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"Sustainability, Systems and Meaning"

Schuetz, Joachim

Schuetz, Joachim. "Sustainability, Systems and Meaning." *Environmental Values* 9, no. 3 (2000): 373–58. doi:10.3197/096327100129342100 .

Sustainability calls for the globe as a relevant unit of analysis, and systems thinking is an appropriate theoretical framework for this task. Yet systems thinking is employed in two contrary ways. The "accommodating" systems approach is closely linked to the classical concept of science. It bases its credibility on the exclusion of values or any other subjective elements. The "creative" way explicitly requires a subjectively recognised leading principle, according to which the system organises itself. Following the "creative" approach, the paper It is this assigned system purpose that gives single actions and judgements within systems their meaning. Since subjective elements will always remain antagonistic in any classical approach, only a "creative" approach offers possibilities for integrating cybernetic systems thinking, giving rise to a concept of systems guided by meaning. (Text from The White Horse Press website)

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