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## **Evolving Ecological Consciousness and the Human-Nature Relationship in Post-Industrial Civilization**

The relationship between humans and the natural environment constitutes a fundamental concern of human civilization. Over the course of our prolonged development, the human-nature relationship has transitioned from a state of reliance on and utilization of nature to one of transforming and conquering it. The annals of human civilization narrate an evolution of humans' interaction with the natural world. As this narrative has unfolded, the ecological consciousness of an ethos of reverence for nature and a recognition of the imperative to harmonize with ecological surroundings have gradually emerged. This ecological consciousness initially existed in diverse forms within the wisdom of cultures across the world, characterized by their naïve and spontaneous essence. Following periods of introspection during the era of industrial civilization, commencing in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ecological consciousness has evolved into a global facet of human spiritual civilization.

Since the 18th century, epitomized by Western capitalist countries, humans have embarked upon the era of industrial civilization. Driven by an intrinsic pursuit of economic wealth growth and the relentless augmentation of capital, capitalist industrial civilization triggered an unrestrained demand for natural resources. Gradually, the transformation and degradation of the natural world reached a zenith, and the rapport between humans and nature became increasingly adversarial. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the natural devastation and plundering wrought by capitalist industrial civilization raised concerns among enlightened minds. Friedrich Engels, in his work *Dialectics of Nature*, issued a prescient admonition: do not become excessively enamored with our triumph over nature, but be wary of nature seeking to retaliate against us. Regrettably, this sagacious insight failed to garner substantial attention at that juncture.

Subsequent to the 1960s, on a global scale, ecological crises intensified, public hazardous events surged, and natural disasters became recurrent. Scientific research suggests that the degradation of Earth's ecosystems has been rapidly proliferating in

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both breadth and depth. This degradation is evidenced by the depletion of land resources, the annihilation of forest resources, the escalating scarcity of freshwater resources, acute air pollution, and the precipitous decline of biodiversity. Moreover, new forms of pollution such as noise pollution, electromagnetic pollution, light pollution, thermal pollution, and nuclear pollution have incessantly emerged. The relentless truths at hand compelled the discerning to reassess the interplay between humans and nature, subjecting the ideals of industrial civilization to profound critique while seeking new avenues for human development. Scientists, medical professionals, lawyers, academics, and even homemakers have collectively convened within environmental organizations, such as "Friends of the Earth International" and "Naturefriends International", wielding the banner of environmental protection. These groups have put forth an array of novel propositions and demands; for instance, there have been calls to safeguard soil and water resources, cleanse air and water, advocate for non-toxic and pollution-free industries, foster the recycling and reuse of waste materials and refuse, oppose excessive oceanic fishing and exploitation, and denounce the slaughter of wildlife and the utilization of animal hides and organs for fashion and medicine. In 1972, the Club of Rome, an environmental organization, issued an awakening research report, the crux of which expounded that the model of development propagated since the Industrial Revolution — characterized by the ethos of "conquering nature" — had led to an acrimonious confrontation between humans and nature, accompanied by ceaseless retribution from the natural world. This conventional path of industrialization, responsible for global population surges, resource shortages, environmental pollution, and ecological devastation, has effectively steered humans onto an unsustainable course. In the interest of our future, every country must undertake efficacious measures. These include efforts to stabilize the population, preserve natural resources, develop and utilize renewable resources, and consciously change values. Through such endeavors, a new path toward harmonious development between humans and nature can be earnestly pursued.