

The Principle of Primal Order in the ritual healing techniques in the community of San Rafael (Andean Philosophy)*

El Principio del Orden Primigenio en las técnicas rituales de sanación en la comunidad de San Rafael (Filosofía Andina)

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Resumen. *Este ensayo examina, mediante la delimitación filosófica y la observación de campo, cómo se manifiesta el Principio del Orden Primigenio, un elemento importante de la filosofía andina, en las técnicas de rituales de sanación utilizadas en la comunidad de San Rafael, Ecuador. Debido a que la filosofía andina existe principalmente en la praxis real y no en la grafología, nuestra tesis es que las características del Principio del Orden Primario existen en estas prácticas específicas. En la última sección se examina la relación epistemológica de las técnicas de rituales de sanación en la comunidad de San Rafael.*

Palabras clave: *filosofía andina, principios filosóficos, técnicas de curación, Estermann.*

Abstract. *This essay examines, using philosophical delimitation, along with observation and fieldwork, how an important element of Andean philosophy, the Principle of Primal Order, is manifested in the ritual healing techniques used in the community of San Rafael, Ecuador. Because Andean philosophy exists mainly in the real praxis rather than in graphology, our thesis is that the characteristics of the Principle of Primal Order exists in these specific practices. In the final section we examine the epistemological relatedness of the ritual healing techniques in the community of San Rafael.*

Keywords: *andean philosophy, philosophical principles, healing techniques, Estermann*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The present paper examines how the Principle of Primal Order¹ (PPO henceforth) is manifested in the ritual healing techniques used in an Andean community from the Ecuadorian highlands. In the first section we use bibliographical analysis, and later fieldwork in the community of San Rafael. The purpose of this fieldwork is to collect information to see if Andean techniques correspond with the bibliographical analysis, which is focused on the PPO. The essay will demonstrate that the PPO of the Andean Philosophy is manifested in the ritual healing techniques in the community of San Rafael.

After the delimitation of what we understand by PPO, the specific objective of the fieldwork is to establish the elements that constitute the healing rituals and define their functions and particularities. To reach this aim, we will study not only the paraphernalia elements to do a conceptual analysis, but also all the ritual structure.

Hence, this essay consists of two basic parts: The PPO of Andean philosophy and the ritual healing techniques in San Rafael. In the first section, we will look at the principles of Andean philosophy according to the studies of Josef Estermann and Mario Mejía Huamán. We will also present an overview of the ethnological and ethnographic features of this community located in the province of Cañar and of the specific rituals.

II. DEVELOPMENT

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIMAL ORDER IN ANDEAN PHILOSOPHY

In some ways, Andean philosophy can be viewed in opposition to Western or traditional philosophy. Therefore, it is opportune that we state some intrinsic characteristics of Andean philosophy compared with traditional philosophical thought. In order to do this, we are going to reference Josef Estermann's² research.

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- 1 By this concept we understand the principle of human and cosmic life, which states that everything that exists is harmoniously ordered in the world. Although the "Principle of holistic harmony" is well known in Andean Philosophy, we are going to use the name "Principle of Primal Order" to indicate the same idea for three reasons: The principle names could vary among researchers (Esterman, Tatzo, Mejía Huamán), this concept is not formed by tradition (Andean people use it without theorization); "Principle of Primal Order" reflects the idea of "start" or "beginning" as epistemological principle. We will talk again about this concept in section 1.2.
 - 2 Josef Estermann (1956) is a Swiss missionary and philosopher who published one of the most important studies on Andean philosophy. Though confined to indigenous communities in Peru, his writings are

- Andean Philosophy is not determined by the same criteria that Western-traditional Philosophy are. Thus, the criteria that Andean philosophy does not match are: It neither appears in Ionia nor in other European territories.
- Its rationality is neither methodically nor systematically determined. It is not a science in the strict sense.
- It does not follow the separation of the Enlightenment between philosophy and religion, knowledge and salvation, theory and praxis.
- It does not respond to the requirement of exclusivist logic. (Estermann, 1998: 42).
- It is not essentially grapho-logic (Estermann, 1998: 65).
- There is not a tradition preserved with individual authors. It is the anonymous reflection of collective experience.
- Andean philosophy is not Western nor occidental – morphic, nor “occidentalizable” (Estermann, 1998: 42).

Additionally, we could define Andean thought as that which occurs in the mountainous area of South America. For instance, geographic and topographic determinations reflect important characteristics: “insecurity of land, the dialectic between up and down (by topography) and the cyclicity of the rainy season and drought (...) [and] climatic and extreme topographic conditions.” (Estermann, 1998: 42-52)³. However, it is also important that we understand that Andean philosophy is not Inca Philosophy; Inca though, is a historical category that does not encompasses of all the Andes, and has no place in the present. In other words, even if Andean philosophy cannot be defined as homogeneous or systemic thinking, it can be defined in relation to its geographical and historical origins; this is the geopolitics of reason⁴.

nevertheless a milestone in the preservation and attempt to systematize the philosophy and rationalize its study. The name of his publication is *Andean philosophy. Intercultural study of Andean indigenous knowledge* (1998).

3 Our translation. The original texts reads: “La precariedad de la tierra, la dialéctica entre arriba y abajo (por la topografía) y la ciclicidad de las épocas de lluvia y sequía (...) [y] condiciones climáticas y topográficas extremas”. These characteristics are, for example, hot during the day and cold at night, dry in winter and humid in summer, deep gorge and very extensive plateaus (Estermann, 1998: 52). But, he explains: “The topographical and climatic conditions can explain in part the dual polarity, time, cyclicity and complementarity; however, these conditions do not mean that the natural environment is crucial to its conceptualization (which will be a simple naturalism)” (Estermann, 1998: 42).

4 We strongly recommend *El Color de la Razón y del Pensamiento Crítico en Las Américas* from professor Catalina León Pesántez, document first published in 2008.

Finally, we can state that Andean philosophy is an aesthetic-centered and pragmatic-centered thought. The transcendence of life experience is not distinguished by separating inner and outer time, so the experience is irreducible and comprehensive. Hence, we cannot look for answers in writing but rather in the *praxis* of Andean communities.

1.1. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ANDEAN PHILOSOPHY

Andean rationality is organized and corresponds with principles (Estermann, Mejía Huamán, Tatzo) that develop in laws and practice. These principles include: the Principle of Harmony of All, the Principle of Correspondence and the Principle of Complementarity.

The Principle of Harmony of All, also called the Holistic Relatedness Principle, indicates that plurality is *beginning* and that the order and harmony of this plurality exist intrinsically in the cosmos. Each element can claim its being only in relation to the other elements. Everything is connected to everything else and this constitutive relationality is substance and not accident. “[It] is not a reductionist relationality that absorbs the elements into an anonymous structure (...). The ‘whole’ Andean philosophy does not contradict the parts; instead, they together constitute a *totum concretum*” (Estermann, 1998: 114)⁵.

And yet, this harmony is not composed of absolute entities: Contrary to Platonic, Neoplatonic and Hegelian principles, where there is a monistic emanation of a single entity, this harmony is not a compression ratio or reduction, nor synthesis. It is a being of all, where the *onticity* of a being is the relationship with the other being. According to Estermann in his *Filosofía Andina*, the Principle of relationality can be formulated negatively and positively: the first way implies that there can be no being completely devoid of relations; the second way proposes that every person, event, state of consciousness, feeling, fact, and possibility is immersed in multiple relationships with other entities, events, states of consciousness, feelings, facts and possibilities (Estermann, 1998: 114).

Notwithstanding, this principle does not solely determine the reality; the concretization of these relationships can be highly variable and in fact it is beyond human comprehension. According to Estermann, in the latter idea rests an important

5 Our translation. The original text reads: “no se trata de una relacionalidad reduccionista que absorbe a los *relata* en una estructura anónima (...). El ‘todo’ en la Filosofía Andina no contradice las partes, sino las ‘constituye’; es un *totum concretum*.”

difference between Western philosophy and Andean philosophy, for Western philosophy has as its unconscious founding myth the premise that the whole reality is intelligible to humans (Estermann, 1998: 119).

Secondly, from the Principle of Harmony of All emerge the Principle of Correspondence and the Principle of Complementarity.

The Principle of correspondence holds that the different aspects of everything correspond harmoniously with other things or situations. Being more specific, this correspondence is between the different fields of reality, the macro-cosmos and the micro-cosmos. To Estermann, this principle is that which the Pythagoreans implied in the phrase “as in the large, it is in the small” and he notes its importance for medicine (isomorphism), which also applies to Andean medicine.

He emphasizes that “the principle of correspondence” includes qualitative relational, symbolic, ritual and emotional links. However, this is not a proportionally similar correlation, but a symbolic (re)presentative correlation.” (Estermann, 1998: 125)⁶. This correspondence is not causation, but it is representative in a sense that the “presentation” is faithful to the thing or entity to which it refers. For instance, in a ritual to thank the earth for its goodness and ask her for blessing, drums are sounded to represent the heartbeat (vibration) of the earth, water is placed in a specific location on the table, which, in turn, represents the flow of life. Nevertheless, it is necessary to explain that the ritual is not the reason *why* the earth blesses the people. There is no causation, since all this happens at the same time. Thus, using the last example, we could explain that the sound of the drum *is* the heartbeat of the earth and that water *is* the life flowing. The people who are in charge of the rituals are manipulating and acting in the presence of the things themselves. Hence, it is easy to explain the ceremonial aspects in the treatment of each element involved in rituals.

On the other side is the Principle of Complementarity, which indicates that there is no entity that exists without its complement. “Nobody or particular event is a complete entity but suffers —speaking in Western terms— from ‘ontological deficiency’” (Estermann, 1998: 126)⁷. So, the complete and comprehensive entity exists only after the inclusion of its opposite. Nothing is complete until opposites get

6 Our translation. The original texts reads: “el principio de correspondencia incluye nexos relacionales de tipo cualitativo, simbólico, celebrativo, ritual y afectivo. No se trata, sin embargo, de una correlación análogo proporcional, sino de una correlación simbólico-(re)representativa.”

7 Our translation. The original texts reads: “Ningún ‘ente’ o acontecimiento particular es una entidad completa, sino que sufre —para hablar en términos occidentales— de una ‘deficiencia ontológica’”.

integrated, without losing their own characteristics. Using an analogy with Western dialectic, the Swiss missionary explains that Andean dialectic is more Heraclitean than Hegelian. Complementarity is not the result of a process, but the expression of the Andean rationality (Estermann, 1998: 131).

The Principle of Correspondence and Principle of Complementarity are expressed on the pragmatic level. On this level, we find the Principle of Reciprocity. This has been the Andean principle which has been the most documented in cultural, anthropological and economic studies. This principle says that every act is met with a reciprocal act and its level is totally ethical, not only from a man to other men, but also from a man to his community, to all communities, and to the cosmos in general.

A relationship (unilateral) in which only one part gives or is active, and the other only receives or is passive, to the Andean *rune* is neither imaginable nor possible. It may be that a certain relational imbalance occurring during a given moment, but the ‘cosmic justice’ *harmony* and *complementarity* require that, sooner or later, this imbalance will be brought into balance by a reciprocal action. (Estermann, 1998: 134 [The second and third italics have been added])⁸

For example, we could mention the *minga*, a custom in which members of the community participate not only in community activities but also in activities, on behalf of a member or his family. Thus, although at any given time only specific people have “given”⁹ (their time, their energy, etc.), that giving is part of the harmony of the whole, the Principle of Primal Order.

1.2. THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIMAL ORDER (PPO)

*“Es decir que detrás de las leyes de la Naturaleza se esconde el orden ético-cósmico del mundo.”*¹⁰

(Rodríguez, 64 [The italics have been added])

The focus of our research is the «Principle of Primal Order», which comprises what we discussed above as the Principle of Harmony as a guideline for all subsequent cosmos and organizations in order to establish its epistemological scope.

8 Our translation. The original text reads: “Una relación (unilateral) en la que una parte sólo da o sólo es activa, y la otra únicamente recibe o es pasiva, para el *rune* andino no es imaginable ni posible. Puede ser que se dé un cierto desequilibrio relacional por un cierto tiempo, pero la ‘justicia cósmica’ y la *armonía* de la *complementariedad* exigen que, tarde o temprano, este desequilibrio será transformado en equilibrio por una acción recíproca.” [The second and third italics have been added]

9 We consider that it is necessary to emphasize that given the cyclical and cumulative conception of time [eg. Y year crop is the X and Z years crop (Tatzo, 2010: 88)]; the moment when an individual gives contains the time when he is receiving, and *vice versa*.

10 “It is said that behind the laws of nature hides the Cosmic Ethical Order of the world.”

The name «Principle of Primal Order» is tacitly referred to by the Peruvian philosopher Mario Mejía Huamán as an initial distinction between Andean Philosophy and Western philosophy: «the universe [in the philosophy of the Andes, as opposed to the Western world] was not in chaos» (Mejía Huamán, 2005: 117)¹¹. The philosophy of ancient Greece starts with a cosmos in chaos and attempts to understand and sort by the ἀρχή. This way of sorting and comprehending the world reaches its apex with Plato and develops completely with Hegel. Later, this idea constitutes the founding myth of Western philosophy.

By contrast, in Andean philosophy, order is primal. From the beginning, the world (cosmos) has been in order and harmony. Therefore, the PPO understands plurality not as imperfection, but rather as perfection itself. Consequently, Primal Order is not an artificial product order or causality of temporal development and space. It has nothing to do with any human teleology. It is natural, unjustifiable and irrefutable.

Finally, people, governed by the PPO of the cosmos, do not have to do more than try to maintain that order. Imbalances exist, and indeed their existence is a natural and necessary part of the cosmic order. But the cosmic order compensates these imbalances by its immeasurability and plurality. Here the healing rites are inserted, because their aims are to recover the Primal Order balance.

2. FIELD RESEARCH: THE COMMUNITY OF SAN RAFAEL AND ANDEAN PHILOSOPHY

In this section we are going to consider the hypothesis that the Principle of Primal Order in Andean philosophy supports an epistemological study and can contribute to the understanding of different types of knowledge, and that this principle can be analyzed, described and incorporated into an epistemological description based on fieldwork. The problem to study is how the Andean Principle of Primal Order manifests itself in rituals practiced in the community of San Rafael (Cañar¹²).

The specific objective of the fieldwork is to establish the elements and structures that are part of the ritual of healing, defining their functions and

11 Our translation. The original texts reads: “el universo [en la filosofía de los Andes, por contraposición al universo occidental] no estaba en caos sino en orden”.

12 Cañar is a province of Ecuador, located in the south of the country. Here is found the greatest remaining population of Cañaris, a pre-columbian culture that dates from the Middle Formative Period (2000 to.C-500.C.). Currently, an important part of the indigenous population of Ecuador lives in Cañar.

characteristics. So the indicators to be considered are the elements of the ritual paraphernalia used in healing rituals of the “ancient wisdom”, seeking a conceptual analysis of these elements and the structure of the ritual. The method used for this purpose includes direct non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews (mainly directed to *shamans* or *yachaks*¹³).

2.1. GENERAL INFORMATION AND LOCATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF SAN RAFAEL¹⁴

Community Name: San Rafael

Province of Cañar, Ecuador

Population density: Approx. 1000 people

Important buildings: School, Health Centre, Chapel, Community House.

Location: The community of San Rafael is located in the central part of the Province of Cañar. The community exists west of the town, at a distance of 2km from the main town and is accessible in two ways: By cab or via the inter-parish bus from the Trunk Pan highway. From the “Cattle Fair”, follow the path to the “Y Shillo pathway”; once there, take the left lane. The center of town is another 100 meters. From the Cañar Center to San Rafael Center takes about 10 minutes to reach by motor vehicle.

2.2. RELIGION, SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

These three elements are necessary to contextualize the fieldwork. Traditional medicine is parallel to Catholic religion. For instance, prayers, invocations, and Christian pictures are included in Andean ceremonies.

Nonetheless, folk medicine is oriented to specific cures arising from the imbalance of energies, comprising techniques that seek to restore the Principle of Primal Order of energies in which “good and bad” or hot and cold are found

13 A *Yachak* or a *Shaman* is a wise person who deals with ancient wisdom. Possibly the best translation is “guru”; however, we will use the original word.

14 The following information has been obtained from a personal interview with Agustín Morocho, a local resident who also has worked with Napoleon Almeida and has published some articles in *CIDAP* magazine.

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in harmony with nature. Examples of these diseases are *mal aire*, *mal de ojo* and *espanto*. But Andean medical techniques are also used for symptomatic illnesses such as stomach aches, cardiovascular deficiency, spasms, etc.

Other important aspects when talking about folk medicine are: fracture healing, belief in witchcraft and the work of midwives (Einzmann and Almeida, 1991). Witchcraft may be caused by envy, lust, concoctions, sessions and other practices; the work of midwives implies that a woman (midwife) assists indigenous women in their childbirth.

2.3. RITUAL HEALING TECHNIQUES IN THE COMMUNITY OF SAN RAFAEL

Healing rituals are very important in the life of Andean people. Along with other traditional practices, such as the cure of *espanto* or *mal de ojo* and *caída del shungo*¹⁵, *caderación*, *lavatorios*, natural childbirth care and start position of the fetus, healing rituals safeguards the understanding of the individual within his rural life, within his community, and within the close relationship with the nature.

The healing rituals contain the following basic criteria. First, the participants always include the *yachak* (possibly helped by an aide) and the beneficiary. Second, it is not a one-dimensional or single-centered process, but consists of several moments in which different techniques and resources express the plural conception of reality of Andean relationality and processes of (re-) presentation that involves philosophical organization.

2.3.1. THE PARTICIPANTS

2.3.1.1. THE YACHAK

The *yachak*, shaman or *curandero* is the director of ancestral medicine rituals. He conducts the offertory preparation and uses the paraphernalia, as well as guides the patient or beneficiary spiritually.

¹⁵ *Espanto* and *caída del shungo* are caused by a disorder or disruption in the body and usually affect children, who have symptoms like nausea, weakness, loss of appetite and diarrhea. *Espanto* and *ojo* are the result of the transposition of bad or very strong vibes from other people. *Caída del shungo* occurs when there has been a fall, when an individual has been shaken or has suffered a stroke that has altered the body. As we say, 'the fallen *shungo*' is when the liver... or when you force falls and moves. (...) That is: to put in order, to tie sets, to set in order, in position, moving it, shaking (...)' (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013).

In the community of San Rafael, the people who require healing rituals and treatments have access to two healers: Mercedes and Mariana Chuma; both are the late Mariana Chuma's daughters. Mercedes practices in Cañar's downtown, while Mariana serves the same community from her home, located about fifty meters past the Inti Raymi Foundation, on the left side of the road to Shillo. Ms. Mariana de Jesús Chuma is a Western Medicine Nurse and Andean Medicine Technician; she is fifty-nine years old and has been dedicated to the work of Andean medicine rituals for thirty-five years (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013). She learned her work from her father, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She states that their knowledge has been kept for a long time. In her words:

«[Concerning] what I learned way before now, it changes very little, very little; nearly the same ancient customs apply, that is why you are already healed, you know, we know that there are plants, and what plant is used for which symptom, and which disease.» (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013)¹⁶.

How do the Andean *yachaks* work? Regarding the rationale and mode of operation:

“We focus on nature and concentrate on plants, talking with the plants, worship them, pray, like entering church. It is here in the hills, in the hills, in spirits, the spirits have to have the power, nature's force, with plants, with stones, with the hills.” (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013)¹⁷.

On the other hand—and in general terms—the Andean *yachaks'* work lead people to consider them as spiritual and conceptual beings. Nevertheless, most *yachaks* are reluctant to talk about categories of thought such as philosophy, or world view. They prefer to speak of “Ancient Wisdom” because this way, nothing which has had the endorsement of hundreds of years of practice may be questioned. To summarize, we can describe the Andean *yachak* as a person circumscribed to a location, who works by taking the resources and assets that the location has, and practices according to the teaching of their immediate ancestors. He is also a mystical being who knows and understands the complexity and the breath of life

16 Our translation. The original text reads: “[Respecto a] lo que yo aprendí más antes ahora es [un] cambio muy poco no más, muy poco; casi en costumbres antiguas mismo se aplica, por eso uno ya se cura, ya saben, ya sabemos nosotros que hay plantitas, qué planta es para qué síntoma no más, qué enfermedad no más.”

17 Our translation. The original text reads: “Nosotros concentramos con la naturaleza, conversamos así con las plantas; vamos a adorarle, orarle, como entrar en [la] iglesia [es] aquí en los cerros; en los cerros, en los espíritus, con los espíritus nosotros tenemos que tener poder, fuerza con las naturalezas, con las plantas, con las piedras, con los cerros”.

that surrounds all aspects of man and woman as well as the Andean nature that surrounds them.

2.3.1.2. THE BENEFICIARY OR PATIENT

The beneficiary or patient may be child or adult, male or female. The observations found that there is not a defined majority; patients were almost equally distributed according to age and gender criteria. The patient who goes to visit the *yachak* shows generally three features located in different progressions:

Before the ritual the beneficiary is elusive. He or she does not like to acknowledge why he or she is visiting the *yachak*, or share any other information (with the exception that while waiting for their turn, they have chance to talk with people who are also going to be attended). The informants who were interviewed expressed that they were there because a friend, family member or other person recommended that they see if the *yachak* could help. During the waiting, tension in the patients is variable. We should also note that the beneficiary goes to the healer with a definite purpose.

During the ritual, some measure of coercion and also respect for the place and the instruments and elements presented by the *yachak* are observed. The patient watches everything with attention; he does everything that the *yachak* asks. Observation revealed that the beneficiary's tension diminished as the ritual progressed.

After the ritual, the beneficiary appears assertive, relieved, and says that he feels, first, surprised by the things that the *shaman* has said (*yachaks* also ask personal questions) and, second, that he feels quieter and lighter in both body and spirit.

Additionally, the spiritual soul-beneficiary status can be analyzed from at least two perspectives. From the point of view of Mariana and Mercedes Chuma, the person who is going to start the procedure has to try to have faith and believe in the stone, on the ground, and everything that is used (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013). On the other hand, it is a consensus among *yachaks* and beneficiaries that the patient goes to the healing procedure when "the body calls it" (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013)¹⁸, and when he feels the need; thus, showing the

18 Our translation. The original texts reads: "el cuerpo mismo pide".

link between the spiritual and physical dimensions of the human being, as opposed to a dual conceptualization.

In summary, beneficiaries can come from a wide social spectrum and show different concerns in different areas of their life. Patients are characterized by their evasiveness and restlessness, though these may vary throughout the process.

2.3.2. STAGES OF THE HEALING RITUAL

The healing ritual is structured in three main stages: preparation, diagnosis and treatment. We will describe each of them as they have been observed in Andean healing practices in the community of San Rafael. We have to note that the methods may differ slightly, without affecting the traditional structure (indicating an organized praxis referring to foundations), and also indicating that the diagnostic process involves a treatment, since the elements indicated for diagnosis also possess properties of healing. For example, the egg can be used at the same time as a diagnostic element and as a treatment element, which allows us to observe the holism of the principles Andean Philosophy.

However, we must keep in mind the following conditions:

First, the healing can be done only on Tuesdays and Fridays, as it is these days when the forces of nature may have concentrated those energies that the *yachak* has prosecuted (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013).

Second, the beneficiary must bring with him several elements. Among these elements, we could find a bundle of “plants for cleansing”. This bundle must include either twelve or seven plants. These plants can also be purchased. However, the *yachak* recommends that they take fresh from the field. The beneficiary must also carry a candle, an egg, and snuff or urine in a jar.

In the following paragraphs we will develop chronologically the three stages and the actions taken in each.

2.3.2.1. PREPARATION

The beneficiary is asked to remove his or her outer clothes: shirt, poncho and blouse (leaving only the brassiere in the case of women). Meanwhile, the healer puts a *chakana* on the table and lights incense.

The shaman presents a petition to the Pachamama to help the beneficiary. It is necessary for the *shaman* to give the patient's name to "reconnect the spirit" (Ochoa, digital audio, 22nd September 2012), and prosecute the energies of nature to achieve its mission.

The purpose of this step is to prepare the environment to encourage and balance the flow of energy. Preparation is important to the healing ritual because it guarantees the performance of the elemental forces of nature in the pursuit of healing as the human being is conceived as part of nature.

2.3.2.2. *DIAGNOSIS*

- According to the element chosen to make the diagnosis, the *yachak* proceeds with candle, snuff, egg or the urine brought by the patient. However, more than one of these can be used, according to the shaman's opinion. In the first case, the patient is asked to pass the candle four times near a flame that has been previously placed, and then four times over his body, before the candle is ignited. When a cigarette is used, it is smoked by the healer and then exhaled four times in different areas of the patient's body. When urine is used, the urine is observed by the healer (Chuma, personal interview, 25th January 2013).
- The *yachak* requests permission from the Andean Pachamama, or Mother Earth, using songs and shaking the described plants on the beneficiary—who is always standing up—without touching him or her yet. Immediately, the same act is repeated, but this time the plants touch the patient's body with medium aggressiveness to "scare the bad energies, bad spirits" (Chuma, personal interview, 25th January 2013). Finally, the beneficiary is asked to smell the mountains four times.
- At this point, the healer provides an appraisal of the various aspects of the person's physical and mental health, including areas that are in balance or out of balance.

In this stage one can see the vital connection found in Andean philosophy between the individual and nature, where the last is used to diagnose the first. Moreover, contrary to a diagnosis of Western medicine, this is a comprehensive assessment that focuses not only on the physical health but also questions other aspects of the patient's life.

2.3.2.3. TREATMENT

Using alcohol the plants are ignited and waves of heat touch the body of the patient who can cover his face while this process occurs. Then, the beneficiary is asked to extinguish with his hands and paper the plants that have been consumed.

For the next step, the patient is asked to close his eyes, and to breathe through the mouth. Then, alcohol is spit directly onto the body of the patient. Next, the shaman extends the patient's hands and spit on them while asking the patient to breathe deeply four times. This process is repeated four times.

Different rocks, plants and soil from the surrounding area are used to channel energy and “balance, reconnect yourself with nature” (Chuma, personal interview, 25th January 2013)¹⁹. Crystals are moved in circular motions across the body at different heights (beginning from above the head to the toes and back up to the sides of the upper and lower limbs, to return back to the starting point. The same movements are used on the patient's back). The above procedure is also performed with feathers, shaking them near the patient from time to time.

At the end of the ritual, the healer makes a summary of the aspects in which the patient has to work (for example, meditating or praying). The healer expresses ways to treat the illness, and gives recommendations related to lifestyle, as required for each patient. We also note that the use of different techniques is related to the plurality of forces of nature.

2.3.2.4. BASICS ELEMENTS OF RITUAL HEALING

The information in this section may vary according to the knowledge of each yachak, his or her specialization, as well as the feasibility of obtaining materials. For example, the quartz described in this part could be unnecessary. However, some elements can be considered basic due to their importance and indispensability in healing rituals, according to the relevant observations in the community of San Rafael. In the next lines we will try to establish those basic elements:

- a) On the center of a table is placed a *chakana* or altar, which is a cross formed with stones, soil, foods like grains and fruits, rose petals and water. These elements are arranged in the form of a cross. This cross represents the organization of the cosmos, the north, south, east and

¹⁹ Our translation. The original texts reads: “equilibrar, reconectarse uno mismo con la naturaleza”.

west, and at each corner the “weapons” (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013)²⁰ are put: stone, alcohol, Florida colony, bones, feathers, chonta, bells, brass instruments, quipa, charango and fire. The weapons are also arranged, according to the required cross-linearities mentioned, water, shell, metal trim, anthropomorphic stones, flowers, plants, native tissues. These elements always maintain symmetry. Symmetry results in the various colors highlighted by the accompanying woven fabrics and *mullos*, which are used to concentrate the forces of nature (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013).

- b) As explained above, the plants have to have an exact number, whether they are from seven or twelve different plants. Among their names: Rue, Rosemary, Pennyroyal, Santa Maria, Guanto, Floripondio, Saúco, Chilchil, Altamisa, and Eucalyptus. Their main task is to absorb bad energy (Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013).
- c) Air is part of this paraphernalia and is represented by feathers and fans. This air is treated as sacred air that allows for the flow of energies and forces of nature (Chuma, personal interview, 25th January 2013).
- d) Fire is presented in a boiler and is used to burn incense, and to light the snuff, the candle and the plants. Fire gives the spirits permission to access them and the *Pachamama* (Chuma, personal interview, 25th January 2013).
- e) Water is placed in a vessel at rest. It is there both to symbolize the element of nature and to be offered to the spirits. (Chuma, personal interview, 25th January 2013).
- f) The stones can be quartz stones or rocks from a sacred hill; they have special or definite forms and they are made naturally or by man (rounded as *chakana*, heart, or straight). A property of the quartz is to guide the path of energies and organize them. Every element of nature has its peculiar power to reconnect the individual with the *Pachamama*. “One needs to have faith in the stone, in the plant; that will cure you.”(Chuma, digital audio, 25th January 2013)²¹.

20 Our translation. The original texts reads: “armas”.

21 Our translation. The original texts reads: “Uno tiene que tenerle fe a la piedra, a la planta, de que le va a curar.”

- g) The symmetry of the altar, the order of the altar and the position in which the elements are located is definitely a feature that is striking at first sight. The elements are located according to the Andean cross; within each part, the basic shape of the *chakana* is repeated. The symmetry of the altar is observed and repeated a quadripartite order.

III. CONCLUSIONS. THE COMMUNITY OF SAN RAFAEL AND ANDEAN PHILOSOPHY

- The community of San Rafael, which is proud of its native culture, shows great attachment to country life. Most daily tasks involve a strong relationship with nature and with other members of the community. This close relationship is reflected in both the respect and care of the earth, and animals, and in the cheerful performance of everyday tasks. The value of respecting nature is an important point in their culture.
- Both patients and shamans sustain the faith and wisdom of the ritual. In general, they think that a philosophical justification is not necessary.
- The different stages of healing rituals bear some correspondence with allopathic procedures, but these rituals consist of a variety of techniques and instruments, which may even have the same purpose. The healing ritual requires multiple elements, both of which correspond directly the recipient (eg. plants, brandy) and which constitute indirect but necessary parts of the healing ritual (such as shells, beads, metal ornament , etc.). This reflects the plurality and the necessity of each element.
- The reason for including all the paraphernalia is to try and ensure the “reconnection” of the individual with nature, with the Pachamama. This is accomplished through the release of energy and encourages the flow of positive energy (eg. moving stones on the body following the toroidal geometry). Thus, the movement of the stones or crystals, or the plants, is always ordered, complete and self-powered.
- All items that are part of the act or ritual have their macro-narrative in nature, (Eg. the water container has the macro-narrative to the natural water in springs, rivers, lakes, a stone can have macro-narrative as a rocky hill, the corn kernels the fertility of the earth). Thereby, re-introducing the natural order.

The principle of primal order in the ritual healing techniques in the community...

- The elements are placed according to a pre-established order: the quadripartite organization of Andean cross. The altar is always symmetrical, because it is a representation of the natural order. In consequence, it must also be properly ordered.
- The relatedness of the plurality of elements is the basis and purpose of Andean healing rituals.
- The relatedness of the plurality can be found in healing rituals performed in Indian-Andean Community of San Rafael.

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