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Colin Ward, Reflected in Water: A Crisis of Social Responsibility

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outsiders. Additionally, Greve discusses the power that ideology, such as the environmental paradigm, can have over law and politics. He also discusses the interplay between the judiciary and Congress as it relates to environmental legislation.

The Demise of Environmentalism in American Law provides an interesting, thoughtful and informative discussion of the catalysts of change in environmental policy and legislation, illustrated by a discussion of relevant case law.

Maureen D. McInerney

Colin Ward, *Reflected in Water: A Crisis of Social Responsibility*, Cassell, London and Washington (1997); 147pp; \$25.95; ISBN 0-304-33568-1, paperback.

In a practical, non-technical style, *Reflected in Water* examines social issues raised both locally and globally due to our need for water and the crises associated with water that face the world. The book emphasizes the need for local community control of access to water.

The first chapter explores the history of water in Britain, where access to water was recognized as a universal human right. Now, however, water has become yet another publicly owned utility being offered for sale to a public that already owns it collectively. This privatization of water especially effects the poor in Britain. Thousands of households have had their water supply cut off due to inability to pay their water bills.

The next chapter discusses the tragedy of the commons and how to avoid it. The tragedy is analogized to a group of herdsmen who live together in harmony until the long-desired goal of social stability becomes a reality and the inherent logic of the commons generates tragedy. The theory is that a herdsman will pursue his interest by increasing the size of his herd while failing to consider the actions of others. The consequence is that the land held commonly becomes overgrazed. The author offers the proposition that local, popular control is the surest way to avoid the tragedy of the commons and discusses the plight of Spain as an illustration of this proposition.

Chapter Three illustrates the current preoccupation with large-scale water engineering projects throughout the world and how the control of water is inevitably control of life and livelihood. The author remarks on the devastation of lives and livelihoods that these grand projects cause, wondering why today's engineers, advocating central control and incorporating a vast bureaucracy, dream of such projects when a thousand smaller projects would be more beneficial.

Chapter Four sets forth a brief history of the dam and how a regime that is ruthless and unopposable equates to more extensive water engineering projects. For example, in the Soviet Union, a series of irrigation projects were implemented in the rivers that feed into the

Aral Sea. Instead of increasing the production of cotton and rice, the intended purpose, the result has been a shrinking of the Sea, which once provided 25,000 tons of fish and now yields zero since salinity has trebled. The chapter also discusses the World Bank's history of favoring lending for spectacular projects, with minimal regard for the local human and ecological consequences.

Chapter Five discusses the fact that water causes major conflicts. Although sharing water resources by mutual agreement between communities may be a fact of history, large-scale water disputes still exist and may have contributed to wars, particularly in the Middle East. The chapter concludes by stating that trust could alleviate the incentive to fight over water.

Chapter Six discusses small and local approaches to water management. Non-governmental organizations and other charitable groups attempt to help poor communities make small improvements to their water supply, and these groups often have the ability to become catalysts in the local communities.

Chapter Seven characterizes how women, as household managers, are expected to produce the required amount of water for the needs of the family. Ironically, the tradition in many societies has been that water supply technology is too complex for women. Yet, there are aid agencies that have learned through experience that they need to win the support of the local people, often the women. Women become their allies because women carry the daily burden of household management, and even horticulture management in some communities.

Chapter Eight chronicles water marketing and how the concept that human beings are entitled to have access to water despite the ability to pay, has been replaced with the privatization of water. The authors discuss and compare the British droughts of 1976 and 1995, as water was not privatized in 1976. In England and Wales, about half of the private water companies have introduced prepayment meters requiring customers to pay in advance with "smart cards." Customers who fail to pay, presumably the poor, automatically have their water supply cut off and weekly charges must be satisfactorily paid before the supply comes on again.

Chapter Nine discusses the plight of the urban poor. In 1985, the World Health Organization estimated that 25% of the population of Third World cities and towns still did not have access to safe water, 100 million more people without safe water than in 1975. Tourism or cash crops for export, versus using water on subsistence crops to feed communities affects rural areas. Thus, the casualties of the global market economy are local people, deprived of a water supply for the benefit of strangers.

Chapter Ten, discusses how the British took their water supply and drainage systems for granted and how this has changed in more recent years. Despite the problems with dirty water in England, Britain alone pumps over 300 million gallons of sewage into their coastal seas around each day. There is an obvious unwillingness to undertake the

required "repair technologies."

Chapter Eleven outlines various problems that contribute to water crises throughout the world. Examples include global warming and irrigation issues. The author offers the proposition that the global problem of water is less a matter of misuse of a natural and renewable resource than it is a reflection of our unwillingness to share our wisdom with those who need it.

The message of this book is that if local, human communities were in control of their own water supply and the manipulation of water, they would manage fairly and responsibly, allowing for the needs of all. Yet, those in control of the world's water economy are not willing to consider that option. Responsible water use does not come from pricing the poor out of the competitive market, but rather from the principle of fair shares for all.

The final chapter epitomizes the delights of water from bathing a child to playing in the water of a fire hydrant in New York City in the middle of the summer. The book ends with a reminder that we are faced with a crisis of social responsibility and not a technical problem.

Beth A. Bulmer