



Beyond sustainability and environmental ethics

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Abstract

This paper challenges the overuse of “sustainability” across diverse contexts, arguing that such ubiquity risks diminishing its core meaning. Sustainability, at its essence, is rooted in physics and refers to the inherent capacity to “exist constantly.” By reconceptualizing sustainability as part of a triadic framework, this work introduces two complementary elements: relatability and communicability. Sustainability represents a deterministic agency to maintain and evolve, as explained by Constructal Theory, which identifies the structured patterns of flow and movement in natural systems. Relatability, on the other hand, introduces a non-deterministic agency, where interactions are governed by information, as described by Information Theory. This aspect emphasizes the role of adaptability and relational interdependence within ecosystems and societies. Finally, communicability embodies an ethical agency, grounded in Teilhard de Chardin’s Law of Complexity-Consciousness, wherein shared understanding and mutual transformation through communication foster a deeper ethical relationship with the environment. Together, sustainability, relatability, and communicability form a comprehensive ethical framework, expanding the concept of environmental ethics beyond traditional sustainability. This triadic approach proposes a balanced, dynamic relationship with nature, integrating deterministic, relational, and ethical dimensions to redefine our collective responsibility toward environmental stewardship.



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