

Toward an Integral Ecopsychology: In Service of Earth, Psyche, and Spirit

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Abstract: In this paper, I advance a proposal for an integral ecopsychology, defining it as the study of the multileveled connection between humans and Earth. The initial section expounds the critical moment we as a species find ourselves at and, touching on different ecological schools, focuses on ecopsychology as a less divisive lens from which to assess our planetary moment. In the next section, I explore three avenues in which the project of ecopsychology enters into dialogue with spiritual and religious wisdom, thus expanding the project's scope while spelling out the particular lineage of integral philosophy followed. The next section addresses the value of integral ecopsychology in facing the ecological crisis, highlighting the importance of seeing such a crisis as a crisis of human consciousness. At the level of consciousness, religious and spiritual wisdom have much to offer, in particular the anthropocosmic or "cosmic human" perspective introduced in the next section. The relevance of the anthropocosmic perspective to cultivate ecologically sound behaviors and ecopsychological health is explored and presented as a main means to bringing ecopsychology in direct contact with religious and spiritual teachings. This contact is necessary for the study of the multileveled connection between humans and Earth. Finally, I propose an expanded definition of integral ecopsychology while offering three tenets deemed essential for its advancement.

Keywords: anthropocosmos, ecological crisis, health, integral ecopsychology, sacred.

The connection between humans and the Earth, in most industrialized societies, lacks the necessary depth and quality to appropriately address the ecological challenges of our times. The modern human has contributed to unleashing a global ecological crisis arguably comparable in magnitude and scope to the previous mass extinction that occurred 65 million years ago, known for exterminating more than half of the species inhabiting the Earth.² Meanwhile, the creative capacities of our species, *Homo sapiens*, seem to have developed exponentially along with a great ability to alter the functioning of the natural systems of the Earth. The celebration of the gifts of the human mind and heart stands in stark contrast with the systematic destruction inflicted upon the natural world. In fact, the very foundations and functioning of industrial societies appear to declare war against other species, the ecosystems they inhabit, and the geochemical processes that animate the whole planetary tapestry of the great blue jewel we have for a home.

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² Known as the K-T (Cretaceous-Tertiary) extinction event, it is one of five massive extinctions that have occurred in the past 500,000 years of the history of the Earth as evidenced in the fossil record.



Never in the history of humankind has the planet endured so many changes in such a short amount of time. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), “Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history” (p. 1). Biodiversity has rapidly declined in the past forty years, the demand on natural resources has doubled since 1960, and we are currently using the equivalent of 1.5 planets to support the lifestyle of industrial societies (World Wildlife Fund, 2012, para. 1). This signifies that the detrimental impact of humanity on rivers and oceans, forests and savannas, blue jays and snakes, the atmosphere and the rolling hills, is continually pushing the Earth to unknown territories with unforeseeable, and potentially catastrophic, outcomes. What would it take for us humans to envision the possibility of a healthier relationship with ourselves and our home, the Earth? In what follows I outline the bases for an integral ecopsychology as a more encompassing and spiritually informed lens through which to address our historical moment marked by the planetary ecological crisis.

Historical Background

As early as the publication of *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962), it became evident that there is no ecosystem on the planet left unaltered by human activity. The ubiquitous influence of one single species, amongst the estimated 10 million currently populating the Earth, has led scientists to coin the term “anthropocene” (Crutzen, 2002; Zalasiewicz et al., 2008) to designate a new geological era dominated by human activity. Through penetrating studies in biology, evolution, and religion, the new era has also been referred to as the “pyschozoic,” (Teilhard de Chardin, 1999, p. 124) given the orchestration and illumination of humanity’s powers of self-reflection. The term “ecozoic” (Berry, 1999, p. 8; Berry, 2006) was coined to refer to the emerging epoch in which the planet as a whole is of utmost concern to the human, collectively referring to the human–Earth conscious coupling as the “Earth community” (Berry, 1988, p. 6). In the same vein, the “planetary era” is the period, initialized in the 16th century, where more or less continuous communication was established between the five continents (Kelly, 2010; Morin, 2005). Taken together, the conscious entrance of the human presence to a planetary level appears to be one of the primary stories of our time.

The planetary ecological crisis has also been described as a novel kind of collective initiation pertaining to all members of our species. The planetary crucible can be seen as involving a collective rite of passage with the potential to initiate global social transformation by purifying destructive habits and inviting less disruptive ways of being to emerge. This process would be so profound as to trigger a species-ego death, that is, an archetypal death-rebirth experience for the human species (Bache, 2000). It appears as if the human species and the wider Earth community has embarked on a “trajectory of initiatory transformation, into a state of spiritual alienation, into an encounter with mortality on a global scale—from world wars and holocausts to the nuclear crisis and now the planetary ecological crisis” (Tarnas, 2002, p. 8). In these times when “the earth is currently operating in a no-analogue state” (Moore, Underdal, Lemke, & Loreau, 2001, para. 7), different researchers ascribe an underlying cause (or set of causes) to the crisis, according to their own lens and field of study.

Social ecologists believe that the root problem of ecological devastation is to be found in the hierarchical and oppressive dynamics characteristic of the social domain of human activity

(Bookchin, 2005). Deep ecologists ascertain that the flaw lies in the anthropocentric bias industrial citizens exercise in our daily lives and the correspondent lack of intrinsic value perceived in non-human species and their habitats (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Naess, 1995a, 1998b, 2008; Sessions, 1995). Supporters of ecofeminism maintain that there is a correlation between humans' destructive relationship to the Earth, the subjugation of women by men, and the historical dominance of patriarchal culture (Griffin, 1978; Merchant, 1980). Transpersonal ecology (Fox, 1995), an extension of the deep ecology movement in dialogue with transpersonal psychology, holds the view that the inability to expand the notion of self via a process of identification with the natural world is the key to the ecological crisis. Social ecology, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and associated schools of ecological thought³ commonly center themselves either on nature and the more-than-human world, or on culture and the social order, often offering polarizing points of view and repressing vital aspects needed for a more integral understanding of our relationship with the Earth.

A less divisive approach has been uncovered that highlights the inner aspects of the eco-crisis. This approach has at its core a fundamental pattern that pertains not only to the human domain but also to the ecologies of the Earth, helping to soften alienating narratives of the human-nature relationship and thus delving deeper into the causes of the ecological crisis. "What is the pattern which connects all the living creatures?" asks Bateson (as cited in Todd, 2005, p. 77). The pattern, he suggests, is mind itself: an eco-connective and collective mind underlying and guiding the material and energetic cycles of the planet. There is a turn inward here, a shift from externalities to an inner view of the natural world in its eco-mental dimension. This inner approach to the eco-crisis allows an expanded degree of freedom, fluidity, and permeability between humans and the Earth, resulting in a more comprehensive, and potentially more effective approach, to dealing with the ecological crisis. In addition, an integral or multileveled view of industrial humans' crippled connection to the Earth invites more penetrating questions in regards to the paradigmatic assumptions that contribute to our alienation from the Earth at ecological, psychological, and spiritual levels. Ecopsychology, or the psychological study of humans' connection to the Earth (Greenway, 2000; Roszak, 1992), is amenable to adopting such an encompassing, integral approach.

Ecopsychology and Spirit

The project of ecopsychology is a diverse and often disjointed effort to heal the relation between industrial humanity and the Earth.⁴ Ecopsychology is not a unified discipline partly due to the lack of an overarching organization or operational definition that encompasses the plurality of efforts sheltered under the umbrella of ecopsychology (Kahn & Hasbach, 2012; Fisher, 2002; Scull, 2000, 2008). This disorganization makes somewhat problematic a thorough assessment of the efforts made to date that incorporate the subtle and spiritual dimensions of our engagement with the Earth. Nonetheless, the efforts to bring to the forefront of ecopsychology the significance of spirituality and move in the direction of an integral ecopsychology broadly derive

³ These schools are considered some of the most representative of the "radical ecologies" (Merchant, 2005). For a comprehensive survey, see Esbjorn-Hargens & Zimmerman (2009).

⁴ For a glance at the history and many origins of ecopsychology, see Greenway (2000), Roszak (1992, 1995), Schroll (2007), and Scull (2000, 2008).

from three areas: Jungian ecopsychology, transpersonal psychology, and the field of religion and ecology.

The first area of influence is the most widespread, as most of ecopsychology, in one way or another, is influenced by Jungian psychology (Merritt, 2010, 2012). This area carries the potential caveat to psychologize the world and reduce the Earth to its psychological value alone and fail to incorporate the nuances that spiritual wisdom has to offer. On the other hand, Jungian psychology provides a rich repertoire of concepts and practices connected to the world's spiritual traditions. In the field of transpersonal psychology, Metzner's (1992, 1999) pioneering efforts have played a key role in bringing together Earth-based traditions with transpersonal psychology. John Davis (1998, 2010, 2011) has advanced a transpersonal ecopsychology focusing on the spiritual and non-dual experiences facilitated by the Earth. As with the larger field of transpersonal psychology, there is a danger of overemphasizing the transcendent and of repressing our ecological embeddedness along with the value of community and service. The field of religion and ecology, as the third area of influence, offers a thorough study of how the world's religions can and should contribute to better deal with the ecological crisis (Chapple & Tucker, 2000; Tucker, 2004; Tucker & Grim, 2001). Depending on the religious tradition under study, the psychological component can be rather weak and thus potentially detrimental for achieving genuine personal and societal change.

Although I am aware of the several strands of integral philosophy (i.e., Aurobindonian, Wilberian, Gebserian), the integral approach advanced in this paper is mostly based on the work of Thomas Berry. In a way, the present research constitutes an extension of Berry's (2009) integral ecology⁵ with the explicit inclusion of the psychological dimensions of our relation to the Earth. For Berry (1999, 2009), the cosmos as a whole is a source of divine expression that manifests in a particular way through the human venture; for cosmos and human are born out of the same universal evolutionary matrix. There exists, according to Berry, a complete implication of the cosmos in the human and of the human in the cosmos to the extent that the religiosity of our species is an expression of the spirituality of the cosmos, of the Earth. "Within this context the human activates one of the deepest dimensions of the universe and is, thus, integral with the universe since the beginning" (Berry, 2006, p. 57). The confluence of Berry's anthropocosmic or "cosmic human" perspective (addressed below) with current advances in ecopsychology conform the basis for my initial proposal of an integral ecopsychology, a formulation that would further equip us to face the challenges and gifts of the ecological crisis.

Integral Ecopsychology and the Ecological Crisis

The ecological crisis, from an integral ecopsychological perspective, is primarily seen as a fundamental psychological misconception of the value and role of the Earth in the health and evolution of the human species. The industrial human relationship to the Earth appears to be characterized by a fundamental amnesia of the psyche's own source—*psyche* and *oikos* (dwelling place or habitat in Greek) are seemingly severed. The human mind has cut itself off from the surrounding landscapes and fellow planetary organisms by placing a psychological straitjacket upon itself. While in a state of forgetfulness, humanity is only able to perceive the movements of

⁵ For a concise history of integral ecology, including Berry's contribution, see: Esbjorn-Hargens (2011).

its own creation. The non-human world seems to lack psychic reality; it is devoid of soul (Hillman, 1982, 1992), making it untenable for humans to meaningfully relate to the Earth at a psychological level (Abram, 2000).

The ecological crisis is a sign of psychological impairment in dire need of healing. The ecological crisis is the outward manifestation of a subtle, yet perhaps more alarming psychological predicament that has been variously referred as a “crisis of perception” (Capra, 1984, 1997), a “crisis of consciousness” (Bache, 2001; Gangadean, 2006; Russell, 2004), and a “crisis of meaning” (Brown, 2003; Wilber, 2000; Zimmerman, n.d.). The reduction of the human identity to its tangible and material aspects neglects the emotional, psychological, and spiritual spectrum vital for healthy development. This neglect of the true spectrum of our humanness is intimately intertwined with our conception of home, the Earth. In essence, the troubled relationship between industrial citizens and the Earth seems to reflect an epistemological fallacy derived from the human condition itself, alluded to by the Indian notion of *avidya* or “ignorance” and the conditioned world of its creation (*samsara*). It is at this deep, existential juncture of our relation to, and conception of, the Earth that ecopsychology is considerably nurtured by the wealth of wisdom that the world’s spiritual traditions have to offer regarding humanity’s potential.

The fundamental challenges posed by the ecological crisis instigate a reformulation of deep-seated values and beliefs commonly informed by spiritual and religious wisdom. Transpersonal psychology proposes that human psychology is better studied in a spiritual context (Daniels, 2005; Grof, 1985, 2000), thus complementing the exploration of a more integrally sustainable engagement with the Earth. The presence of spirit, as a more transcendent vector of the sacred along with the immanent manifestation of that continuum of sacrality, take part in reengaging the human body–mind with the Earth (Adams, 2010; Besthorn, Wulff, & St. George, 2009). It becomes possible to rescue and value the sacredness of Earth’s immanence without disregarding the transcendent qualities of the Absolute. The shift demanded by the ecological crisis is better understood and navigated through frameworks and models in direct contact with the spiritual core of consciousness.

Tucker and Grim (2001) and Tucker (2004) esteem that religions have entered an ecological phase, potentially providing societies with key insights to bring health, fulfillment, and a sense of the sacred to our embeddedness in the world. Researchers suggest that for religions to stay relevant they must address, in one way or another, the ecological crisis (Gottlieb, 2008; Taylor, 2009; Tucker, 2008). “Can religions re-evoke and encourage the deep sense of wonder that ignites human imagination in the face of nature’s beauty?” (Tucker, 2004, p. 8). Amongst the plethora of attitudes pertaining to the sacred, perhaps the greatest gift of the confluence of religion and ecology involves bringing the role and presence of the divine to the forefront of the nexus between humans and the Earth.

For Thomas Berry (1999), the recognition of the sacredness of Earth requires the construction of a *new story* from which to derive meaning and guidance to embark on the great work of healing and transformation of our species. This story is attuned to the evolutionary epic of the universe from the big originating burst 14 billion years ago to the accretion of the Earth to the emergence of computers and complex life forms. The cosmos as an evolutionary, interdependent

continuum is the essential sacred story to root our efforts for shifting consciousness and dealing with the ecological crisis. Joanna Macy (2007; Macy & Brown, 1998) strategically differentiates three dimensions of what she calls the “Great Turning” (2007, p. 139) or the transition to a life-sustaining society. Whereas the first two dimensions have to do with slowing the destructive pace of societies and creating more viable structures, the third dimension is the shift in consciousness. Without tending the terrain of consciousness, the other two dimensions of the Great Turning would not endure.

On the other hand, since the Axial Age (Jaspers, 1951/2003), from about 800 BCE to 200 CE, certain elements of the world’s religions have contributed to a systematic alienation from the Earth and the cosmos. This alienation is facilitated by an emphasis on transcendence and the prime relevance of sacred scriptures (Berry, 1988; White, 1967). With the advent of the Enlightenment period and the rise of industrial societies, the Earth became subject to control and manipulation given that the presence of God had been posited beyond the manifest world. Although with a wide range of nuance, rationalism, the idea of individual salvation, a God figure removed from creation, and a machine-like world, are some of the assumptions underlying the industrial worldview (McKibben, 2006; Merchant, 1980). However, religious traditions often elaborate on how humans, Earth, and the cosmos, are infused with the sacredness permeating all creation.

The Anthropocosmic Vision

By engaging in a comparative analysis of religions, Eliade (1958) noted a pervading “anthropocosmic experience” (p. 455) in which the human is seen as permeable to the living, sacred ordering of the world. This permeability between human and cosmos is taken to be the epitome of religious experience and provides a fresh existential dimension wherein the human presence is situated within the cosmic matrix (Eliade, 1991). A religious experience constitutes the realization of belonging to the cosmos often achieved by way of micro-macrocosmic correspondences or “anthropocosmic homologies” (Eliade, 1987, p. 169) that favor a deeper intimacy between humans, the cosmos, and the sacred.

The anthropocosmic vision is present in several religious and spiritual traditions. The Christian tradition has the idea that humans were created in the “image” and “likeness” of God (Gen 1:26) and in Kabbalah the concept of *adam kadmon* or “primal man” figures prominently as the divine human expressed by the ten *sefirot* of the Tree of Life (Jung, 1977). In the Western tradition, the anthropocosmic knowing of unity and sacred reciprocity between humans and the cosmos is evident in the theory of correspondences (Faivre, 1994). This theory, based on the set of homologies between humans and the cosmos, is said to be one of the keystones of Western alchemy and philosophy (Hanegraaff, 1997) and is perhaps best represented by the Hermetic maxim, “as above, so below.” Paracelsus tells us: “Heaven is man, and man is heaven, and all men together are one heaven, and heaven is nothing but one man” (as cited in Jacobi, 1951, p. 113).

We find a long history of anthropocosmic awareness in the Eastern traditions as expressed in the Vedas, the yoga traditions, and Buddhism. The Rig Veda outlines the correspondence between the cosmic winds and the breath, the cosmic pillar (*skambha*) and the vertebral column,

and the idea of the “center of the world” as a point in the heart or axis traversing the human energy centers (Eliade, 1958, p. 117). The Purusha sukta, the hymn of the Cosmic Being in the Rig Veda, lays out a story of creation in which the cosmic being (Purusha) is dismembered and certain parts of its body constitute the different corners of the world, planets, gods, humans, animals, society, and so on. The Atharva Veda (10.7) relates how the outgrowths of skambha, a representation of Purusha and Brahman as the axis mundi, disclose the harmony between the numerous worldly expressions and their inmost source (Bloomfield, 1973).

The Upanishadic doctrine of atman-Brahman advances that the omnipresent, imperishable creative principle of the Absolute (Brahman) is said to be manifest in human form as atman, equally found at a macrocosmic scale in the entire cosmos. Specific correlations are made between the anatomy of the cosmic person and the world are outlined in the *Aitareya* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads* while the *Mundaka Upanishad* (2.1.4) gives a detailed correlations between the bodily parts of the cosmic person and the world (Radhakrishnan, 1995, p. 680). The resultant anthropocosmic vision, in which humanity is transformed into “the public property of the cosmos” (Weiming, 1989, p. 102) is given clear expression in the Bhagavad Gita (6.29), where we read that “the man whose self is in Yoga, sees the self in all beings and all beings in the self, he is equal-visioned everywhere” (in Sri Aurobindo, 1995, p. 29). *Atman* or the cosmic person from whom both cosmos and human emerge out of acts as a kind of holographic matrix that enters into a developmental process through the dynamics of the world ever extending into *Brahman*.

The anthropocosmic impulse is found even in the commonly considered world-denying *raja* or “royal” path of yoga. Patanjali tells us that meditating (samyaama) on specific bodily areas that correspond to the sun, the moon, and the stars, gives rise to cosmic wisdom and the orientation of the body within it (Yoga Sutras, 3.26–29).⁶ Similarly, asana or a sacramental bodily posture, when executed correctly, is aimed at uniting (samapatti) with the infinite (ananta) (Yoga Sutras, 2.47). Furthermore, the Yoga Sutras (2.18) maintain that asana has the potential to take the practitioner beyond the grip of the opposites of self and cosmos. Patanjali states that yoga is a means of refinement that leads to a transparency of being where, due to a diminishment of the factors of suffering, the unity among grasping, grasping, and grasped becomes manifest (Yoga Sutras 1.41). In a state of conscious transparency, unity is revealed and the practitioner becomes like a “clear jewel” (Chapple, 2008, p. 33). Human and cosmos enter into a state of unity (samapatti) and ecstasy (samadhi) that enables the inherent luminosity of existence, the “clear jewel,” to shine forth.

In the Tantric tradition, the identification and deep resonance of the human and the cosmos is taken to a fuller expression. “What is here is elsewhere; what is not here is nowhere,” says the Vishvara Tantra (as cited in Lysebeth, 2002, p. 5), conveying at once the essence of Tantra and the holographic nature of the human and the cosmos intimated since the Vedic period. The human microcosm (body–mind) is transfigured into a temple, a sacred symbol homologized with the macrocosms. In the Kalachakratra, the Buddha reveals the great secret: “As it is without, so it is in the body” (Wallace, 2001, p. 65); and the Adibhudatantra adds, “as it is in the body, so it is elsewhere” (p. 66). The human re-enactment of cosmic creation is the key that restores divine

⁶ The translations of the *Yoga Sutras* used throughout the document are Aranya (1983) and Chapple (2008).

order (rita), yoking into conscious transparency the sacrality and mutual belonging of the micro and the macro, the human and the cosmos.

In the Avatamsaka or Flower Ornament Sutra it is said that Indra fashioned the cosmos by casting a jeweled net (Cook, 1977). The net stretched to infinity in all directions and a glistening jewel was found in each juncture of the net. An endless number of jewels adorn the infinite net. Any one jewel in the net reflects the luminosity of all the jewels and each of the jewels reflected within a particular jewel in turn reflects all other jewels resulting in a net of infinite reflection. The homologous relation between human and cosmos is present elsewhere in the Buddhist tradition. “Our body is the bodhi tree, and our mind a mirror bright,” Shen-hsiu tells us (as cited in Price & Mou-lam, 2005, p. 70). The human body is equated with the place in which the Buddha reached enlightenment, the bodhi tree, and the mind is said to reflect the luminous qualities of its true nature. The dharma (dharma), the body of teachings derived from Buddha *Sakyamuni*'s realization, aims to disclose the pristine essence of all that is. The Mahayana tradition sees dharma as the seed planted all throughout the cosmos, seed that is known as “Buddha nature.” The human body–mind and cosmos partake of the awakened, intermeshed nature.

Opening to the Healing Reciprocity of Humans and Earth

An anthropocosmic perspective provides an encompassing worldview that values the confluence of Earth, humans, and the sacred. In contrast with schools of ecological thought centered on human value (anthropocentrism), the whole of life (biocentrism) or life and its environment (ecocentrism), an anthropocosmic approach provides a conciliatory path between humans, life, and their ecosystems. The anthropocosmic perspective is based on the idea of a continuity of being (Weiming, 1985), a seamless continuum of interiority and sacrality between humans, heaven, and Earth. This continuum goes beyond any form of “centrism” that may give rise to fragmentary and ecologically detrimental worldviews and behaviors. As Mickey (2007) tells us, “Whether small or large, biotic or abiotic, human or nonhuman, home or beyond, everything and everyone can become an echo-box resonating with cosmic repercussions” (p. 244).

The ecologically oriented worldviews and attitudes facilitated by the anthropocosmic weaving of humans and the cosmos allow for the fullness of humanity to participate in the sacredness of Earth. This participation demands a reformulation of the understanding of religious experience itself. Anthropocosmic participation invariably manifests as a hierophany, a disclosure of the numinosity of both humans and the cosmos. The anthropocosmic vision summons a fuller understanding of humanity by virtue of bringing forth commonly repressed aspects of our being that exist in resonance with the cosmos, ultimately conceived as chief source of the sacred. Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (1992) has coined the term “interbeing” to refer to the net-like Buddha nature at the heart of the cosmos. He tells us, “To be is to inter-be. We cannot just be by ourselves alone. We have to inter-be with every other thing” (p. 96).

The anthropocosmic view of Earth relies on a healthier mode of relation between humans and Earth that rests on the rediscovery of the transparency and intimacy of humans, the web of life, and the sacred. Similarly, orienting the body–mind toward the Earth in search of health is one of

the main tenets of ecopsychology. There is a wellspring of healing inherent to the Earth ready to be absorbed by the body–mind when it moves in harmony with the source of its existence (Buzzel & Chalquist, 2009; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Garling, 2003; R. Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Logan & Selhub, 2012), for this expansion and subsequent integration signifies a reclaiming of the totality of the psyche and the reestablishment of the covenant between humans and world. The underlying reciprocity between self and Earth suggests that effective efforts to move in the direction of healing are those that imply wholeness (Jung, 1965). It may well be that the ecosystems of the Earth represent wild, untamed regions of the mind that guard the medicine necessary for the health and wholeness of human beings (Plotkin, 2003).

The wholeness implied in an anthropocosmic perspective invites the recognition of humans' multidimensional connection to the Earth. The healing task of ecopsychology would invite recognition of the permeable boundary between the web of life or the "Earth without" and the human mind or "Earth within," along with the sacred ground from which both grow their sustenance. At the subjective level, humans' relation to the Earth is enlivened by what Jung called the "primitive within" (Jung & Sabini, 2002, p. 18). This primordial aspect of the psyche is at home with the rhythms of the Earth. Notions such as the "ecological self," (Naess, 2008, p. 82) or the "transpersonal self" (Daniels, 2005, p. 159) give voice to humanity's widened identity, echoing the Purusha of the yoga tradition or the seed of Buddha nature at the heart of creation. At the objective level, the ecological kinship of the Earth is manifest via the cycles and exchanges of particles, elements, and nutrients of which our bodies and those of other species are constituted. Earth within and without are in intimate reciprocity. The acknowledgment and alignment of inner and outer, of humans, Earth and cosmos, allow for the recovery of health. That is to say, humans and Earth partake in the healing qualities inherent in their mutuality. Berry (2006) reminds us,

the mountains and rivers and all living things, the sky and its sun and moon and clouds all constitute a healing, sustaining sacred presence for humans which they need as much for their psychic integrity as for their physical nourishment. (p. 136)

From an integral ecopsychological perspective, health for Earth and humans derives from psychological wholeness and the recovery of a pervading sense of the sacred. This integrative conception of health and healing goes well beyond the dominant mechanistic and individualistic understanding of the Earth and the human body–mind, yet it is implicit in the etymology of the word "health" itself. The word "healing" evolved from Indo-European roots variously meaning "wholeness," "whole," "sound," "holy," and "sacred" (Devereux, 1996). This encompassing approach to health is found in the ancient medical traditions of the world, including ayurveda, traditional Chinese medicine, native American traditional healing, and other medical systems, all of which take into consideration the physical and spiritual dimensions of health. The Parable of the Two Suitors (Tarnas, 2007) invites us to appreciate the need to conceive of a spiritually enlivened world, full of agency and meaning as opposed to a soulless, devalued one, for the former would more readily disclose its healing secrets. The healing of humans and Earth might just depend on how much we open ourselves to the multidimensionality of existence and make ourselves participants of such a numinous reality. This openness is readily accessible by the anthropocosmic vision outlined above.

The multileveled belonging and reciprocity between humans and Earth may run deeper than we commonly acknowledge. Instead of the mind being trapped in the skull and the body encased by the skin, the body-mind is better conceived as a reflection of a planetary and cosmic phenomenon that we partake in. If the matrix of the human presence rests in the dynamics of the Earth and the world at large, as suggested in the various ideas outlined above, the correspondence between our species and the Earth occurs at a deep, elemental level. How would our psychological theories and frameworks be like if we were to seriously consider our intimate belonging to the world? Where would we search for healing? The quest for a healthier and fuller relation to the Earth beyond the ecological crisis entails a radical shift of worldview; a sort of conversion in a spiritual sense where world and self are born anew and a transfiguration of seeing enables viewing the sacred in all. No less than a breakthrough of the profound kind is needed to face the ecological crisis, one supported by the dialogue between ecopsychology and spiritual and religious wisdom.

Toward an Integral Ecopsychology

From an integral perspective that aims to move beyond the materialistic and reductionist tendency of modernity, the task of healing the Earth-human relation could not be achieved, at least in an enduring way, without acknowledging the multidimensionality of both humans and the Earth. A concomitant shift takes place where ecopsychology as the study of humanity's psychological connection to the Earth shifts to the appraisal of not only the psychological sphere but of our multileveled connection to the Earth. Commonly used ecopsychological practices such as horticultural and animal-assisted therapy, green exercise (e.g., Japanese "forest baths"), ecological restoration activities, and so on, are joined by various contemplative practices that take into consideration the psycho-spiritual dimensions of humans and the world. Various spiritually engaged practices (Kelly, 2005; Nicol, 2010) Earth-based rituals (Gomes, 2009; Metzner, 2009; Watkins, 2009), and cultural therapeutic activities (Berry, 2009; Plotkin, 2007) become essential in order to regain ecopsychological health and sanity. An integral ecopsychology could thus be initially defined as the study of the multileveled connection between humans and the Earth. Although broad, this tentative definition allows for the inclusion of commonly neglected dimensions of human's relation to the Earth, including somatic, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

Given the relevance of the psycho-spiritual roots of the ecological crisis when in search of healing, an integral ecopsychology would necessarily invite a practice of constant self-study facilitated by spiritual and religious wisdom in the context of the Earth community. This practice would in turn release the necessary impetus to embark on a healing expedition for a renewed sense of intimacy and belonging to the Earth. Thus, we can elaborate on the tentative definition of an integral ecopsychology, entailing the study of the multileveled connection between humans and the Earth with the dual aim of restoring personal and collective health and contributing to the quest for wholeness and self-discovery. In the following, I would like to outline three key tenets that derive from the expanded definition of integral ecopsychology:

1. The bond between humans and Earth is multileveled and a complication at any of these levels can translate into disease. An encompassing effort to tend the Earth-human bond is most adequate to promote enduring health and ecologically viable behaviors.

2. Health and wholeness are two facets of the same process. To achieve health in an enduring and holistic way, it is necessary to uncover the deep dynamics of fragmentation and alienation that keep human beings from the awareness of the totality of our being.
3. Healing, wholeness, and the holy form a single continuum. The inclusion of spiritual and religious wisdom into psychological frameworks provides a fundamental vantage point to further concepts and strategies for the betterment of health and self-discovery.

These are some of the tenets deemed essential in the creation of a viable future for the Earth community and also serve as stepping stones for an integral ecopsychology. This paper outlines one expression of potentially myriad varieties of what an integral ecopsychology might look like. Perhaps the distinctive mark of an integral ecopsychology is that the human is to be permeable to the Earth not only for psychological healing but also for spiritual nourishment. Rescuing the multi-dimensionality of our humanness, the wholeness and true identity of human beings ultimately depends on an ability to behold the sacredness of the Earth. This ability of unveiling the numinous dimensions in which we participate with is at the heart of integral ecopsychology.

Much research remains to be done in order to envision and actualize a way in which “humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner” (Berry, 1999, p. 3). This is particularly true when advancing an integral ecopsychology given the presence of numerous integral philosophies, socio-political contexts, cultural nuances, and religious and spiritual inclinations available nowadays. However, models, theories, and frameworks that invite a reevaluation of the deep seated cultural assumptions that facilitate the plundering of the Earth while pointing at the multileveled reciprocity between humans and the world, including the deepest spiritual dimensions, may be crucial for the future of our species and all the beings we share the planet with.

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