

Page, Edward and John Proops (eds.), 2003. Environmental Thought: Current Issues in Ecological Economics. Edward Elgar. Cheltenham, U.K. and Northampton, MA., USA. Hardcover Price: Unknown. viii + pp. 298 + index.

Over the past four decades, the environment has continued to attract the interest of the academy and policy makers. Virtually all disciplines are interested in environmental matters. Hence it is no surprise of the emergence of ecological economics as an environmental transdiscipline. This book provides an overview of the central ideas and concepts presently at work in ecological economics.

Many text books have been written on the following subjects: (1) environment and economics; (2) environmental sociology; (3) environmental politics; (4) environmental management; (5) sustainable development; (6) sustainability; and (7) global warning just to name a few areas. But this book is an excellent attempt to put together ideas about what constitutes environmental thought.

Many people have accused the academic community of being too theoretical about matters of the environment and not being sufficiently applied in order to “change the world.” It is imperative to understand the world that we live in. The environment has constraints that the occupants of earth must understand in order to maximize the use of its resources and minimize waste. Understanding the “laws of nature” is important in policy formulation. Theorizing enables one to make a better sense of the world and theories about the environment enables us to examine better ways of managing natural resources and sustaining a “good” environment. Because theories, ideas and concepts are of great significance, they are pivotal in conceptualizing the world and it is upon these foundations that policy are crafted and articulated.

The literature on environmental thoughts is numerous, but it is quite certain that the three emerging themes out of the plethora of information about environmental thought are: complexity, interconnectedness and uncertainty.

This book is structured into three sections: (1) Disciplinary approaches; (2) Concepts; and (3) Issues. It is clear from the book that some of the concepts in environmental thoughts are related to specific disciplines. But it should be emphasized that sustainable development concept does not belong to a particular discipline and my own research and many by others have clearly documented that sustainable development is interdisciplinary is perspective. There is no doubt that the issues which have propelled environmental thought into day to day discussion in academia, classroom, think tanks and governmental and non-governmental boardrooms are worthy of examination because they have

enhanced the expansion of ideas in the disciplines and in some cases they led to the emergence of new ideas, concepts and theories.

This book is planned to expose the reader to those major areas and sub-areas as detailed below:

- a.     Disciplinary Approaches
  - philosophy, politics, sociology, economics and law.
- b.     Concepts
  - the precautionary principle, sustainable development, environmental security and ecological modernization
- c.     Issues
  - consumption, biodiversity, global climate change and population

Overall, this is an excellent book that is bound to provoke the reader and place him/her in the middle of modern debate about the environment. It is highly recommended for graduate seminars and for researchers who would like to be grounded in sound theorizing about the environment.

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