

dance between centralization and autonomy is especially nicely drawn here. State officials wanted to direct elites into local research, but saw that autonomy was one of the principal strengths of these various societies, and tried to avoid intervening too much or drawing them too closely into one centralized administration. Yet these same officials needed to develop institutional structures to better communicate with the array of learned societies in the hinterlands, to promote research of a consistent quality, and to encourage peer-review. Some administrators also viewed the local as potentially dangerous, and wanted to keep an eye on local societies, playing an indirect or “behind the scenes” role to prevent the fostering of splinter political movements. As Gerson outlines, several conceptions of civil society were held at this time, ranging from those of de Tocqueville, who opposed centralized state power and argued for the development of a rich network of local voluntary associations, to the Hegelian understanding of civil society as potentially divisive. The “official cult of local memories” had the daunting task of integrating these incompatible models, Gerson argues, and often zigzagged between them. Ambivalence regarding civil society led to an uneven and sometimes faltering promotion of local historical efforts. Over time, both state and civil society continued to expand in this domain, and their connections to each other multiplied. In the process, French identity was not produced solely in the capital, or only in the provinces, but “articulated at the juncture of Paris and the provinces, of state and civil society” (p. 278).

In sum, this is a work of remarkable scholarship that attempts to unite several political breaks and local and national units of analysis to reveal a nineteenth-century fascination with the local and local pasts that, perhaps contrary to our expectations, was actually encouraged by the state. Historians of France will find that this work provides a refreshing new look at this period, and scholars of contemporary French society intrigued by today’s “return to the local” will enjoy delving into a detailed examination of quite similar trends of quite a different era.

***Regulating Eden: The Nature of Order in North American Parks*, by Joe Hermer (2002), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 150 pp.**

**Reviewed by Eric H. Pavri; Park Ranger, Bandelier National Monument, New Mexico; Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona.**

pavri@u.arizona.edu

Edward Abbey once wrote that “the itch for naming things is almost as bad as the itch for possessing things.” In *Regulating Eden*, Joe Hermer trains a cooler, theoretical lens on the same issues of constraints on human freedom and commoditization of the land that fueled Abbey’s scratchy rage. Hermer’s provocative book argues not only that places thought of as “natural” or “wild” are in fact constituted by the most human means, but that parks in particular represent sites within which the authority and power that maintain order in the larger society are replicated and reinforced. It investigates the consequences of “the itch for naming things” by examining how the classification and ordering of space, along with policies governing “appropriate” visitor behavior, are instruments of moral regulation of a population beyond park boundaries.

Hermer draws the reader in with an arresting anecdote from his father’s experience bundling firewood for campers in a Canadian provincial park. When one particularly choosy customer demanded wood “without knots,” the woodman replied, motioning to the branches above their head, “If we had wood without knots, where would all the little birds sit?” (xii). Hermer wields this metaphor to powerful effect. He depicts national, state, and provincial parks as attempts to manufacture sanitized, homogenous versions of the natural world, a forest of “knotless trees” and safe Kodak viewpoints (often with disastrous consequences for ecosystems), even while the discourse of park regulations invokes imagery of a frightening or pristine wilderness in order to ensure voluntary compliance with ideals of patriarchy, conformity, and moral “hygiene”. Hermer sums up these two related theses of his book when he writes, “parks do not simply ‘protect’ nature, as we are so often educated to believe, but rather manufacture an experience of wildness and disorder which is not only congruent with widespread practices of environmental toxification, but also plays a central role in constructing particular social relations as ‘natural’ and ‘normal.’”

The social construction of nature and the policing of ‘civilized’ social relations are intricately linked” (5).

Hermer coins the term “emparkment” to describe the medium through which this discursive power operates, defining it as a set of practices that enclose space under legal authority, and within which modified and highly-ordered landscapes are presented as natural (14). He draws on Foucault to describe emparkment as forms of representational technology (park signs about natural hazards, subdivision-like camping areas, carefully-designated routes and trails, rules about fire and alcohol use) that function to ensure compliance with societal rules through a park visitor’s self-regulation of his or her conduct. His opening chapter explores the work of various theorists in the “sociology of governance” movement and tends to abstraction, although it contains interesting historical sidenotes about how both the enclosures movement in 18th century England and the establishment of African game reserves for hunting by British colonial elite (both examples of “emparkment”) were violent exercises in domination by wealthy landowners that displaced and impoverished local populations (15, 19). Subsequent chapters delve deeply into readable analyses of regulations and policies, including illustrated examples of park signs and educational materials, and a particularly amusing section (91-95) on the development of Smokey the Bear as a symbol of a constructed version of the wilderness and of visitor self-policing (“Only you can prevent forest fires...”). The composite text of these chapters is a convincing argument that North American parks are “a highly sanitized landscape that is intensely ordered, that tells people where to go, what to do, and how long to do it” (45).

Despite these strengths, the work falters on several points, particularly when it ventures over its scholarly head into “the legislative missions of parks and the often flawed character of the park rangers who carry out such missions” (22). Much of the regulation and order that Hermer disparages is in fact necessary to constrain activities that impair the functioning of ecosystems or degrade historically-significant places by virtually anyone’s constructed standard. The erosion and noise of off-road vehicles in areas of high biological diversity or the for-profit excavation of ceramics and human remains from archaeological sites are examples of clear-cut degradation that regulatory park policies inhibit and reduce. Having been a park warden in Canada, Hermer is almost certainly aware of the utility of many of the regulations that he disparages, but he inexplicably refuses to explore this contradiction. He critiques Garrett Hardin’s “tragedy of the commons” arguments as justifying the implementation of excessive regulation by park managers (116), but the population of visitors to national and state parks is transient and unable to develop the social ties and reciprocal relationships that often help to regulate the use of common-pool resources by individuals in more stable, integrated communities. Hermer argues convincingly that North American parks are intensely ordered landscapes, and his point that the classification and ordering of space in parks replicates and reinforces patterns of social control in the larger society is well taken, but he does not balance his analysis by considering how some degree of order may be necessary. There is good reason not to permit overnight camping in canyons where peregrine falcons nest, to restrict people from climbing over the fragile masonry of cliff dwellings, or to eject a drunk and belligerent person from a child-oriented campfire talk about bears – as a park ranger himself, the reviewer has found it necessary to do all three within the past month. Hermer is correct in pointing out that some regulations (he offers the interesting example of inflexible definitions of a traditional, heterosexual “family” with regards to campsite fees) are unnecessarily restrictive and based more on the moral perspectives of park administrators than on sound management of park resources. Nevertheless, refusing to admit that some regulations are beneficial strikes the reader as a glaring omission.

Another blind spot in Hermer’s analysis merits attention. His theoretical deliberations on the “sociology of governance” are interesting but are highlighted to the exclusion of other, more obvious explanations for (and constraints on) the behavior of both park administrators and the lower-level employees that actually enforce the regulations. Given that Hermer has worked as a park warden himself, it is surprising that he chooses to ignore these less abstract considerations related to economics and organizational politics that comprise much of the everyday, when-the-visitors-aren’t-around conversations of park employees. The author of this review has worked as a seasonal employee in four different National Parks and Monuments over the past ten years, and can personally testify to the importance of professional ambition and fears of liability among both the temporary and permanent staffs in shaping both park policy and its implementation. This is not to say that park employees are not dedicated to their work. In fact, most employees with whom the reviewer has worked could earn higher salaries in the private sector, but remain with the

Park Service because of personal beliefs in the importance of their work -- be it monitoring migratory bird populations, safeguarding archaeological sites, or educating schoolchildren about wildlife biology. Nevertheless, particularly among upper-level administrators, fears of legal culpability and the strategies of organizational politics shape policy decisions as much as empirically-based resource management data. The fire-use restrictions implemented throughout the U.S. Southwest at the time of this writing are a case in point. Park and forest administrators tend to adopt conservative, restrictive policies on visitor use so as not to jeopardize their climb up the career ladder to larger parks and higher pay-scale positions, yet simultaneously feel pressure from park visitors seeking recreational activities and from local businesses whose incomes depend on those visitors' dollars.

It is important to note that the author does not contend that these methods of social control are consciously employed by park employees. For Hermer (drawing on Foucault), moral regulation functions through the representational technologies of emparkment that operate in the subtle realm of discourse. But while Hermer's elegant theoretical musings make clear that while park policies may function to reinforce dominant conceptions of nature and morality, he overlooks that these policies generally result directly from the more prosaic political and economic relations that park rangers and administrators must contend with on a daily basis. From the book the reader is left to conclude that rangers on the ground have no individual agency whatsoever and simply blindly enforce the regulations that Hermer disparages. For example, his statement that preservation and public use objectives are "unproblematically posed as being complementary and interdependent" in park mission statements (31) obscures the contentious debates and struggles in which resource management decisions (To allow snowmobiles in Yellowstone's backcountry? To close Zion's main canyon to vehicles? To permit elk hunting in the Valles Caldera National Preserve?) are shaped. In another passage, Hermer rails against policies that empower rangers to prosecute a visitor for breaking a branch for a marshmallow stick but permit logging companies to carry out extensive cutting operations within the same park (79). Although he conflates Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands (where such logging operations are common) with National Parks (where they are not), his point that the policy might permit such an illogical (from a resource protection standpoint) situation on some "protected" lands is valid. However, even though in his introduction he explicitly rejects what he terms to be a "positivist" conception of law as a sterile text divorced from social realities (20) in favor of a view of law as created through the discourse and practice of everyday governance, throughout the rest of the book he fails to acknowledge that rangers exercise discretion and intellect in determining how park policies are to be implemented. This reviewer has met very few fellow rangers who would throw the book at a camper for snapping a stick to toast a marshmallow. Rangers are not illiterate automatons. Most of this writer's coworkers have read Roderick Nash and *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and are not nearly as enamored of social control as the author might have the reader believe. If homogenous, sanitized Order was truly their deity, they would have been CPAs or corporate lawyers.

Finally, Hermer's concluding chapter also belabors a somewhat exaggerated point. He argues that the official version of nature represented by parks creates the fallacy that the only valuable ecological systems are those that exist in park form, although the greatest threats to the biosphere cannot be solved by protection of resources within the limited landscapes of parks (115-116). Hermer portrays parks as a false atonement for our larger environmental sins, and argues that their existence distracts attention from larger issues such as atmospheric pollution, global warming, and degradation of the ozone layer. While readers will certainly feel the urge to thank the author for blowing the lid off these hitherto-unknown threats from which they were distracted by the pretty parks, it does seem rather shortsighted not to acknowledge the political struggles of millions of people in the global environmental movement who are all too aware of massive desertification of agricultural lands, rapidly decreasing genetic diversity, and the vulnerability of economically marginalized populations to natural disasters and epidemic diseases. Moreover, visits to national and state parks provide the initial spark of interest for many children to develop a wilderness or environmental ethic later in life.

As a working park ranger, this reviewer does not agree with all of Hermer's points. Nevertheless, Hermer has written a provocative book important to anyone interested in issues of social ordering of space and landscapes, contested notions of nature and wilderness, and the shortcomings of environmental education. *Regulating Eden* seeks to spark debate about how the creation and operation of parks reinforce relationships of power, and to that end achieves its goal admirably. Like a good park ranger program (ironically enough), this slim volume succeeds not

because it overwhelms its audience with information, but because it challenges the reader to think in novel directions – in this case to question previous assumptions about the mission and functions of parks in our society.

***Risk Regulation at Risk: Restoring a Pragmatic Approach* by S.A. Shapiro and R. L. Glicksman. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, (2003), xii + 265pp.**

**Reviewed by William S. Bradley, Faculty of Intercultural Communication, Ryukoku University, Shiga, Japan.**

billbradley@yahoo.com

This work offers a defense of risk regulation in the U.S. against a rising chorus of critiques from neo-realists who tout cost-benefit approaches as the best way to balance the wide array of interests and stakeholders in regulation of risk industries and polluters. While the focus is nearly entirely on legal aspects of risk regulation, the authors do attempt to ground their approach in pragmatic principles. Pragmatic critique is used as both a partial foundational philosophy for risk regulation and a methodological basis for a series of reforms of risk regulation. The approach of the book is to counter claims that have been brought against risk regulation by some economists and conservative think tanks of its being ‘irrational,’ in that such regulations often impose solutions to risks that end up being quite costly. The main arguments of the book are set out in recursive fashion, beginning in Chapter 2 with a brief overview of pragmatism and how it relates to risk regulation.

Chapter 3 outlines some of the key terms of current risk regulation (e.g. statutory standards and risk thresholds) and how they work in practice, arguing that the U.S. Congress has rightly rejected cost-benefit approaches. Chapter 4 outlines the link between pragmatism and the current approaches, showing how pragmatism is more attuned to the multidisciplinary nature of risk and decision-making involving risk. Chapter 5 introduces some of the key critics of risk regulation and their arguments and flaws while Chapter 6 analyzes the different valuation methods that are used, undermining some of the critics' claims about risk as being limited by various factors that extend beyond simple utilitarian reduction of risks to costs and benefits. Chapter 7 focuses on regulatory impact analysis arguing for qualitative data to be included along with quantitative. Chapter 8 proposes incremental decision-making to overcome the problems of over-regulation and the excessive time that it takes to implement a complete and comprehensive regulatory scheme, while Chapter 9 addresses the different functions of the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches of government and how to make them act in concert and not against the "relative competence of ... agency decision-makers" (p.206). While the amount of material covered is quite impressive, the argument setting out the pragmatic basis for risk regulation I found to be somewhat thin.

The bulk of this discussion is laid out in Chapter 2, but is occasionally referenced in later chapters. While John Dewey is cited several times, this is done entirely on the basis on secondary sources. It becomes clear that the point of the chapter is to briefly lay out a framework which will allow the authors to argue that, in the context of American political discourse, the pragmatic tradition, taking into account ‘bounded rationality,’ is the most suitable for reaching optimal results. Further, such pragmatic-based policies can always be adjusted, “on the back end” as they put it, in light of new data or evidence that shows that there is either too much or too little regulation. Nevertheless, the authors want to argue that idealism is not abandoned by such an approach, in that “pragmatism’s commitment to being open-minded [does not] require one to abandon passionate beliefs” (p. 29). Much of the remaining chapters of the book outline the methods by which risk regulation has worked in the U.S. since its inception in the 1960s and 70s, and counters the claims of utilitarian critics who want to reduce the costs and burdens of current regulatory controls. In general, the authors are skeptical of reduction of risk to economic models, because this “gives the upper hand to economic analysts and discourages non-economic input” (p.60).