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Book Review

Cynthia Dash

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Book Review

Erratum

The citation for this review is *4 RISK 357 (1993)* in most commercial databases.

DONALD C. LEE, TOWARD A SOUND WORLD ORDER: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL HIERARCHICAL ETHICAL THEORY. (Greenwood Press 1992). [240 pp.] Bibliography, index, notes, preface. LC: 91-440942; ISBN:0-313-27903-9. [Cloth \$42.95. Address above.]

Environmental awareness has increased dramatically over the past decade. For example, while recycling has become a way of life in numerous communities across the U.S., many people are still not conscious of their role in depleting natural resources here and abroad.

Lee's discussion is in three parts: The Ethical Theory, Extension of the Ethical Theory in the Environmental Realm and Extension of the Theory in the Political and Economic Realm. Thus, only a third of the book addresses conflicts between present and future needs for natural resources.

In his introduction, Lee argues that free market and liberal political approaches are neither always fair nor best. He also challenges the dominant tradition of ethics "in which one ethical principle, based on one aspect of human nature, is supposed to be applicable to all aspects of human life."¹ He argues, rather, that ethics should account for all aspects of human nature and recognize different ontological levels in several ethical levels.² He regards ethics as based on universal needs, not eternal ideals.³

In his theory, Lee stresses the importance of individuals gaining knowledge and self-confidence as well as satisfaction at five basic levels: *biological, social, rational, cultural* and *individual*.⁴ Throughout, Lee argues that when individuals are not satisfied at every level, their decisions are apt to be detrimental to the community.⁵

1 At xii.

2 At xii and 9.

3 At xiv.

4 At 27-40.

5 See, e.g., *id.* at 72:

I once asked an executive of a lumber company if he agreed with the current projection that the tropical rain forests would be gone by the end of this century. He conceded that it was probable. I asked him if it did not worry him that his grandchildren would have no wood with which to

For Lee, essential basic human needs of individuals must be met before all can benefit. However, some illustrations of his theory suffer a great deal from failure, e.g., to anticipate the collapse of the United Soviet Socialist Republic and the extreme political unrest that has followed the demise of the Cold War. Moreover, particularly in view of the cost of this book, some purchasers may be disappointed that it was obviously reproduced from a typed manuscript.

That one cannot ignore basic human needs in dealing with ethics generally and or ethics as applied in environmental, or in broader political or economic realms seems compelling. Thus, notwithstanding failure of his crystal ball, Lee appears to add a new dimension to one aspect of the environmental debate, and some readers of *RISK* may find it useful.

Cynthia Dash[†]

make houses, furniture, and other items. His response was that by then he would have made a fortune, and his grandchildren could use the wealth to build plastic houses.

[†] Ms. Dash received her B.A. (Political Science) from William Smith College and is a 1994 candidate for the J.D. at FPLC.