

# THE MAN-NATURE AND CULTURE RELATIONSHIP: PARADIGMS OF ETHNOBIOLOGY

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The contemporary world is driven by the search for knowledge and understanding of life, from its simplest to the most substantial interactions with the environment. The relationship between man and nature is intrinsic and vital, and over time, human beings have depended on the environment for their subsistence; whether through the demand for food, shelter or other essential resources for staying on the planet. However, this relationship has been marked by numerous challenges, as modern society grows and impacts the environment significantly.

The closer relationship between human beings and nature has not only led us to a modern and comfortable life, but also to the reduction of natural resources, the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems. With agricultural advancement and disorderly urbanization, the quality of human life and the planet's biological diversity tend to be profoundly affected, which brings us a spectrum of how such a relationship can become challenging. Furthermore, the unsustainable exploitation of natural spaces brings to light several aspects of how limited understanding, or even a lack of awareness about the importance of environmental issues can be harmful to environmental conservation and preservation.

Ethnobiology is an interdisciplinary science that studies the relationships between humans, the environment, ecological perceptions and concepts developed over time by different cultural groups about biology. It is a scientific essay that deals with traditional knowledge, cultural practices and the influence of numerous cultures on biodiversity. It combines elements of biology, anthropology, ecology, ethnography and countless other areas that investigate and seek to understand how societies perceive, use and interact with natural resources, biodiversity and the ecosystems that surround them.

Through ethnobiology it is possible to understand the dynamics of relationships between people and their cultural groups, biota and environment, from the distant past to the immediate present. This branch of knowledge allows us to explore the valuable popular wisdom of traditional communities with the sum of scientific arguments from modern science, providing countless essential information about the sustainable use of natural resources and harmonious coexistence with all other living beings. Ethnobiology also enhances our understanding of cultural ecology, highlighting the deep connection between ancestry and the current technological landscape. In a globalized world, it challenges the idea that conventional scientific knowledge is the only valid one, valuing cultural diversity.

When we talk about culture, we refer to one of the most comprehensive and influential concepts that dictate human perception. Culture is a powerful force that shapes people's personality and communication with the world. It reflects our history, values and traditions, providing identity and belonging and inspiring creativity and innovation. As well as playing a determining role in promoting critical thinking, it seeks to foster diversity and tolerance, representing the enriching exchange of knowledge passed down through generations. Therefore, in this context, culture is inherent to understanding how human beings relate to the natural environment, sculpting their attitudes and behaviors in relation to nature.

As a society, we have a responsibility and commitment to ensuring natural balance. This obligation arises from a series of factors, including our interconnection with all other living beings and our direct dependence on nature for survival, in addition to, of course, the increasingly transparent understanding of the consequences of environmental degradation. The rampant exploitation of natural resources, pollution and climate change are just a few more examples of how such a relationship can become problematic. Therefore, it is crucial to promote a sustainable and balanced view of nature, recognizing its considerable relevance to our well-being. After all, the health and quality of human life depend on the health and balance of natural environments.

The relationship between nature and culture is a "sophisticated dance" that shapes our existence. On the one hand, culture influences our perception of nature, giving meaning to landscapes, animals and plants. Nature provides resources and inspiration for human culture, from food to art and spirituality. On the other hand, culture exerts a specific influence on nature. The way we see, explore and modify the natural environment is shaped by our habits and beliefs. While many cultures have historically coexisted in harmony with the environment, others have adopted more predatory and exploitative approaches. In short, the man-nature and culture relationship is complex and challenging. Given the interconnection of these elements and the profound influence of socio-environmental and historical factors, it becomes our responsibility to approach such challenges ethically and adopt mitigating measures that promote sustainable coexistence between human beings and the environment. And in this sense, ethnobiology plays a crucial role in questioning the conventional paradigm that man is historically separated from nature. Furthermore, it also demonstrates that many societies value and respect the natural setting, incorporating it into their cultural practices. Therefore, the current challenge lies in finding ways to integrate human needs with the protection of natural spaces, promoting respectful coexistence between man, nature and culture, highlighting the importance of a conscious and respectful approach to maintaining socio-environmental balance and cultural aspects.