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"An Environmental History Perspective on the UN Agenda 2030 ('Sustainable Development Goals')"

Winiwarter, Verena

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Sustainability concepts such as 'Planetary Boundaries' or the 'Ecological Footprint' (and others) are problematic because they ignore legacies. These are long-term consequences of past interventions, which in the future will require labour and energy and pose a considerable risk. A societal transformation towards sustainability must recognise the mortgages that societies have already raised on the future by producing Plutonium, by creating and abandoning underground mines, by saturating soils with long-lived synthetic chemicals, in short, by threatening the integrity of land and marine ecosystems. Societies need to incorporate the longevity of legacies and their relative danger into the prioritisation of environmental protection measures. (From the article)

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