

ECOPSYCHOSYNTHESIS

LIVING WITHIN NATURE, LIVING WITHIN YOURSELF.

Translated by Damiano Pagani

This article highlights the importance of a good relationship with nature, the impact it has on our health, our well-being, the quality of life and the many beneficial effects that can derive from it. From this perspective, Ecopsychosynthesis can help us explore the contribution that Psychosynthesis can make in promoting a positive relationship with nature.

1. Connected to nature: finding one's home⁽¹⁾

Inhabiting nature, inhabiting oneself, inhabiting one's home. Seeing nature as a common home that we share and that we have carried within us since the dawn of time. In this evolutionary path we have lived 99.99% of the time in a natural environment. Our body is therefore adapted to nature.

Qing Li – immunologist, one of the world's leading experts in forest medicine – wrote *“the idea that contact with nature is an essential biological need for human beings is called biophilia, from the Greek ‘love of life’ or ‘love of the living world’.* The theory was put forward in 1984 by the American biologist E.O. Wilson (...); since our species evolved in nature, Wilson states, we feel the need to maintain a connection with it. (...) We are genetically structured to love nature. It's in our DNA.”⁽²⁾

Certainly, we know how pleasant and regenerating it can be to immerse ourselves in nature. We have known this for millennia. The fresh, clean air, the intense green, the blue of the waters and the blue of the sky, the scent of the trees, the chirping of the birds, the sun's rays passing through the foliage of the plants, the fragrant mosses, the moving clouds ... they give us a sense of well-being, they ease our thoughts, relieve worries and anxieties, allow us to relax, restore our energy and good mood.

We come from nature and, if we are detached from it, the risk of becoming sick and not living well is certainly higher. Dedicated research and scientific studies confirm this. It is therefore fundamental for our lives and our well-being to cultivate and nourish a deep relationship with nature, to be connected with this living reality to which we belong. Giuseppe Barbiero⁽³⁾, however, in his book *Introduction to Biophilia*, reminds us that our relationship



with nature is an innate relationship, but today it is no longer instinctive. We are part of the natural context, but we are not capable of experiencing this relationship in an immediate and obvious way, as soon as we re-enter it (Raoul Fiordiponti, Teffit). We need to re-educate ourselves about nature, remembering that returning to nature ultimately means finding one's home again!

In this regard, Roberto Assagioli, in his introductory book to Psychosynthesis, in an edition of the 1960s, reports, in the cover title, a highly inspirational phrase: "For the harmony of life...". Following this thought, a question arises: can we think of generating harmony in our lives without having a harmonious relationship with nature? I really do not think so! Assagioli himself, in a live conversation (available in a recorded audio), regarding the supreme value of life and nature, said:

"...with an act of will one can escape from ordinary city life, go into the midst of nature, in silence and opening oneself voluntarily, happily to the perception of the broader life, of which one feels one is a small part". Assagioli was certainly very much in contact with nature, it was a very important chapter in his life, even if, in his time, little was said about nature or ecology.

Starting from these premises, we now find ourselves faced with a fundamental question that each of us, sooner or later, should ask ourselves: what is my relationship with nature, what relationship do I have with it, how much space does it have in my life and in my daily life? Is it a relationship of domination and utilitarian exploitation, based on a vision that sees man at the summit of Creation or is it a relationship based on respect, care, reciprocity and awareness?

Expectations, attitudes and ways of behaving, concrete behaviours fuel our personal relationship with nature, making it a loving mother or hostile stepmother. The society in which we live, increasingly urban, technological, accelerated, overabundant with stimuli, divisive, uncertain... conditions our relationship with nature, often distancing us from it. Returning to nature and to a positive and responsible relationship with it today becomes a vital challenge for each of us, for the community and for future generations.

2. Ecopsychosynthesis: how it can help us

At this point a question arises spontaneously: what help, what contribution can Psychosynthesis make? Indeed, specifically, we begin to talk about **Ecopsychosynthesis: a perspective and a transversal vision that places Psychosynthesis with Ecology in dialogue with each other, fully fitting into Ecopsychology** (born at the end of the 1980s in the United States of America). Along this path, a unitary vision of the human being and his environment is recovered, in an eco-centric perspective, well integrated with humanistic and transpersonal psychology.

Ecopsychosynthesis is ultimately proposed as an integrated approach, oriented towards awareness and care of oneself, of the community and of the social environment in which one lives, an approach based on the model, on constructs, on processes and on psychosynthetic techniques, enhanced and amplified by the potential for life and health that nature offers us. Specifically, it proposes the path of nature as a privileged path for self-expression. A path that facilitates contact with the transpersonal and spiritual world. A gateway to our originality, to our potential, to our talents, to the beauty that is within us and outside of us. Therefore, a gateway to *peak experiences*, towards personal self-realization, towards contact and the deeper presence of that divine nature that lives within us and which represents the basis of the *evolutionary spark* that supports our possible growth.

All this represents an important contribution in the search for harmony in our lives, for deep contact with the nature that surrounds us, for contact and relationship with our most authentic self. A relationship that must be an opportunity for everyone, not a privilege for a few!

Ecopsychosynthesis therefore works - in a focused way - on the relationship between man and nature, helping to promote a relationship based on biophilia (attraction and contact with everything that is vital) and also on awareness of our biophobias, gray areas, subpersonalities, fears that distance us from nature, in an illusion of being able to dominate it, within a clearly anthropocentric and self-sufficient vision.

It should be underlined here that Ecopsychosynthesis is not another environmentalist movement (also very important and deserving movements and associations) but is a proposal that aims to enhance memory and psychosynthetic experience, according to a humanistic approach based on a universal vision of man, an integral and living part of a single living organism, to give value and grow a profound relationship between all living beings and nature. To encourage and support evolutionary processes that allow us to live in health, in good company, in harmony with ourselves and with others, with nature, in mutual cooperation ... knowing how to grasp the value of the interconnections that bind us, within an evolutionary bond of life.

Massimo Rosselli reminded us: *“...we live in an environment that we pass through with its pathogenic and healing energies...we need allies...We need to get along with nature and not impose ourselves on nature and on things. These great resources always have to do with the body, with ritual, with feelings, with spirituality and with the sense of the journey. In this the psychosynthetic healing process emerges”*⁽⁴⁾.

Ecopsychosynthesis can be, today, a very important area of research, study, work and personal practice in relation to the contribution that Psychosynthesis can give to the current society and to the emerging epochal transformations, fully assuming the social responsibility that appertains to it.

3. A cultural and personal habit change is essential

In the perspective we have briefly recalled, a new relationship with nature requires a cultural paradigm shift at a collective level and a change in habits at a personal level, in order to promote lifestyles more in harmony with nature and with ourselves. We must necessarily frame this possible transformation in a vision of well-being and health that takes charge of our daily habits and our overall lifestyle. In other words, *if we want to enjoy the beneficial effects of nature, our attendance - in parks, woods, forests, lakes, marine environments... - must have a certain systematic nature.* In fact, as is often reiterated by studies and research, habitual frequenting of nature produces a direct improvement in human

psychophysical health, at every age and stage of life.

In practice, it involves activating and practicing a virtuous circle of well-being and health in nature⁽⁵⁾, both as a preventive and curative action. This idea, therefore, of *building* a personal virtuous circle over time, aims to positively influence habits and lifestyle. A good practice that supports and allows us to concretely carry out a conscious and personal action aimed at doing us good.

This personal commitment develops within the social and collective context that we find ourselves living in. In fact, the relationship between human beings takes place within a change of era. It is a time of great transformations, great contrasts, opportunities and great risks. A profound cultural transformation is essential which involves each of us in every sector of our daily life: in the family, with children, in the relationship between women and men, at work, in school, in the relationship with nature ...

This cultural transformation must focus decisively on a model of coexistence based on partnership, therefore on respect, reciprocity, care and cooperation. In the concreteness of relationships and behaviours. Today we are immersed in a changing era, a time in which the *old* has accentuated its resistance. A model of society and coexistence based on domination, control, performance, hoarding, fears, threats, manipulation and instrumentally constructed narratives, individualism, division and fragmentation of the social fabric and relationships ... powerful groups ready to resist by any means.

We must all strive to build partnership relationships in our daily lives. Social change doesn't happen thanks to extraordinary people. Each of us is special and unique ... and we can do our part.

The power of partnership (Riane Eisler)⁽⁶⁾ is expressed in the relational ecosystem that is the basis of our lives: the relationship with ourselves, with loved ones and those close to us, with the community and the workplace, with the national community, with the international and multicultural one, with nature and the living environment, finally, with the spiritual sphere, of the unprecedented, of the meaning we give to our life and of the relationship we have with the Whole and with the Beyond. As far as we are concerned, in this writing, the main focus has been oriented towards our relationship

with nature and on how to understand society and the relationships that support it, a focus based on partnership and mutuality; furthermore, how this model of social coexistence can help make a paradigm shift in concrete behaviours in daily life, in connection and relationship with nature, in evolutionary opportunities for both human beings and Planet Earth.

In this perspective of cultural transformation, the relationship between human beings and nature requires an explicit and strong commitment to create opportunities and paths for learning, training, awareness, education, in the various contexts in which we live (family, school, work, national, international). Training opportunities and paths, of continuous learning, which allow us to face the challenges present in the 21st century through the direction indicated above, specific and characteristic of a model of social coexistence based on partnership, mutuality, cooperation and caring.

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Notes

1. Ferrucci P., *La bellezza e l'anima*, cap. XI – Ritorno alla natura, pp. 124-132, Mondadori, Milano, 2018.
2. Qing L., *Shinrin-Yoku. Immergersi nei boschi*, p. 19, Bur Rizzoli – Mondadori, Milano, 2022.
3. Barbiero G., Berto R., *Introduzione alla biofilia*, Carrocci Editore, Roma, 2016.
4. Rosselli M., *Verso una Psicopsintesi clinica: psicopatologia e processo di guarigione*, in *Rivista di Psicopsintesi Terapeutica*, anno 1 – N. 1, p. 53
5. Vedi www.teffit.it, 2024.
6. Eisler R., *Il potere della partnership*, Edizioni Forum, Udine, 2018. Eisler R., *Il calice e la spada – La civiltà della Grande Dea dal Neolitico a oggi*, Edizioni Forum, Udine, 2012.

