



Re-establishing an ecological discourse in the policy debate over how to value ecosystems and biodiversity.

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Abstract: In this paper we explore the discourses of ecology, environmental economics, new environmental pragmatism and social ecological economics as they relate to the value of ecosystems and biodiversity. Conceptualizing biodiversity and ecosystems as goods and services that can be represented by monetary values in policy processes is an economic discourse being increasingly championed by ecologists and conservation biologists. The latter promote a new environmental pragmatism internationally as hardwiring biodiversity and ecosystems services into finance. The approach adopts a narrow instrumentalism, denies value pluralism and incommensurability, and downplays the role of scientific knowledge. Re-establishing an ecological discourse in biodiversity policy implies a crucial role for biophysical indicators as independent policy targets, exemplified in this paper by the Nature Index for Norway. Yet, there is a recognisable need to go beyond a traditional ecological approach to one recognising the interconnections of social, ecological and economic problems. This requires reviving and relating to a range of alternative ecologically informed discourses, including an ecofeminist perspective, in order to transform the increasingly dominant and destructive relationship of humans separated from and domineering over Nature.

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