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Philosophy : Ethics

Munthe, Christian

The Price of Precaution and the Ethics of Risk

- Presents a novel analysis of the scholarly and scientific debate about the precautionary principle
- Sets out a comprehensive overview of the basic theoretical starting points for a sound ethics of risk.
- Presents and argues in favor of an innovative ethical theory about the imposition of risks
- Discusses the practical implications of the resulting theory of the morality
- Analyses the political implications

Christian Munthe undertakes an innovative, in-depth philosophical analysis of what the idea of a precautionary principle is and should be about. A novel theory of the ethics of imposing risks is developed and used as a foundation for defending the idea of precaution in environmental and technological policy making against its critics, while at the same time avoiding a number of identified flaws. The theory is shown to have far-reaching practical conclusions for areas such as bio-, information- and nuclear technology, and global environmental policy in areas such as climate change. The author argues that, while the price we pay for precaution must not be too high, we have to be prepared to pay it in order to act ethically defensible. A number of practical suggestions for precautionary regulation and policy making are made on the basis of this, and some challenges to basic ethical theory as well as consumerist societies, the global political order and liberal democracy are identified. Munthe's book is a well-argued contribution to the PP debate, putting neglected justificatory and methodological questions at the forefront. His many discussions of alternative accounts as well as his drawing out the consequences of his own suggestion in practical cases give the reader a thorough, holistic sense of what justification of PP amounts to. /....

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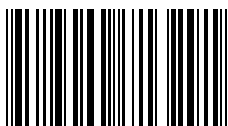
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