**The Ethical and Humanistic Context of Environmental Issues**

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**Abstract.** This article examines the ethical and humanistic aspects of environmental issues within the context of contemporary philosophical discourse. Recognizing that environmental degradation is not merely an ecological or technical problem but also a profound moral crisis, the study analyzes the philosophical foundations of moral responsibility in the context of human–nature relations. Methodologically, the research draws on a combination of dialectical, synergistic, and systemic-structural approaches, supported by historical and logical analysis, content analysis, and empirical tools, including surveys. The study emphasizes that ecological activity is not limited to practical or scientific engagement with the environment but is deeply rooted in moral values, ecological consciousness, and a humanistic worldview. The article distinguishes between broad and narrow interpretations of ecological culture, demonstrating that ecological ethics, intergenerational responsibility, and the universalization of human values must guide sustainable interaction with nature. The findings underscore that developing ecological culture—through ethical education, awareness, and civic participation—is essential to ensure ecological security. The analysis of global philosophical trends, including geographical determinism, possibilism, and ecological anthropology, provides further context for the evolution of ecological thought. Ultimately, the study advocates for a co-evolutionary paradigm in which moral reflection and cultural transformation play central roles in addressing environmental challenges.

**INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, theoretical studies have led to the recognition that the sphere of moral action extends far beyond the domain of direct interpersonal relationships. In the context of social practice, virtually no area remains untouched by ethical considerations. Morality regulates human interactions based on principles such as benevolence, justice, dignity, and honor. It serves as a fundamental criterion for evaluating all forms of human activity and their consequences.

Moral values can also be applied to the domain of human interaction with the natural world. The environment, viewed as the living space for present and future generations, increasingly becomes a subject of ethical reflection and spiritual regulation. As human impact on the natural world intensifies, the scope of moral responsibility for both individuals and society correspondingly expands.

This expansion of moral consciousness reflects a deepened and renewed philosophical understanding of the nature and function of ethics. Within the framework of environmental philosophy, the article aims to elucidate the ethical and humanistic dimensions of addressing ecological problems, positioning them as the normative core of ecological security.

The study employs a combination of methodological approaches, including the principles of development and universal interconnectedness, synergetic analysis, systemic-structural methodology, historical and logical analysis, objectivity, integrative thinking, content analysis, and empirical tools such as surveys and questionnaires.

**EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH**

The methodological foundation of the research is based on a multidisciplinary philosophical approach. The research integrates dialectical and synergetic methodologies to analyze the dynamic interaction between society and nature, as well as systemic-structural analysis to reveal the internal coherence of ecological culture as a socio-philosophical phenomenon.

Historical and logical analysis is applied to trace the evolution of ecological thought, particularly through the stages of geographical determinism, possibilism, and ecological anthropology. Content analysis is used to examine philosophical, cultural, and ethical texts related to environmental issues, while empirical tools such as surveys and questionnaires support the identification of value orientations, ecological consciousness, and ethical attitudes within society.

Within this research framework, ecological activity is conceptualized as both a subject–object and value-oriented process. The human being is examined simultaneously as the subject who transforms nature and as the object affected by ecological outcomes. This duality enables a comprehensive evaluation of moral responsibility, ecological ethics, and cultural transformation in the context of environmental security.

**RESEARCH RESULTS**

First and foremost, morality must be regarded as a distinctive mode through which the socially embedded individual internalizes and interprets the world — a spiritual-practical method of engagement. This characterization allows morality to be understood not merely as a passive system of norms but as an active influence on the "human world," functioning as an instrument of creative human activity.

Morality prescribes a specific mode of action, evaluating practice through the dialectics of good and evil. It introduces an alternative metric for understanding reality — one that challenges pragmatism, utilitarianism, and the principle of expediency. Within this moral framework, the realization of goodness emerges as the principal measure of human action.

In the moral appropriation of the world, a critical threshold of expectations is set for both the individual and society. This threshold is not defined by what currently exists, but by the normative ideal — *what ought to be*. It envisions the elevation of lived experience to a moral and existential ideal, necessitating the integration of goodness in life and the pursuit of deeper ethical meaning.

Such moral cognition is not purely rational or detached; it necessitates the presence of moral feeling, emotional engagement, and ethical intuition. Morality, in this sense, transcends cold rationality. It represents a spiritually embodied mode of comprehension, integrally tied to practical experience. This moral mode of being fuels human action with a powerful impulse, manifests itself in behavior, and becomes visible in the transformation of life situations.

In the domain of ecological activity, the universal human character of moral values becomes especially evident. The resolution of environmental issues invokes not only practical concerns but also reflects the historical evolution of moral theory itself. The dialectic of "society–nature" and "social human–nature" belongs undeniably to the category of serious global philosophical problems. The intensification of these issues is directly connected to the reckless and exploitative attitude toward nature — an attitude that the trajectory of social progress has yet to overcome.

Approaching nature solely as an object of human domination, as an inexhaustible resource, or as an arena for the demonstration of power has led to a disinterest in the state of the natural world. Only upon realizing that a violated nature is, in fact, a violated home for humanity — and that it poses an existential threat — does society begin to comprehend the gravity of the crisis. The degradation of nature, resulting from irresponsible human activity, ultimately leads to the collapse of life itself, comparable in consequence to that of a thermonuclear catastrophe.

Like other global problems, the environmental crisis has deepened and diversified our understanding of humanism and humanity. Today, humanism is no longer solely a struggle for the development and perfection of the individual — it also represents a struggle for survival. Ensuring the viability of human life and humanity itself has become one of the most pressing issues of our time, as it underlies the resolution of many other global challenges. The recognition of "the interests of humanity as a whole" is no longer a speculative ideal but a reflection of lived global realities. It has become clear that the efforts of any single nation alone cannot solve such problems. Global problems, at their essence, require collective action, drawing on the combined efforts of various nations and peoples. Their impact transcends internal policy, acquiring universal significance.

Within this context, the role of universal moral values in shaping ecological relations between human beings and nature becomes critically important. Our ethical ideal must integrate both national and universal dimensions, filling it with real, globally resonant humanistic content.

A philosophical analysis of the current ecological condition reveals the enrichment of the concept of universalism. It demonstrates that the universality of morality cannot be explained solely through historical continuity or the linear progression of social development. Instead, it demands acknowledgment of the economic, socio-political, and ecological relations that form the objective basis for the emergence and evolution of the universal ethical domain.

Why, then, is the human-nature relationship necessarily connected to ethics? In brief, it ultimately reflects the relationship between human beings themselves. The environmental problem possesses a dual humanistic nature. These two dimensions are interconnected and reflect society's unity with nature. Human interaction with nature manifests not only in its functional and utilitarian dimensions but also in the existential and ethical bond that connects all of humanity.

Ecological interconnectedness emerges both "horizontally" — through relations among different populations within and across regions — and "vertically" — across generations in time. The very existence of these two interrelated humanistic aspects of ecological relations necessitates the inclusion of morality in environmental discourse. Ethical motivations must be integrated into all forms of environmental engagement. Ethical norms and ideals guide the future-oriented value system of social activity, eliminating the narrowness of situational or expedient behaviors.

As human impact on the environment increases, the domain of moral responsibility likewise expands. Nature, as the living environment for present and future generations, becomes subject to ethical evaluation and regulation. A morally guided orientation fosters a deeper understanding of the intergenerational implications of ecological activity. Without such an orientation, human action risks devolving into mere pragmatism.

It is thus important to distinguish between the broad and narrow meanings of ecological activity. In its broader sense, ecological activity entails the individual's moral and spiritual transformation of nature and society. It calls for ethical self-awareness and harmonization of human behavior with natural and social systems. In its narrower sense, ecological activity is realized in the educational process — not merely in terms of acquiring knowledge and skills, but also through the development of pro-environmental socio-cultural motives and ethical behaviors.

In this respect, ecological activity plays a vital role in both environmental education and upbringing. It is within this framework that we define environmental education as a morally charged, value-oriented activity. It represents an integrated process aimed at cultivating environmentally responsible citizens who recognize the ethical significance of their actions within the broader ecological system.

In the process of ecological activity, humans not only adapt to the natural environment but also modify it to meet their personal and collective needs. Ultimately, humans construct an artificially mediated ecological world — a distinct cultural reality known as ecological culture. Through this transformation, socio-cultural ones increasingly replace natural relationships, and nature itself becomes an object of human influence.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, this dynamic underscores a fundamental duality: the human being is simultaneously the subject and object of ecological activity. Understanding ecological practice as a subject–object relation necessitates reflection on the concept of values and evaluations. These evaluations are rooted in the ecological demands of human beings — specifically, the desire for a comfortable, optimal, and healthy environmental context.

To meet such demands, ecological values must be harmonized with the inherent capacities and laws of the biosphere. Moreover, knowledge, skills, and evaluative judgments — as expressions of human values — must be considered alongside needs and requirements. Together, they form the necessary mechanism for initiating and sustaining meaningful ecological action.

However, ecological activity cannot occur in a vacuum; it requires certain enabling conditions — economic, political, scientific, and institutional. The subject's ability to transform the object depends on the availability and proper application of specific methods that mediate this influence. These methods facilitate the transformation of the ecological object in ways that align with the subject's intentions.

Finally, ecological activity yields tangible outcomes. These outcomes reflect the subject's purpose as manifested in the altered state of the natural object. The result thus becomes a material expression of intentional human interaction with the environment, demonstrating the integration of moral agency, scientific rationality, and ecological necessity.

When addressing the issue of ecological culture within the context of global social development, it is essential to recognize that the interrelationship between the socio-natural environment and culture has historically passed through three key stages: geographical determinism, possibilism, and ecological anthropology. Proponents of geographical determinism (J.Bodin, Ch.Montesquieu, and others) [1] argued that natural factors and geographical conditions decisively influence the process of shaping the cultural characteristics of certain peoples. Possibilism, on the other hand, regarded the cultural traditions of ethnic groups as the determining factor. According to this view, nature is merely the background or enabling condition for the development of cultural traditions (P.Vidal de la Blache) [2]. From the mid-20th century onwards, a major scientific direction known as ecological anthropology emerged, synthesizing the ideas of both geographical determinism and possibilism (J.Steward, L.White) [3]. In this framework, the natural environment is not viewed merely as an aggregate of physical features, but as a resource utilized and interpreted by society. This approach can be viewed as the theoretical and methodological foundation for the development of ethnic ecological culture, which we aim to establish today.

The distinctive feature of ethnic ecology lies in the study of the interaction between ethnic groups and their surrounding environment, encompassing both natural and socio-cultural aspects. From this perspective, traditional ecological culture represents a non-biological mechanism of adaptation to the environment. It ensures optimal adjustment to specific natural-geographical conditions.

In this adaptive orientation, traditional ecological knowledge guides practices for utilizing natural resources in ways that do not disrupt the dynamic balance of ecosystems, fostering a worldview that promotes harmonious interaction with nature. Such methods and orientations are deeply rooted in the values and traditions of nations.

Let us now briefly turn to the core elements of ecological culture, including ecological knowledge, consciousness, and behavior.

The philosophical approach to ecological culture allows us to study universal phenomena and enables a comparative analysis between philosophy and ecological culture, thereby clarifying their distinct features. As a result, philosophy is regarded as the outcome of thought. In contrast, ecological culture is seen as a mode of existence — a way of life — for both the individual and society as a whole.

Among the diverse approaches to defining culture, it is widely acknowledged that culture does not stand in opposition to nature per se. Instead, it emerges as a mechanism for humanity's adaptation to the natural environment. Culture simultaneously exists in tension with and in reliance on nature. The harmony within this duality forms the very condition for the survival of culture.

In philosophy, culture is defined as a specific form of organizing and developing human life activity. It manifests itself in the products of both material and spiritual labor, in systems of social norms and institutions, in spiritual values, in the totality of relationships between humans and nature, and in interpersonal and self-reflective relations.

According to E.Girusov, culture can be defined in contrast to natural phenomena, as it reflects the content that distinguishes it from the mere natural existence of material objects. Culture, in this sense, is the reflection of the subject's conscious activity. However, in reality, the evolution of society reveals an increasing mutual influence and reciprocal determination between culture and nature.

Culture is thus a manifestation of conscious activity, and it expresses the degree of freedom in the subject's relationship to both natural and social necessity [4].

The numerous definitions of ecological culture can be conditionally categorized into two main approaches. The first approach views ecological culture as a social phenomenon — an essential characteristic of social culture and society as a whole. The second approach, which may be termed a "humanistic perspective," regards ecological culture as a qualitatively new dimension of an individual's overall cultural development, reflected in their consciousness and behavior.

In contemporary philosophical discourse, definitions of ecological culture appear in fragmented form. For instance, V.Kushnarev proposes understanding ecological culture as an ideal or a new type of culture. At its core lies the restoration of a genuine relationship between humans and nature — one that is based on active engagement rooted in the understanding of the laws governing nature and the biosphere [5].

Defining ecological culture necessitates clarifying the roles of culture, the human being, society, and nature in shaping this phenomenon. From this standpoint, it is appropriate to support the definition proposed by D.Markovich, who characterizes ecological culture as the condition and result of seeking universal mechanisms of interconnection. These universal interrelations extend to all aspects of human relations — including one's relationship with oneself, with others, and society's relationship with nature and the world at large. In this sense, ecological culture integrates humanity, society, and each individual into a universal system of mutual interdependence.

An analysis of philosophical and cultural studies literature on ecological culture reveals that it includes both material and spiritual dimensions. The material aspect encompasses all forms of interaction between society and nature, along with the consequences of such interaction. The spiritual aspect incorporates ecological knowledge, skills, beliefs, and experiences.

Moreover, several foundational components influence the formation and transmission of ecological knowledge. These include ecological consciousness, ecological ethics, and an ecological worldview — each of which merits special attention.

Ecological consciousness is a specific form of social consciousness. It reflects the moral unity between human beings and the environment. It encompasses the development of appropriate actions and behaviors, as well as the formulation of a philosophical conception of the dialectical relationship between ethnos and nature.

Ecological ethics refers to the system of moral principles and norms that regulate human interactions with nature. This ethical system posits that nature should be recognized as a full member of the moral community — a moral partner. It affirms the equal rights and intrinsic value of all living beings, even if this requires restricting certain human rights and desires. Ecological ethics is grounded in universal life values and humanistic ideals, and it constitutes an essential part of global ethics. As a field of interdisciplinary inquiry, ecological ethics emerged in response to the impact of scientific and technological progress on the environment, and it investigates the value-based and moral dimensions of human-nature relationships.

An ecological worldview represents a system of views that determines an individual's attitudes toward the world, other people, and oneself. It shapes human structures of meaning and is based on the idea of co-evolution between nature and humanity. The ecological worldview is formed as a complex product of the individual's practical interactions with the surrounding reality, encompassing both nature and society.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Ecological culture constitutes an integral part of universal human culture. It encompasses a system of social relations, moral values, norms, and methods through which ethnic groups interact with the natural environment. Through its essential components — ecological consciousness, ecological ethics, and ecological worldview — ecological culture influences the formation and transmission of ecological knowledge.

The core function of ecological culture lies in the emergence of a new type of worldview — an ecological worldview based on the principles of co-evolution. The cultivation of ecological culture and the transformation of human attitudes toward nature — i.e., the transformation of ecological consciousness — accelerates the pace of cultural development as a form of interaction with nature, thereby enhancing humanity's chances for survival.

In conclusion, given the urgency and social relevance of environmental problems — particularly the ecological catastrophe of the Aral Sea — we can identify the following key pathways for addressing these challenges:

First, the solution to environmental problems must be grounded in a historical analysis of the human–nature relationship, and must draw on the potential of science, technology, and culture. Overcoming current ecological crises requires scientific and technological advancement (such as reforming the active sciences of global ecology, developing new methods to study human–nature interactions and more), as well as significant transformations in industrial systems and governance structures.

Second, solutions must be connected to the emergence of a new cognitive and co-evolutionary paradigm. This paradigm calls for the unification of cognitive and value-based initiatives within human activity. It affirms a novel understanding of the human being as an integrated biological and social entity. Such a paradigm enhances our recognition of the human role in the nature–society system.

Third, it is essential to clearly define the capabilities and limitations of ecological activity within both natural and social systems. The primary reference point for such activity must be objectivity, in complete alignment with the laws of nature.

Based on these points, two fundamental requirements emerge for addressing ecological problems:

First and foremost, all forms and modalities of human activity must be guided by a philosophically grounded orientation—one that is congruent with the resolution of both mature and emerging issues within the sphere of human–nature relations. This orientation must be attuned to the principal aim of environmental policy: establishing a harmonized ontological order between society and the natural world. In the current historical phase, the trajectory of ecological development is marked by several foundational imperatives: the refinement of the institutional and managerial architecture of environmental governance; the normative regulation of natural resource usage; the construction of an environmentally responsible operational mechanism capable of ensuring both the efficient use and long-term preservation of national ecological wealth; and the philosophical-epistemic dissemination of scientific and technological progress as a decisive instrument in the rationalization of human engagement with nature. Furthermore, the intensification of Uzbekistan's participation in the global ecological discourse, alongside a radical rethinking and enhancement of environmental consciousness and ethical education among the population, constitutes an integral dimension of this broader cultural and civilizational shift. These directions collectively reflect not only pragmatic necessity but also a deeper anthropological imperative—namely, the rearticulation of the human being's existential responsibility within the planetary ecological system.

The second imperative entails the expansion and activation of public engagement in ecological practices, including environmental protection, resource conservation, and fostering a sustainable ethos. This requirement presupposes the formation of a socially responsible ecological subject—one that not only acknowledges but also actively participates in addressing the complex environmental challenges. Such participation signifies a shift from passive awareness to conscious ecological agency, wherein the individual becomes an ethical co-creator of the shared natural world. In this context, environmental responsibility is no longer confined to institutional frameworks; it becomes a manifestation of collective moral consciousness and a foundational condition for the co-evolution of humanity and nature.

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