

Orlin ZAGOROV<sup>1</sup>

## **The Ecosophy: Humanistic Paradigm of the New Millennium**

### **Abstract**

The forming of ecosophy as philosophic paradigm is an expression of the objective necessity of setting up a new cultural consciousness and vital strategy, based on the humanistic ideals of culture. The fundamental idea of this new paradigm has for its deep basis the understanding that through its cultural matrix the Man imparts meaning of being by rationalizing in a specific way its place in the World and becomes conscious the function of its own existence.

The ecosophy teaches that in the long run the Man can exhaust the vitality of Gaea by decreasing her productivity and can erase key species from her life supporting system. However the Reason ordains Man to save her by overcoming its suicidal aggressive greed -- the price that all living beings pay for this great gift of life, including the Man.

In this sense, the ecosophy is basic source of ideas and values, needed for the emerging and development of ecology of spirit which is essential element of the modern ecological culture.

### **Key Words**

Ecosophy, ecology of the spirit, purpose of Man, ecological codex, eco-humanism, humanistic ideals of culture, sustainable development, new cultural strategy.

## **Ekosofi: Yeni Milenyumun İnsancıl Paradigması**

### **Özet**

Felsefi bir paradigma olarak ekosofinin biçimlenmesi, insancıl kültür ideali üzerine temellenen yeni bir kültürel bilinç ve yaşamsal stratejiyi kurmanın nesnel zorunluluğunun bir ifadesidir. Bu yeni paradigmanın temel fikri, derin temeline dair, kültürel matris aracılığı ile insanın belirli bir tarzda, dünyadaki yerini rasyonelize ederek varlığa anlamını verdiği ve onun kendi varoluşunun işlevini bilinçli kıldığı bir anlayışa sahiptir.

Ekosofi, uzun vadede, insanın, Gaea'nın verimliliğini azaltarak yaşama gücünü tüketebildiğini ve yaşamından sistemi destekleyici anahtar türleri ortadan

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Professor of International Educational Centre, Bulgaria.

kaldırabildiğini öğretir. Bununla birlikte, akıl, insanı, yok edici saldırgan ihtirasının üstesinden gelerek korur – insan dahil bütün yaşayan varlıkların bu büyük yaşam armağanı için ödediği bedel.

Bu anlamda, eksofî, modern ekolojik kültürün temel ögesi olan tinin ekolojisinin ortaya çıkması ve gelişmesi için ihtiyaç duyulan fikirlerin ve değerlerin kaynağıdır.

### Anahtar Sözcükler

Ekosofî, tinin ekolojisi, insanın niyeti, ekolojik kodeks, oko-hümanizm, insancıl kültür idealleri, sürdürülebilir kalkınma, yeni kültürel strateji.

## 1. Humanistic Philosophic Paradigm

*The ecosophy is a system of ideas, concepts and principles of interaction between society and nature, between ecological mind and nature being, and of the environment and internal (spiritual) ecology.*

The emerging and development of ecosophy becomes possible during the 20th century because of the research of the Club of Rome, the views of Erich Fromm (1900-1980) for "new society" and "new man", the concept of "alternative production" and "appropriate technology" of E.F. Schumacher, the "ecological materialism" of K. Emery, etc.

Important role in the development of ecosophy has the "philosophy of life" and the realization of the unsoundness of concepts of "consumer society", "technocratic rationalism", etc. The basic reason which determines the appearance of ecosophy is the continuous deepening discrepancy and collision between consumers way of living and nature, an expression of the depletion and decay of modern civilization.

*The ecosophy is understood as a radical transformation of ontological and epistemological, and also of social and axiological problems of philosophy as theoretical self-consciousness of the epoch.*

The theoretical basis of the new philosophic paradigm is the "dialectical humanism" of K. Marx who revives and defends the comprehension of the unity between man and nature.

Ecosophy is still a new and undeveloped area of philosophic knowledge. Because of that there is still a lack of complete research of the basic problems which are covered by its research area. At this stage the efforts are targeted to accumulating of empirical data on different types of pollution of separate objects (soil, water, atmosphere, etc), and also of the whole planet. Meanwhile there has been a serious progress in the research of different aspects of urban, cultural, humane, social, ethnic and confessional ecology and other sciences that are studying the relationship of man and environment. This allows to make the first serious conclusions, based on the positions of such interdisciplinary science as ecological philosophy or ecosophy. On this basis a number of terms, categories, principles and laws acquire more and more notable philosophic nuances.

*Terms as "life", "coevolution", "ecohumanism", "economic growth", "quality of life", "progress", "civilization", "criterion", "bioethics", "sustainable development", "synergetics", "syntropy", "ecotopy", etc. receive new interpretations.*

Ecosophy is still in process of forming. Here the word "process" is used precisely in the sense of consecutive changes of states, combination of consecutive actions achieving a specific result, combination of naturally following stages that present a single line of development. Many of the principles and categories used in the research of ecosophy are still debatable. However the ecosophy has a strong influence on the philosophical paradigm of the modern world, increasing its humanistic, axiological and ethnical functions. It is known that since 17th - 18th century philosophy emphasizes on problems connected mainly with ontological, epistemological and anthropological characteristics, and it is constantly rationalizing itself. During 19th and 20th century philosophy is excessively political and it becomes apologetic too. This objectively decreases its humanistic potential. Ecosophy is called to contribute for overcoming these extremes and to bring back to philosophical knowledge the humanistic pathos so that the problem of purpose of being and the meaning of human life are fundamental. Examining the deep axiological sense between the relation of human spirit (reason, intellect, consciousness) to the objective being (natural, cultural and social environment) the ecosophy has the right to specify the philosophical paradigm of the new epoch. This cannot be done by common ecology which is first and foremost a biological science, neither its other specific branches like social ecology, humane ecology, sociobiology, bioethics, etc. that concentrate its attention on a specific aspects of the interaction between man and environment.

*Ecosophy aspires to overcome the antagonism between human world (inner world) and the world of nature (outer world), between civilization and nature, between culture and humanism.*

This increases even more the need of a new view on the ideological matrix that will have ecosophy as its nucleus -- i.e. ecological philosophy -- spiritual equivalent of ecological civilization, i.e. new spirituality that is something more than religion and scientific and technological progress.

In its theoretical searching and realization of methodological, ideological, social, and political functions ecosophy is governed by certain basic principles, i.e. fundamental ideas. It supports in its followers the view of immorality of excessive industrialization and aggressive urbanization and also the need of resistance against the technocratic rationalism and consumer civilization.

Ecosophy is negation of "technocratic egoism", which stands in the base of the technocratic model of civilization. This model underestimates the moral, humanistic, spiritual aspects of the development of modern humanity. The best representatives of ecosophy do not reconcile even with the so called "ecological pessimism" - doctrine in modern philosophy which followers do not believe in the ability of humanity to solve the global faced to them problems. Ecosophy is not compatible with "ecological obstructionism" and "ecological catastrophism" (ecological eschatology), the two extremes dealing with the consequences of ecological crisis. Ecosophy is critical and negative and to the so called "naturalistic integratism" -- ideology of the extreme ecologists, who want Earth's population to be decreased drastically, each country to turn

into closed self-sufficient economic entity, all nuclear power plants to be turned off, the consumption of energy and raw materials to be drastically decreased, society to be reconstructed on the basis of temperance and catastrophism, without even proposing any other alternatives.

*Fundamental idea of ecosophy is the necessity that Man is to live in concordance with nature, to broaden the identification of its human "I" to the borders of noosphere. From ecosophy point of view Reason and Matter are one entity. In contrast to Newton's ideas, ecosophy accepts Universe as organic, evolving, dynamic reality.*

Everything above-mentioned assumes critical reevaluation of basic problems with fundamental meaning: about the meaning of human life, about the reasonableness of human decisions and actions; ecological security; adaptation; the revolution of the spirit and spirituality, etc. It is imposed that humanization has to be connected to the view that good, welfare and happiness of man are dependent not only on connections and relations between him and other people in society but also on the content of interactions he has with environment. This induces the necessity of new global ethics with far more complex functions and scope compared to traditional ethics.

Further development of ecosophy requires the deeper use of some philosophical teachings, doctrines and schools that have been left out of the attention of philosophical education.

## 2. Categories, Principles and Laws of Ecosophy

It is known that one of the main conditions for setting up of certain scientific field is the construction of specific unic system of conceptions and categories alongside the definition of the field.

The basic **categories** of ecosophy are: **eco-system, ecological consciousness, nature being, active evolution, co-evolution, noosphere, cosmism, integratism, ecologism, global ethics, eco-humanism, syntropy** (the tendency of the vital energy to achieve greater connection, communication, collaboration, consciousness), **synergy** (coefficient of energy that is the result of interaction between natural systems), etc.

The **principles**, formulated by ecosophy are related to the unity and continuum of the Universe, its dynamic essence, and the calling of humanity culture as a process of ennoblement, spiritualization and humanizing of the primary nature reality.

The **laws**, that are the bases over which the ecosophy follows the interaction between human (spirit, reason, cognition, consciousness, will, intellect, purpose) and nature, represent the common connections and relationships by which the nature and the eco-system function in harmony (homeostasis) and which the man follows because they are organic part of the Universe.

Except or in conjunction with this the ecosophy uses its own specific laws which it uses to reveal the essence, the structure and the functional interaction between man and nature. These laws are relevant to:

1. The determining role of society over the character of interaction between man and environment;

2. The dependency of the modifications of the ecological situation on human activity (cultural, labor, production);
3. The necessary connection between the state of the spirituality and the human communication with environment;
4. The global essence of ecological problems.

The laws and their action have objective essence. The law is the natural dependency and the mutual determinateness between objects, processes and phenomena. The purpose of the scientific investigation is to study, so it can aid the man to use them in his benefit by conforming to the laws. Based on the knowledge of the laws it is possible to foresee with high credibility the progress of process. The **ecological futurology** uses this as a base for developing itself as scientific field.

### **3. Methodological, Social, Cultural and Political Functions of Ecosophy**

Ecological philosophy is a methodological, ideological and world outlook (Weltanschauung) base of human activity and regulation of the interaction of man and environment.

First of all the ecosophy sets up a general theory which examines everything in nature, including human behaviour, considered as interconnected. According to the ecosophy nothing can be understood in state of isolation. In such way it acquires a characteristic of world outlook, so man could receive specific system of theoretical rationalized knowledge, views and notions of the environment, he could find his place in world and a meaning of his life as well.

Another manifestation of the methodological function of ecosophy is its transformation into **ideology - ecological ideology** which has many specific characteristics, different from any other forms of ideology. First of all ecosophy is above-class, above-confessional, above national, it is common for all people, it is global and planetary.

*The ecological ideology represents a system of realized and rationalized ideas, principles and ideals which are raised to the status of values, in which humanity sees the theoretical expression of its basic interest connected with survival and further development of life, and the ways, the means and the factors for their practical realization as well.*

The purpose of ecosophy is to help people to realize the need of specific ecological culture and ideology needed for the transformation of the knowledge into conviction, and the conviction - into conscience, into meaning of their human being.

The ecosophy is the basis of several social, cultural and political movements like alternativism, "ecotopia", eco-socialism, "green" reformism, etc.

#### 4. New Categorical Imperative

Prophet Mohammed formulated specific ecological directions which are mandatory for every believer. They are the pillar of Islamic ecological ethics. There is reason some authors to write that Mohammed *left to his followers a kind of "ecological codex" ("Ekolojik Sunnet")*.

The ecosophy uses ideas from such spiritual achievements like cosmism and **people's ecology**. This is the basis of revival of possible syntheses of eastern and western tradition and for revival of the spirit of Euroasia.

From the point of view of ecosophy a particular interest is the concept of noosphere of V.I.Vernadsky. According to it the noo-sphere represents an epoch of transition of the planet of Earth from spontaneous natural processes to **noo-spheric Synarchy** i.e. to rational scientific and moral participation of man in the processes of managing the social and planetary history.

The ecosophy prepares the ideological, moral and axiological conditions for the confirmation of "**Sustainable Development**" as a new quality model of development.

*The philosophy of "sustainable development" could be summarized into global spiritual imperative: to live in a way, so that we can leave after us a world, better, richer, more peaceful, and more beautiful from the one we inherited.*

That point of view transforms the sustainable development as a model of admissible development of civilization, in theory for the possibility of keeping a constant progress, and the progress is rising, definitely needed from history perspective and morally justified development. The basic issue that stands in the idea of sustainable development is - **did the humanity diagnose its disease correctly and could it cure itself in general or does it only sustain its health, pretending to be healthy while at the same time it is going to death.**

Summarized view of the philosophic essence of formula of sustainable development of the society could be found in the speech of the former French president François Mitterrand delivered at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen on 11 March 1996. He said: "Will we leave the world to transform itself into a global market without another right but the right of the stronger, without another purpose but making of maximum profit for minimum time, a world, where speculation destroys in few hours the product of the labor of millions of men and women. Will we leave future generations to the chance and to the blind powers? Could we create international order, based on the progress and in particular to the social progress? ... And should we leave the freedom of action to the ones, whose only credo is summarized in few words - chaos, destruction of skills, experience and even disregard of state, its hurting while it is the base of the democratic society".

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atasoy, E. (2004) Çevre için Eğitim. Çocuk Doga Etkileşimi [Ecological Education. Child and Nature Relations]. Bursa, Turkey: Ezgi Yayınevi.

- Bayraktar, M. (1992) *Islam ve ekoloji [Islam and Ecology]*. Ankara, Turkey: DIB Yayınları.
- Cassirer, E. (1951) *An Essay on Man*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dodel, R. & D'Agagio, N. (1988), *Chovekat – smisal i sadba [Man – Meaning and Destity]*. Sofia, Bulgaria: Narodna mladezh.
- Duralı, T. (1992) *Bioleji Felsefesi [Philosophy of Biology]*. Ankara, Turkey: Akçağ Yayınları.
- Frolov, I. T. (1989) *O cheloveke i gumanizme [On Man and Humanism]*. Moscow, Russia: Politicheskaya literatura.
- Gor, Al. (1992) *Earth in the Balance*. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Los, V., Semenova, S., Gacheva, A., Subetto, A., Leskov, L., Shkolenko, Y., et al. (1997) *Strategia vyzhivaniya: kosmizm i ekologiya [Strategy of Survival: Cosmism and Ecology]*. Moscow, Russia: Editorial URSS.
- Lovelock, J. (2000) *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. Oxford University Press.
- Peccei, A. (1977) *The Human Quality*. Pergamon Press.
- Schweitzer, A. (1990) *Kultura i etika [Culture and Ethics ]*. Sofia, Bulgaria: Nauka i izkustvo.
- Sezen, Y. (1997) *Humanizm ve Atatürk Devrimleri [Humanism and the Reforms of Ataturk]*. Istanbul, Turkey: Ayışığı Kitapları.
- Toynbee, A. & Ikeda, D. (1976) *Choose Life*. Oxford University Press.
- Ünder, H. (1996) *Çevre felsefesi. Etik ve Metafizik görüşler [Ecological Philosophy. Ethical and Philosophical Views]*. Ankara, Turkey: Doruk Yayıncılık,
- Zagorov, O. (2000) *Uvod v ekosofiyata. Filosofski problemi na ekologiyata. [ Introduction to Ecosophy. Philosophical Problems of Ecology]*. Sofia, Bulgaria: Bulgarika.
- Zagorov, O. (2006) *Smisalat [ Meaning of Life]*. Sofia, Bulgaria: Avangard Prima.