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"The Development of Environmental Thinking in Economics"

Spash, Clive L.

Spash, Clive L. "The Development of Environmental Thinking in Economics." *Environmental Values* 8, no. 4 (1999): 413–35. doi:10.3197/096327199129341897 .

There has always been a sub-group of established economists trying to convey an environmental critique of the mainstream. This paper traces their thinking into the late 20th century via the development of associations and journals in the USA and Europe. There is clearly a divergence between the conformity to neo-classical economics favoured by resource and environmental economists and the acceptance of more radical critiques apparent in ecological economics. Thus, the progressive elements of ecological economics are increasingly incompatible with those practising neo-classical environmental economics who try to reduce all concepts to fit within the confines of their models. A group of people can be identified who teach that ecological economics is nothing more than a name for the link between mainstream economics and ecology. A new movement and paradigm are unnecessary for such ends. This viewpoint is argued to be inconsistent with the roots and ideas of the ecological economics movement. Ecological economics is seen here to be synthesising various types of economics (e.g., socialist, institutional, environmental) and moving back to explicit inclusion of ethical issues in the mode of classical political economy. This inevitably means rediscovering neglected past works and exploring new ways of thinking about socio-economics and the environment.
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