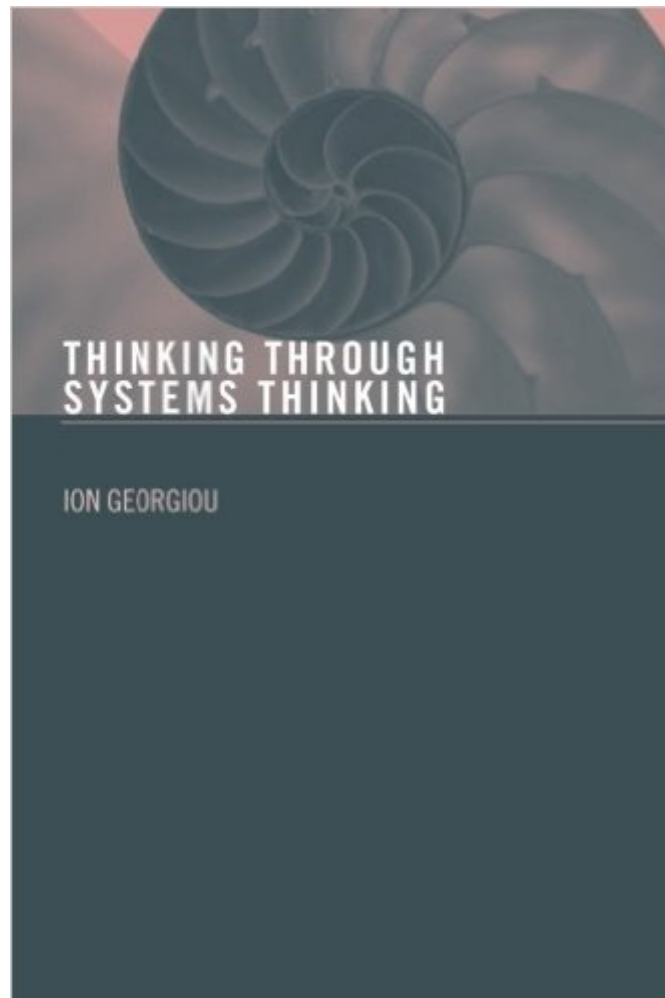


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Thinking Through Systems Thinking



Synopsis

Systemicity is receiving wider attention thanks to its evident paradox. On the one hand, it occurs as a problem with complex symptoms. On the other, it is sought after as an approach for dealing with the non-linear reality of the world. At once problem and prize, systemicity continues to confound. This book details the mechanics of this paradox as they arise from human epistemological engagement with the world. Guided by an original analysis of the fundamental idea of emergent property, *Thinking Through Systems Thinking* uncovers the distinct significance, but also incompleteness, of the systems approach as a theory of human epistemological engagement. The incompleteness is treated through a non-eclectic interdisciplinary investigation which meets ten distinctly developed criteria required of any potential interdisciplinary partner to systems thinking. There results a theory of knowledge - an epistemology - which is systemic in both senses of the term: it belongs to the general systems movement, and it is systemically structured. The systems movement is thus offered a distinct epistemological voice which can compete on equal ground with other philosophical/epistemological positions. In true systemic fashion, this theory of knowledge also offers methodological, ethical, and existential implications. The book provides: a complete systems science epistemology built upon the idea of emergent property; a developed system theoretical understanding of consciousness, hence contributing to studies of consciousness in general and, moreover, to the understanding of the manner in which human beings engage epistemologically with the world; a detailed analysis of the relationship between emergent properties and the wholes which exhibit them; an in-depth explication of the fundamental importance of the idea of emergent property to system science; epistemological insights into some of the core ideas of systems science such as emergent property and boundary critique - indeed, the book's treatment of the former idea is unique in the system science literature and provides an advanced epistemological understanding of this idea; a fresh, and distinctly epistemological, understanding of von Bertalanffy's pioneering general system theory - an understanding which has served to also demonstrate the continuing relevance of the original ideas behind the contemporary face of systems science, and the manner in which such ideas sit well with phenomenology; a systemic understanding of two cornerstones of Husserlian phenomenology: intentionality and intuition; an introduction, detailed treatment, and delimitation of the epistemological ideas of dogmatism and bounded rationality; an original, epistemologically-focused critique of the idea of boundary analysis/boundary judgements; an original, epistemological treatment of the idea of alienation, further demonstrated as permeating systems science and phenomenology; and, an application for the development of organizational learning and knowledge management.

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