

Cosmic ecopsychology: Harmony, psyche and buen vivir

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Abstract

This article proposes a reflection on the ontological foundations of psychology as a science, questioning its underlying worldview — Eurocentric, anthropocentric, and fragmented. Drawing on the ecopsychological critique of Hillman and Roszak, it recovers the cosmocentric vision of Hippocrates and the principle of harmony developed by Pythagoras, articulating them with Jung's analytical psychology. It proposes an intercultural dialogue with Buen Vivir philosophies (Sumak Kawsay, Suma Qamaña, Tekoa Porã) and with Indigenous care practices that bring confluences with Pythagorean precepts centered on the principle of harmony. The methodology is theoretical-conceptual, with a hermeneutic and transdisciplinary approach. It concludes that the restoration of harmony as a guiding principle of psychology is a fundamental condition for responding to the contemporary mental health crisis. ■

Keywords: Ecopsychology; Jungian Psychology; Harmony; Pythagoras; Buen vivir.

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Ecopsicologia cósmica: Harmonia, psique e bem-viver

Resumo

Este artigo propõe uma reflexão sobre os fundamentos ontológicos da psicologia como ciência, questionando sua visão de mundo subjacente — eurocêntrica, antropocêntrica e fragmentada. A partir da crítica ecopsicológica de Hillman e Roszak, resgata-se a visão cosmocêntrica de Hipócrates e o princípio da harmonia elaborado por Pitágoras, articulando-os à psicologia analítica de Jung. Propõe um diálogo intercultural com as filosofias do bem-viver (Sumak Kawsay, Suma Qamaña, Tekoa Porã) e com práticas de cuidado de povos indígenas que trazem confluências com os preceitos pitagóricos centrados no princípio da harmonia. A metodologia é teórico-conceitual, de abordagem hermenêutica e transdisciplinar. Conclui-se que a restauração da harmonia como princípio norteador da psicologia é condição fundamental para responder à crise de saúde mental contemporânea. ■

Palavras-chave: Ecopsicologia; Psicologia Junguiana; Harmonia; Pitágoras; Bem-viver.

Ecopsicología cósmica: Armonía, psique y buen vivir

Resumen

Este artículo propone una reflexión sobre los fundamentos ontológicos de la psicología como ciencia, cuestionando su visión del mundo subyacente — eurocéntrica, antropocéntrica y fragmentada. A partir de la crítica ecopsicológica de Hillman y Roszak, recupera la visión cosmocéntrica de Hipócrates y el principio de armonía elaborado por Pitágoras, articulándolos con la psicología analítica de Jung. Propone un diálogo intercultural con las filosofías del Buen Vivir (Sumak Kawsay, Suma Qamaña, Tekoa Porã) y con prácticas de cuidado de pueblos indígenas que traen confluencias con los preceptos pitagóricos centrados en el principio de armonía. La metodología es teórico-conceptual, de enfoque hermenéutico y transdisciplinar. Concluye que la restauración de la armonía como principio rector de la psicología es una condición fundamental para responder a la crisis contemporánea de salud mental. ■

Palabras claves: Ecopsicología; Psicología Junguiana; Armonía; Pitágoras; Buen vivir.

Introduction

In this work, we propose a reflection on the ontological foundations of psychology as a science, questioning its underlying worldview — Eurocentric and marked by anthropocentrism and fragmentation. The project of European modernity dissociates subject from object, body from soul, reason from emotion, and, synthesizing these dissociations, the human being from nature. In this paradigm, instrumentalized reason proposes to know in order to dominate a soulless nature, made up of “extended

things” governed by mechanical laws (Bacon, 1979; Descartes, 2005; 2006).

This epistemological heritage profoundly influences psychology, which tends to treat the individual as an isolated entity, disconnected from the ecological and cosmic fabric that constitutes them, promoting self-knowledge for self-mastery — knowledge and power intertwined. Against this backdrop, ecopsychological critique becomes pertinent, drawing on ancestral cosmocentric wisdom to rethink psychology in an integrative manner. To this end, we adopt a theoretical-conceptual

methodology with a hermeneutic and transdisciplinary approach, in intercultural dialogue between Pythagorean philosophy, analytical psychology, and the cosmocentric knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Abya Yala.

The article is structured in four sections. In the first, drawing on Hillman (1995) and Roszak (2001), we demonstrate that the false dichotomy between psyche and nature is pathogenic, and we recover the cosmocentric basis of Hippocratic medicine, the principle of harmony elaborated by Pythagoras, and its affinity with the philosophies of *Buen vivir* (Acosta, 2016). In the second, we deepen this principle in Pythagorean philosophy, examining how music, mathematics, and geometry made it possible to establish harmony as a universal principle, with resonances in cymatics and quantum physics. In the third, we articulate these foundations with Jung's analytical psychology, through the Tetraktys and numerical archetypes. In the fourth, we present psychotherapeutic practices based on the Pythagorean way of life and on some indigenous peoples aligned with the wisdom of *Buen vivir*. In the final considerations, we conclude that the contemporary mental health crisis demands the restoration of harmony as a guiding principle for psychology.

Harmony as a natural principle of psychology

Thinking about human psychology in a minimally profound way demands a comprehensive reflection on the causes and determining conditions for the formation of a person, which leads us to consider the environment, the ecology that surrounds us. On this matter, Winnicott said that there is no such thing as a baby (cf. Winnicott, 1983, p. 40), but always a baby with their mother, drawing attention to the fact that the development of a baby's innate potential is anchored above all in the quality of the mothering offered to them, just as the development of a seed is based in the quality of the soil that nourishes it. Neither is there a mother, but always a mother surrounded by an environment that will offer favorable

conditions, or not, for the quality of her mothering. Likewise, the fertility of the soil that nourishes the seed depends on the conditions of the ecosystem of that territory.

In his article "The Psyche of the Size of the Earth," Hillman (1995) offers considerations on the necessarily ecological dimension of subjectivity. Reviewing the foundations of psychological theories, he demonstrates that, despite the ontological separation created by anthropocentrism, human beings have always been implicated in the broader context of nature, for they are constituted of the same nature as the rest of the world and are equally subject to it. Nevertheless, Hillman emphasizes that psychological practice tends to treat the individual as if they were separate from the nature they are.

It is under the shadow of this alienated perception that Theodore Roszak (2001) stresses the need to affirm an ecopsychology: the union of psychology with ecology, two intrinsically related fields whose separation says much about what he calls, drawing on Freud (2023), our psychopathology of contemporary everyday life. In *In the Voice of the Earth*, Roszak (2001) goes beyond the anthropocentric framework and expands Jung's (2018) concept of the collective unconscious and Freud's (2011) "Ego and Id" to conclude that these terms necessarily imply the natural world.

From this perspective, Hillman (1995) emphasizes that an individual's harmony with their "own deep self" implies a harmonious dynamic with the environment. Indeed, the boundary between the self and the natural world is arbitrary, relative, and uncertain, and this uncertainty leads us to reconsider the psychotherapeutic approach:

In brief, if psychology is the study of the subject, and if the limits of this subject cannot be set, then psychology merges willy-nilly with ecology. [...] For depth psychology this merger implies that alterations in the "external world" may be as therapeutic as alterations in my subjective feelings. The "bad" place I am "in" may refer not only to a depressed mood or an anxious state of mind; it may refer to

a sealed-up office tower where I work, a set-apart suburban subdivision where I sleep, or the jammed freeway on which I commute between the two. (Hillman, 1995, p. 20)

Hillman (1995) reminds us that this understanding is nothing new and was already expressed far better by Hippocrates (1990), 2,500 years ago, in his treatise *Airs, Waters, Places*. The father of medicine starts with a cosmocentric vision, understanding that everything is linked to an ordered organic whole. In the cosmocentric horizon, the cosmos is the central axis of an existence in which everything is interconnected in a network of ordered and interdependent relationships. The human being, like any other being, is an inseparable part of this web of life. Therefore, there is no disorder of an individual in isolation, but always as a symptom of an imbalance in the organism to which they are linked.

[...] To grasp the disorders in any subject we must carefully study the environment of that disorder: the kind of water; the winds; the humidity; the temperatures; the foods and plants; the times of day; the seasons. Treatment of the interior requires attention to the outer; or, as another ancient healer wrote, “The greater part of the soul lies outside the body.” Just as there are happy places beneficial to well-being, so there are others that seem to harbor demons, miasmas, and melancholy. (Hillman 1995, p. 21)

There is no essential separation between soul and body, or even any separation at all. Absolutely everything is an expression of cosmic unity; the psyche, or soul, being the vital and noetic principle of living beings, a reflection of that living intelligence which gives them organic form. The separation of the diversity of elements is apparent, just as the distinct waves on the ocean’s surface are emanations of oceanic unity.

Luc Ferry (2010) aptly describes this understanding when he says that the cosmos would designate the totality of the universe as an organized and animated

being, analogous to a living being whose essence is harmony: the simultaneously just and beautiful order that the Greeks designated as *kosmos*. In this same sense, dictionaries define harmony as the order that confers unity upon diversity and produces aesthetic pleasure when contemplated. Harmony thus reveals itself as the organizing principle of multiplicity that brings well-being to organisms.

Restoring harmony as a guiding principle for (re) thinking and (re)making psychology thus proves to be an adequate response to the contemporary mental health crisis — or, following Roszak (2001), to our psychopathology of everyday life, produced by the alienation from our ecological condition. Psychic health demands that one be integral, whole, and this implies care for harmony in relation to the environment that generates and sustains us.

It is therefore essential to turn to ancestral knowledges that have never lost sight of harmony as a central principle of existence. In this sense, the original peoples of Abya Yala have much to teach with their philosophies of *Buen vivir*, which find in this principle their central axis:

Buen vivir affirms itself in balance, harmony, and coexistence among beings. In harmony between the individual and themselves, between the individual and society, and between society and the planet with all its beings, however insignificant or repugnant they may appear to us. Only from these three harmonies will we be able to establish a profound connection and interdependence with the nature of which we are a part. (Acosta, 2016, p. 9)

These knowledges, still alive and present in the Andean cosmovisions of *Sumak Kawsay*, *Suma Qamaña*, and, in Brazil, *Tekoa Porã* (Acosta, 2016; Werá, 2024), help us imagine other worlds beyond the developmentalist and anthropocentric logic of Western modernity. Echoing Bispo (2023), we understand that these peoples have not undergone development — that is, a process of separation from nature and the cosmos, but, on the contrary, they resist

with ethical proposals that offer paths of healing for the alienation of contemporary subjectivity.

In confluence with these knowledges, the philosophies of Pythagoras and Heraclitus offer equally harmony-centered paths, representing an original strand of Western thought that predates the split between human beings, nature, and cosmos. We will devote special attention to the philosophy of Pythagoras, for it was the first to conceive harmony and the cosmos as fundamental principles of a good and beautiful life.

Pythagoras and harmony at the heart of the cosmos

The legendary Pythagoras and his followers were pioneers in the philosophical theorization of harmony and the cosmos. According to classical doxographic references, they were the first thinkers to philosophically resignify these two words (Burkert, 1972). In archaic Homeric Greece, *kosmos* meant “order” or “organization” in a concrete sense — a military organization or an adornment. With the Pythagorean philosophical abstraction, *kosmos* comes to designate the totality of the universe organized in an essentially harmonious and beautiful way.

The etymology of the word “harmony” (Putnik, 2024), in turn, reveals its original concrete meaning from an episode in the *Odyssey*: when Odysseus builds a raft to leave the island of Ogygia and return home, the Greek term ἁρμονία (*harmonía*) appears to literally designate the “fitting together,” the “joint,” or “adjustment” of the wooden pieces to form the raft. The pieces need to be joined together, adjusted, or harmonized to form a consistent whole which, in this case, is the raft that Odysseus needs to return home. It was upon this concrete meaning that the Pythagoreans elaborated the philosophical resignifications that elevated harmony to the fundamental cosmic principle, as Critchley states:

The principle of *harmonia* is at the center of Pythagorean thought. The Universe is One but the world is a unity in multiplicity. The phenomenal realm is a differentiated image of

the unity of the Universe. Although the whole consists of many parts, the unity of the whole is maintained by the hierarchical principle of harmony, the *logos* of relation, which gives every part its place in the fabric of the whole. (Critchley, 2010, p. 62)

The Pythagorean school emerged on the Greek horizon by elaborating a philosophy in which theory and ethics had harmony as their central principle. This led the Pythagoreans to see things not as essentially individualized, but necessarily integrated — which was reflected in a fraternal way of life in which the diversity of individuals needed to harmonize with communal unity. In this sense, the Pythagoreans disregarded patriarchal verticality by establishing a functional hierarchy — independent of gender — based on the combination of psychological types and skills for the formation of a community. (Cf. Critchley, 2010, p. 49)

The historical existence of Pythagoras is controversial: his life and genealogy are shrouded in mythical narratives that call his biography into question, making it more prudent and fruitful to speak of a Pythagorean school and of Pythagoras as an archetypal figure. In this sense, based on etymology (Beekes, 2010), Πυθαγόρας (*Pythagóras*) is the combination of Πυθ- (*Pyth-*) and -αγόρας (*-agóras*). *Pyth-* is related to the Pythia, the priestess of the Oracle of Delphi, temple of Apollo Pythios, deity of clarity and harmony. As for -αγόρας (*-agóras*), it means “assembly” or “public square.” Therefore, Pythagoras can be translated as “the one who proclaims the wisdom of Apollo to the public square.”

And indeed, this is what Pythagorean philosophy does when it theorizes harmony as a cosmic principle through its mathematical and geometric discoveries, which, as we shall see next, started from a musical experience.

Harmony through music, mathematics, and geometry

Legend has it that the principle of harmony was elaborated by Pythagoras from a concrete aesthetic

experience: while passing by a blacksmith's workshop, the philosopher noticed that hammers of different weights produced consonant sounds when struck together (Crocker, 2013). This experience motivated him to investigate harmony in music using monochords, leading to the discovery that the musical intervals considered perfect — octave, fifth, fourth — corresponded to simple numerical ratios between the lengths of the strings: 2:1, 3:2, and 4:3, respectively. Musical harmony, which sounded good to the ears, corresponded to mathematical ratios and symmetrical geometric forms.

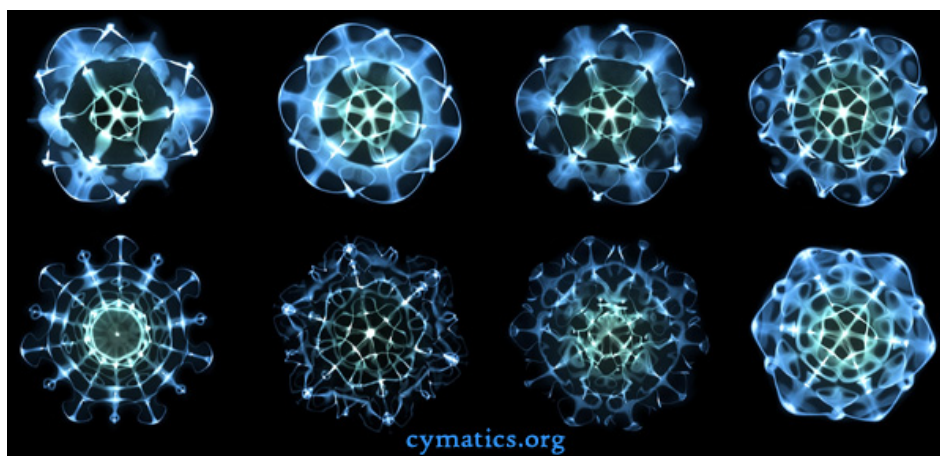
It was from this that the Pythagoreans based their intuition that “all is number,” with numbers being manifestations of the archetype of order that expresses itself throughout all existence. Geometry and music are visual and sonic expressions of the numerical order proper to the intelligence of the cosmos. Music, mathematics, and geometry thus form a unity: music is mathematics in motion, and geometry is mathematics in forms.

This perspective resonates with contemporary discoveries. In twentieth-century quantum physics,

matter observed at the atomic and subatomic scale reveals wave-particle duality (Gleiser, 2006): every wave is characterized by a numerically measurable frequency, so that reality is not a static substance, but a set of waves whose states become intelligible through mathematics. The Pythagorean intuition that ‘all is number’ and that reality is founded on relations ordered by the principle of harmony echoes in quantum physics.

In acoustic physics, analogy remains valid, for every sound is a vibration at a certain numerically measurable frequency (Pierce, 1983), and these frequencies project visible geometric forms through cymatics, which is the study of the effects of sound vibrations on physical media, such as liquids or surfaces. This field became famous with Hans Jenny (2001) and his experiments demonstrating that dissonant sounds, generally considered unpleasant, generate chaotic visual patterns, while pleasant-sounding sounds tend to create symmetrical and aesthetically balanced forms, such as those in the image that follows:

Figure 1 – Cymatic patterns in water at different frequencies (12–30 Hz)

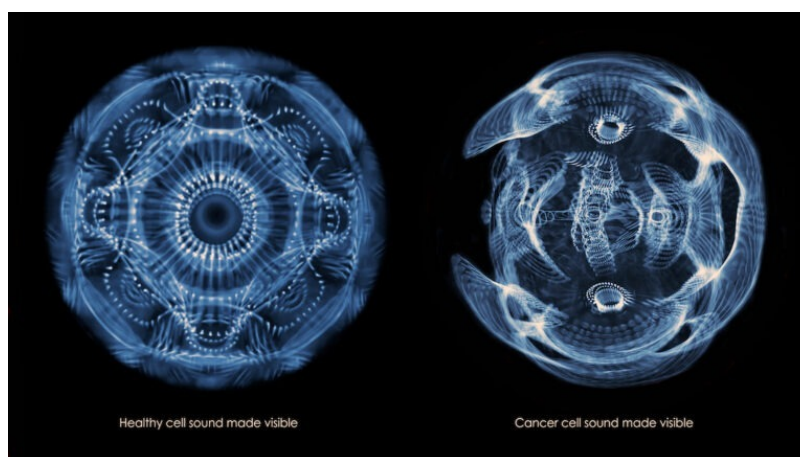


Source: SYTI (2010), image by Dan Blore/Cymatics.org.

In this regard, it is also worth noting the interdisciplinary study (Reid; Park; Ji, 2019) in which scientists specializing in physical acoustics and molecular biology used the Cymascope instrument to apply cymatic imaging to identify cancerous cells in comparison

with healthy cells. The results showed that healthy cells generate harmonious cymatic patterns, whereas cancerous cells generate disharmonious patterns, as we can see in the image below, where on the left we see a healthy cell and, on the right, a cancerous cell:

Figure 2 – Cymatic patterns from signals of healthy and cancerous brain tissue



Source: Cymascope, 2020.

These findings seem to corroborate the Pythagorean vision that conceives of the good, the beautiful, and the true through the principle of harmony: things are good and beautiful when they flow harmoniously. And this can be perceived in images and sounds (vibrations) that reflect mathematical ratios of archetypal patterns related to states of harmony or disharmony.

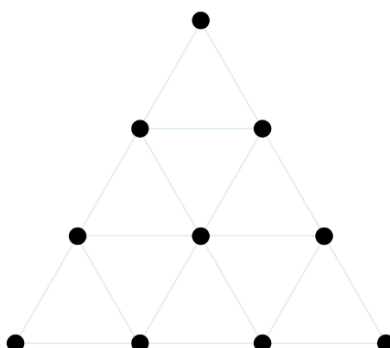
This harmony is naturally present in our psyche, which exhibits a self-regulating character grounded in this cosmic and omnipresent principle. Jung (2015a, §§325-328) brings the idea of the *Unus Mundus* as a resonance of this cosmocentric wisdom — the understanding that there is no fundamental separation between the physical and the psychic dimensions, and that everything is a manifestation of cosmic unity.

Toward a cosmic psychology

The cosmic dimension of subjectivity pervades the psychosomatic unity through the principle of harmony, which, in the Pythagorean and Jungian perspectives, takes shape in the symbol of the Tetráktys — a quaternary structure that reflects the organization of the cosmos and the psyche through the archetypes of the first four numbers.

For the Pythagoreans, the Tetráktys represented totality under the intelligibility of numerical order. The first four numbers compose the Decad, since their sum totals ten ($1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$), and the numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are potentially present through combinations among them ($5 = 4+1$; $6 = 4+2$; $7 = 4 + 3$ etc.). For a clearer understanding, let us look below at the image of the Tetráktys:

Figure 3 – Pythagorean Tetraktys



Source: Jossifresco (2006), via Wikimedia Commons.

According to Iamblichus, the Tetraktys would be “the cause and root, and source of ever-flowing Nature” (Taylor, n.d., p. 77), and through this symbol it would be possible to comprehend the intelligible structure underlying the dynamics of reality. The cosmos and the psyche can be understood through geometric numerical proportions of an archetypal character that present themselves in the Tetraktys. We will briefly analyze the archetypal dimension of the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, which form the quaternary basis of the Tetraktys, beginning with 1, or the monad.

The monad, as the fundamental unity and potency of all that exists, is presented by Philolaus of Croton when he begins his book *On the Nature of Things* with the statement: “The nature of the universe (*kosmos*) was harmonized (*harmochte*) from unlimited things (*apeira*) and from limiting things (*perainonta*) — not only the universe as a whole, but also everything within it.” (Kirk; Raven; Schofield, 2010, p. 342) In this fragment we see a philosophical reading of Hesiod’s theogony (1995, p. 91), which tells us that “first Chaos came to be, then broad-bosomed Earth, the ever-immovable seat of all.” The principle is chaos, the unlimited, like empty space which is the potency of becoming. The emptiness spoken of in Buddhism (Tanahashi, 2016), the condition of possibility for the continuous (re)creation of the universal flow.

The monad, as fundamental unity, is geometrically represented as a dimensionless point from which all things emanate, beginning with “2” (the dyad): the potential space of difference and otherness, but still formless, for two points create only a homogeneous and undifferentiated line. It is “3” (the triad) that actualizes the potential relation, for with the introduction of a third point, homogeneity is broken — qualitatively distinct regions emerge, and the *logos* of the observer who can discern and compare appears. The triad comes to actualize the potential relation by delimiting space in the configuration of the triangle, the primordial form of manifestation that configures harmony or love — that is, that which “joins together” and confers unity to the diversity of dyadic polarity.

The triangle, however, delimits only a surface without volume. Manifestation becomes concrete in “4,” whose geometric analogue is the tetrahedron, the first solid and three-dimensional form. It is from 4 onward that we have the structure of material reality with its quaternities: the four classical elements, the four seasons, the four cardinal points, the phases of the moon. The quaternity is the most balanced and stable structure of the material world, as seen in tetrapody: an evolutionarily successful characteristic of the animal kingdom, inherited from a common ancestor, manifesting as wings, fins, arms, or legs, materializing an archetype of solidity and grounding in the physical world.

Since there is no separation between the physical and the psychic worlds, we find correspondences of the four numbers of the Tetraktys in the structuring of the psyche. Thinking of human development from Jung (2015a), the fundamental unity of 1 lies in the originating chaos of unconsciousness — the primordial unconscious that contains everything in potency.

With the emergence of 2, the potential relation with otherness begins in the mother-infant dyad, characterized by the undifferentiation between self and other, typical of the beginning of life. An external third is needed to effectuate the triangulation that institutes differentiation. The 3 represents this element that limits and institutes difference, opening the path to the external world. The 4 completes the Tetrad: it is the world that concretizes existence beyond the originating trinity, engaging the individual in the process of individuation that is structured in the quaternity (Jung, 2008). The family triad — mother, father, and child — is fundamental for creation, which, to manifest itself, needs the world as the fourth element that concretizes its existence, for there is no family unity disintegrated from the world.

Jung (2016) shared the Pythagorean understanding of numbers as archetypes of psychic and cosmic order when he stated that:

Number helps us, above all, to put order into chaos. It is the most primitive ordering element of the human spirit, it being observed that the numbers one to four are the most frequent and most widespread, for primitive ordering schemes are predominantly triads and tetrads. Therefore, it is by no means such a bold conclusion to define number as an archetype of order that has become conscious. It is remarkable that the psychic images of totality, produced spontaneously by the unconscious, or the symbols of the Self expressed in mandalic form, have a mathematical structure. These are generally quaternities (or their multiples). These structures not only express order but also create it. That is why they generally appear

in times of psychic disorientation, to compensate for a chaotic state or to formulate numinous experiences.

It is worth noting the correspondence between the harmony of the cymatic forms of pleasant sounds and healthy cells, which we saw in the previous section, with the mandalic forms of quaternary mathematical structure, which would likewise be manifestations of the archetype of order, under the principle of harmony, in the sense of psychic health.

This ordering factor permeates existence at every moment, as in enantiodromia — the principle that Jung recovers from Heraclitus to describe the dialectical movement of the psyche. As Heraclitus said: “That which is in opposition is in agreement, and the fairest harmony arises from things at variance, as in the case of the bow and the lyre.” (Costa, 2017, p. 127) Harmony also contains disharmony within itself; the heat implies the cold, light implies shadow. Everything flows in dialectical movement: expansion is followed by contraction, day turns into night, the tide rises and falls, all things contain within themselves the seed of their opposite.

This dialectical character of the cosmos finds its reflection in psychic functioning: extreme joy will inevitably be followed by extreme sadness; intense identification with the persona will intensely feed the shadow, which, at some point, will erupt with the same force with which it was repressed.

Aligned with the perennial philosophy, Jung noted that the balance of polarities is essential for psychic harmony, which today is often called mental health. It is in this way that he speaks to us of the compensatory tendency of the (un)conscious (Jung, 2000), translating into the disposition to balance what seems conflictual within ourselves — persona/shadow, anima/animus (Jung, 2008). As psychotherapists, it is our role to act in favor of awareness of this psychic self-regulation, which is the principle of cosmic harmony in action. In traditional clinical practice, occupying the function of the third — as observer and facilitator of the expression of the dialectical process — is, in a certain way, supporting the transcendent function and the emergence of the symbol

that unifies oppositions. This requires attention and care for the principle of harmony and its archetypal reflections that manifest the living intelligence of the cosmos in action.

This living intelligence, however, can be better understood through the direct experience provided by ecopsychological approaches. These are ancestral practices, centered on the principle of harmony, that enable the recognition of the cosmic and ecological dimension of subjectivity.

Cosmic ecopsychology in psychotherapy

It falls to cosmic and ecological psychology to facilitate the journey toward meeting oneself through integration with the nature that permeates us, within and without. As we have seen above, ecopsychology, as proposed by Roszak (2001), is born precisely from the recognition that the psyche is essentially ecological and that the boundaries between the self and the natural world are arbitrary and uncertain (Hillman, 1995). We are the fruits of an ecosystem that is, in turn, an expression of the cosmos — the living intelligence that configures the organism we are. To this synthesis between the psychological, ecological, and cosmic planes, we propose the name cosmic ecopsychology.

This articulation recognizes two complementary movements: on one hand, the continuity between the individual and the ecosystem (ecological dimension); on the other, the participation of the psyche in the same principles of order and harmony that govern the cosmic totality — the archetypal numbers, physical laws, and vital cycles (cosmic dimension). To care for the psyche, from this perspective, is to care for one's relationship with oneself by understanding the immediate environment and the cosmic totality.

The practice of this psychology moves toward overcoming the paradigm of individualistic subjectivism which, as Hillman (1995) warned, privatizes the psyche and psychological clinical practice. The private clinic tends to reproduce the individualistic liberal paradigm that produced it, constituting its own ecosystem. It is generally located in a closed

room in a corporate building in a cosmophobic city which, according to Bispo dos Santos (2023, p. 8), would be a territory designed exclusively for humans, excluding all possibility of other lives: “Any other life that tries to exist in the city is destroyed. If it exists, it is thanks to the force of the organic, not because humans want it.” This urban architecture of separateness is the ecosystem of cosmophobic subjectivity, characterized by fear, aversion, or the inability to relate to the cosmos.

Contemporary psychopathologies seem to be directly related to this ecosystem, especially loneliness — declared an epidemic by the WHO (Oliveto, 2025) — and depression, which signal the malaise of living apart from the world, under the concrete and subjective architecture of the apartment of the human being's relationship with nature and with themselves. Breaking this logic of separateness is the horizon of healing practices governed by the principle of harmony that figures both in the Pythagoreans and in the *Buen vivir* wisdoms of some indigenous peoples.

As we have already said, the Pythagoreans practiced ethics and politics in tune with this principle, for they lived in community cultivating friendship as “the most perfect good and the source of all goods” (Taylor, n.d., p. 103). The importance of a life based on friendship with all beings was the foundation of their communal life, which was, in itself, a form of psychotherapy, for living in community is to practice the art of “joining” (harmonizing) diversity in a unified and diverse dynamic. This implies a daily intersubjective exercise of balancing and integrating differences — a fundamental skill for psychic health which, like a forest, has its vitality measured by the diversity it can maintain in balance.

Music, diet, exercise, and the arts were likewise experienced as practices aimed at nourishing the natural harmony of the psychosomatic unity (Critchley, 2010), connecting the subject to the cosmic community that constitutes them. Diet was an art that related the body to food, to the land that produces it, and to the cycles that govern the time to plant and to harvest; exercise related the body to space, to movement, and to the other bodies with

whom one often exercised together. Music and the visual arts, in turn, were understood as sensible embodiments of Number: music embodying its transcendent virtues in time — rhythms and cycles — and the visual arts in space — symmetry and natural proportions (Critchley, 2010).

They also prescribed morning walks in silence through quiet and beautiful places — groves, forests, temples — to begin the cycle of the new day (Cf. Taylor, p. 46), enhancing the harmony and serenity of the soul through presence and connection with these places of power. They thus avoided the excess of stimuli that disturb the organism, especially in the morning, for waking as the return of consciousness from the unconsciousness of sleep repeats, on a small scale, the passage from primordial chaos to cosmic order. Consciousness that awakens cannot leap directly from sleep to the excess of stimuli of the day. Like the dawn, it needs time for structuring to sustain worldly experiences. The silent walks in beautiful places were the ideal environment for this structuring.

This care for diet and for the experience of spaces dialogues with cosmologies that understand the body as an extension of the territory that constitutes it and is constituted by it (Barboza; Tukano; Waiwai, 2019). As synthesized by the *Manifesto Reflorestarmentes*, a collective document produced by the Indigenous women participants of the *II Marcha das Mulheres Indígenas* (2021), caring for the land is caring for one's own body and spirit, "body is land, forest is mind." In this manifesto, we see the philosophy of *Buen vivir* in action, expressed in the reciprocity and proportionality that guides the relationship with the land and with one's own body simultaneously.

If the ecopsychotherapeutic practices of the Pythagoreans seem to have been forgotten by the Western tradition that succeeded them, similar practices remain alive in the subjective territories aligned with the philosophy of *Buen vivir*. The vision of mental health as something essentially communal, for example, is present in the territory of the Ticuna people, who understand health and illness always in relation to the community (Machado; Schweickardt, 2023). In this tradition, there is no merely individual

illness, but always as a symptom of disharmony in the collective; so that the shaman acts by diagnosing and harmonizing excesses so that the health of the individual and the collectivity is restored.

There are parallels between the Pythagorean care for time and the excess of stimuli with the precept of *resguardo* [protective seclusion] among the Maxakali. As explained by Cristine Takua, an Indigenous woman of this ethnicity, many processes of mental confusion are related to the non-observance of this precept (Takua, 2025). The natural time of *resguardo*, according to her, is fundamental so that transitions of cycles — first menstruation, childbirth, mourning — are well integrated psychically, under risk of illness when disrespected. Takua reports that this mental confusion, when it reaches the state health system, tends to be treated with black-label psychiatric medications, evidencing the non-recognition of the natural logic of *resguardo* by disembedded medical science.

This medicinal treatment of symptoms related to the non-observance of *resguardo* is just one example, among many, of the mistaken pathologization of natural responses to disconnection from nature, reinforcing it even further insofar as it anesthetizes the symptom and ignores its fundamental cause: the disharmony between the individual and their environment, between psyche and cosmos. The healing process of this illness, proper to the paradigm of disembedding, lies in practices that facilitate reconnection with the cosmic and ecological nature of subjectivity.

The ancestral wisdoms of care of the Pythagoreans and, especially, of the Indigenous peoples who keep their practices alive, are fundamental references in this process. The theoretical and, above all, practical dialogue with these knowledges needs to be cultivated to fertilize new therapeutic healing possibilities for our psychopathology of contemporary everyday life.

Final considerations

Throughout this introductory article, we have sought to demonstrate that the restoration of the principle of harmony as a central axis for (re)thinking

and (re)making psychology is a fundamental condition for responding to the contemporary mental health crisis. Starting from the ecopsychological critique of Hillman (1995) and Roszak (2001) to individualistic anthropocentrism, we followed the recovery of Hippocrates' cosmocentric vision to the Pythagorean school and its theorization of the principle of harmony, articulating it with Jung's analytical psychology and, finally, with care practices aligned both with Pythagorean philosophy and with the *Buen vivir* philosophies that remain alive among many Indigenous peoples.

We recognize that the use of the word "harmony" to bring Pythagorean thought closer to the *Buen vivir* philosophies implies a limited translation. However, authors such as Kaká Werá and Alberto Acosta use this term to speak of *Tekoa Porã* and *Sumak Kawsay*, indicating that this approximation is not arbitrary.

Indeed, the principle of harmony — unity that expresses itself in diversity — seemed to us a key of interpretation capable of opening an intercultural dialogue without exhausting the depth of each tradition.

The space limitations of this introductory article prevented us from undertaking this deep dive, which will be carried out in future works, in which we will further expand upon this theoretical and practical elaboration of the approach we call cosmic ecopsychology. Our objective was to lay the theoretical foundations of this articulation and to suggest, even if only initially, some of its practical developments. Echoing Hillman, we reaffirm that what we are proposing is nothing new, but rather a recovery of ancestral wisdoms that integrate psyche, nature, and cosmos. It seems to us that remembering them is the path of healing for contemporary pathologies, symptoms of the forgetting of who we are. ■

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