist is demanding, and training to do this work is even more demanding, the more so as trainees are often in full- or part-time employment. The demands of the Temenos counselling course increase through the three years: in addition to attendance at modules and course reading, course requirements include analysed taped transcripts of sessions, case studies, presentations, essays (if trainees opt to complete an 'academic strand'), client work, supervision, a minimum of 40 hours of personal therapy (although this is the subject of some debate between the competing demands of consistency with person-centred philosophy and current BAC requirements) and, for the qualifying exam, written and oral presentations. Given this, on our mutual assessment days

we are open with potential trainees that we are considering the following qualities:

- a certain self-awareness, maturity and stability
- an ability to make use of and to reflect on experiences outside the course
- a capacity to cope with the various demands of the course (as above)
- an ability to form a helping relationship
- a willingness to participate, to challenge and to be challenged
- an awareness of issues of power, oppression and discrimination.

Sociotherapy: The personal is political and the political is personal

The third source of our philosophy combines our interest in politics and the political context of counselling and psychotherapy with the sociotherapeutic tradition of the therapeutic communities movement. In our clinical work with clients we have been promoting the notion of a non-residential therapeutic community and we are keen to develop and encourage practice which helps to make existing communities more therapeutic.

This is also reflected in our educational practice. The four elements of Temenos' history outlined in the first section reflect four sociological processes or principles of a sociotherapeutic community as identified by Rapaport:

- openness and access to decision-making (democracy)
- commitment to the trainee's individual

journey and the open advanced year (permissiveness)

- emphasis on assessment and knowledge of mental health/illness (reality confrontation)
- 'small is beautiful' and community meetings (communalism)

From its early days, psychotherapy and, more recently, counselling have been political in a number of ways. Freud, Jung and Reich all considered the relationship between psychoanalysis and culture. Equally the politics of psychotherapy, its organisation and its institutionalisation have been the subject of debate (and splits) ever since Freud and Jung parted company. As intentional people and practitioners, we welcome the recent resurgence in interest in the politics of therapy, not least through the pages of *Self & Society* and through organisations such as Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility (of which we are both members), touching on issues such as organisation, education and training, assessment, accreditation and registration. Our aim at Temenos is to provide the physical, conceptual and emotional space in which people may reflect on relationships — with themselves, their immediate and wider social (economic/political/ecological) environments. Whilst we recognise and celebrate diversity and pluralism, we still find the person-centred approach a necessary and sufficient philosophical framework for our therapeutic and educational endeavour and enquiries.

Further reading

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R.N. Rapaport, *Community as Doctor*, Tavistock, 1960

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Keith Tudor, 'The Person-Centred Approach and the Political Sphere', (Special Issue) *Person Centred Practice* 5(2), 1997

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My Experience of Temenos and its Counselling Course

Dave Horsfield

I am 43 years old and have recently completed the final year of the Temenos person-centred counselling diploma course. I am now preparing for the diploma exam which I intend to take in July. I am excited and apprehensive about graduating. It will mark for me the end of the beginning of what is becoming a huge change in my life.

I previously worked for 16 years as a civil engineer in the construction industry. My engineering training was at a polytechnic where I enrolled on a degree course and left with an HND. I struggled to absorb the vast amount of teaching that was thrust upon me, preferring to miss lectures and involve myself more in the social life that surrounded me. I guess in some ways I was not ready to commit myself to further study, and I now know also that the way in which the training was presented did not suit my way of learning. I do

not easily absorb theory if it is presented on a blackboard, and in the foundation year at Temenos I was very excited to discover a method of learning that did suit me. Whilst talking about my experiences and listening to others in the training group, my struggle to understand was sometimes made easier by the skilful ability of the facilitators to relate person-centred theory to what we were talking about. It was like a light being switched on, and each time something was illuminated or became clear my excitement grew. I fondly remember times when I wrestled with ideas and drew from my wrestling some answers — and more questions — that really meant something to me. I was not learning 'parrot-fashion', I was learning through my experiences. I was also developing my own ideas and thinking about the person-centred approach, or PCA.

Dave Horsfield is a trainee counsellor.

Becoming a counsellor

When I went to Temenos in 1995 to attend a mutual assessment day for the counselling course I found myself sitting in a room with others who had also come to find out more about the course. Some of these people already had experience as counsellors; others, like myself, were from very different backgrounds. At that time I was not thinking about starting a new career as a counsellor. I was a member of a therapy group that was run by Keith Tudor. I had become interested in knowing more about my own process in personal development and had just spent a few months reading Eric Berne on transactional analysis and Carl Rogers on person-centred theory, in the hope of understanding more about myself. I remember thinking that Carl Rogers' writings on personality theory made a lot of sense: it was almost as if he was writing about me.

During the mutual assessment day and the subsequent interview I came to the decision that I wanted to do the foundation year of the counselling course because it offered me the opportunity to further my understanding of myself in a training environment. I looked forward to relating the theory of the PCA to my experiences in the group. With Keith also being involved with the course we were both very open and clear about the boundaries that we needed to hold because of the dual relationships of therapist/client and trainer/trainee. We consulted the British Association for Counselling and took their suggestions on board. We agreed that we wanted to be clear with other trainees and trainers about our other, therapeutic relationship and that Keith, as an occasional facilitator

of modules during the course, would not have any input in the assessment of my work and would not observe my counselling practice.

The foundation year was an exciting and challenging experience which seemed to pass very quickly. I felt I was in a place of safety and nurture where I could learn about myself, other group members and basic theory of the PCA, with the help of my tutor, Mike Worrall. Throughout that first year he offered the core conditions of the PCA, and the six conditions which Rogers states are necessary and sufficient for therapeutic change were all present to varying degrees within the group. This provided me with an environment for personal growth through which I gained more awareness of myself, especially in being able to reclaim some uncomfortable feelings and thoughts about myself that I had suppressed. I decided that I wanted to continue to the intermediate year and eventually complete the course.

Over the three-year period the course changed from a closed group (in the foundation year) to an open group (in the advanced year). Looking back over this time I can see that, overall, this change was a very healthy experience for me. Having other facilitators and trainers enabled me to see their individual styles and the ways in which they reflected, applied and lived the PCA. Meeting other practitioners in the (open) advanced year gave me opportunities to encounter people established in the world of counselling and learn from their experiences as therapists and practitioners.

Problems

Although I can now see how this course

structure has benefited my development, both personally and professionally, there were times when it felt very difficult. The most difficult period for me was the beginning of the intermediate year. I was missing the cohesiveness of the foundation year group. There were different people in the new group; some of the foundation year trainees had decided not to continue or else to take a year out, and others (from previous foundation years) had joined 'us'. I also missed my foundation year tutor. It was a big upheaval; I stopped saying what I thought and felt because it now seemed too risky, and because I stopped taking risks I think I slowed down and sometimes stopped learning. I did not experience the conditions of the PCA the way I had in the foundation year. In that year I had developed a trust in both tutor and trainees and had revealed more of my life and what I was feeling. In turn they had seemed to trust me. I had felt a closeness between us in which I was accepted. It had been a place where I could work through my difficulties with other people in the group and see our differences.

I experienced another struggle in the intermediate year: because it suited them better, some of the group wanted more structured learning, with theory taught more traditionally, whereas I was looking for a continuation of my foundation year experience. As the year progressed, however, my difficulties lessened and I became more involved in the group. A big change for me was the realisation that I would get more from my training and learning if I contributed, rather than withdrawing. By the time I started the advanced year I was seeing clients, and knew there were specific areas of the PCA that I wanted to

concentrate on in my learning. This final year has flexibility built into it, which allows students to choose from a large selection of modules and to introduce ideas for modules of their own. At a planning day prior to the start of this year I decided that I wanted to look at the core conditions of the PCA in more depth; I also wanted to develop my own thinking about the therapeutic relationship and to look at group work in more detail, comparing the different theories of therapy related to person-centred theory. I was able to tailor my course of study to what I felt I needed to learn and to integrate it with the work I was doing with my clients. My module choices were informed by my experience with clients and by the areas I wanted to develop into in the future.

An ecological metaphor

There was a continuous thread of growth for me throughout the three years of my training. I liken my experience to that of a seed of unknown origin being planted, watered and nurtured in an incubator (this is during the foundation year). As the plant develops shoots and becomes stronger and healthier, it is introduced by stages to the outside world (the counselling profession) in which it will live. Finally, it is planted into the garden and becomes part of, and a valuable contribution to, that garden.

As I write this article at the end of my final year, I am able to look back on my diploma course and see how I have grown, and I feel ready to bring that part of my life to an end. I look forward with excitement and relish to working in and being a part of the counselling community. My transition into that community has already hap-

pened at my own pace and when I wanted it to happen. I am still enjoying my placement in a local GP practice; I am involved in the counselling element of a local project established to help men who are or who have been violent. I am developing a network of counselling colleagues within my local area who are outside the Temenos organisation, and I hope in the future to work with some of them. I am becoming known in Sheffield as a counsellor and the number of client referrals I receive from my new contacts is on the increase. I have developed contacts and friendships nationally and internationally with established practitioners who share my interest in person-centred large groups. At the beginning of last year I took part in a person-centred large group in Arizona, where I spent time with people who had worked and trained with Carl Rogers, and I have also spent a week in a person-centred community in Devon.

Not set in stone

Throughout my three years as a trainee with Temenos I have experienced both the organisation and the counselling course as continually evolving. Every three months a meeting is held to discuss issues arising around the course; this is open to course

directors, tutors, trainers, trainee representatives, the external course consultant and a newly appointed co-ordinator of supervisors for trainees. At the beginning of my foundation year I volunteered and was nominated to represent my year and peers at these meetings. It was a role that I also held for the subsequent two years until I completed the taught course. The meetings provide a forum where everybody's opinions and ideas about all aspects of the course are aired. They have contained exactly the sort of lively discussion and debate which has been my experience of the philosophy and practice of the PCA. They are non-hierarchical, and contributions I have made on behalf of myself and my peers have been included in the course.

The role of course representative has had its frustrations. I have not always felt appreciated by my peers for the contributions I have made and the diligence with which I have kept people up to date with the content of meetings. Despite any drawbacks, however, being a course representative has been a unique and exciting experience. I took an avid interest in the development of the course because I knew I had something to offer, and I think it has benefited from my input and that of other trainees. I have also learnt a lot about the issues surrounding both this course and training courses in general. To be viewed by course directors, tutors and facilitators as a valued and individual contributor to the course development symbolises for me how Temenos as an organisation holds and believes in the values of the person-centred approach as a way of living and being.

