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The present paper is a survey of the economics of survival, a branch of ecological economics that stresses the preservation of the opportunities of future generations over an extended time horizon. It outlines the main analytical foundation of the branch—in which the concept of entropy is a major building block—and its analysis of the interaction between the economic system and the environment. Regarding its outlook of the future, we see that the founders of the branch were mainly concerned with the consequences of a serious depletion of natural resources—particularly the energetic capital of the earth. More recently, however, emphasis is being placed on problems that stem from the fragility of the global ecosystem in face of the disturbances caused by the entropic acceleration imposed by mankind. It is feared that the ongoing expansion of the scale of the economy may bring about irreversible damages to vital environmental functions, such as protection against undesirable consequences of solar radiation, maintenance of temperature within a range that will support life, and preservation of ecosystem resiliency.
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