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Review of "Wild Ideas" by David Rothenberg

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Books Received

WILD IDEAS by David Rothenberg (editor), Foreword by Vance G. Martin. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. Pp. 225. \$19.95

The essays collected in *Wild Ideas* reflect on the concepts of "wildness" and "wilderness." Compiled and edited by philosophy professor David Rothenberg, *Wild Ideas* is a collection of essays that arose from a symposium on the "wild" and "wilderness" at the fifth World Wilderness Congress in 1993. It takes on several of the major complexities of the environmental movement, among them the difference between "wildness" as Thoreau uses the term in his famously misquoted adage, "In wildness is the preservation of the world," and "wilderness," a term whose meaning continues to evolve. The book also addresses a number of the core issues that bedevil wilderness philosophy: the historical racism embedded in the Wilderness Act of 1964, the problematic notion of wilderness as a playground for the rich, and the cultural relativism of the term "wilderness." Despite the importance and immediacy of the issues it treats and the excellence of several individual essays, *Wild Ideas* lacks narrative propulsion. Neither its introduction nor its conclusion (both by Rothenberg) effectively ties together the disparate threads running through the collection.

The first section of the book examines the history and future of wilderness through essays by R. Edward Grumbine, Denis Cosgrove, and Max Oelschlaeger. Each writer relies on his own articulation of the dual concepts of "wilderness" and "wildness," with little common ground among them as to definitions or methodology. Consequently, the authors' collective efforts to illuminate these terms serves instead to obfuscate an already vexing issue of terminology.

Differentiating between wilderness and wildness forms a crucial subtext throughout the book, but only the first section treats the problem directly. Grumbine distinguishes between wilderness and wildness, Cosgrove conflates them and Oelschlaeger begs the question. The contrast of these alternate definitional approaches highlights how dramatically the use of language shapes any discussion of the environment.

Grumbine declares that, while wilderness is culturally relative (and thus, assumedly, indefinable), wildness is "the process and es-

sence of nature.” We should therefore, according to Grumbine, focus on preserving wildness rather than wilderness. Grumbine’s is the least interesting essay of this group because he shies away from drawing conclusions. He observes that “the details will be discovered in the living” and that “we must concern ourselves with charging the course so that others may sail the ship and have the chance for a successful voyage.”

In the next essay, Dennis Cosgrove tells us that Thoreau used “wild” interchangeably with “wilderness,” to describe untamed, natural environments. Cosgrove launches into a fascinating, albeit lengthy, discussion of historical, western conceptions of the geographical unknown. Fifteenth-century European world maps portrayed a single landmass divided into three continents in the northern hemisphere. These three continents constituted the *ecumene*, or habitable earth. Beyond the *ecumene* lay the wilderness, an unknown region which contained, depending on whom you asked, either savage non-human creatures or a pre-lapsarian paradise beyond the reach of human culture. Embedded within both visions, Cosgrove maintains, lie two central themes of western socio-environmental evolution: a cyclical history from chaos to order and back again, and the belief that “the history of civilization follows the course of the sun toward—the west.” Wilderness, we learn, has always been associated both with origins and infancy and with the Armageddon that lies in wait at the end of culture. This discussion segues into an analysis of Frederick Jackson Turner’s landmark essay, “the Significance of the Frontier in American Society” and then a disturbingly persuasive situating of the American wilderness ideal within the rubric of eugenics.

Turner’s premise that American identity was forged in the cultural cleansing process that accompanied westward expansion and conquest of nature elides the concurrent popularity of anti-immigrant rhetoric based on eugenic notions of a true American identity. This American-ness was apparently tied to an Anglo-Saxon ethnicity. Other ethnic groups supposedly lacked the requisite “ancestral experience” to be Americans. Cosgrove locates Turner’s thesis along the same ideological continuum as the popular nineteenth-century notion of the American wilderness as the environment where racially pure immigrants forged their national identity. The parallels Cosgrove outlines are disturbing and well-drawn. The essay’s conclusion does not live up to its midsection, however. It ends with a homily about the cultural potency of wilderness ideology and, for this reader, lingering confusion as to the meanings of and distinctions between wilderness and wildness.

Max Oelschlaeger’s chapter weighs in next with an ambitious critique of the vocabulary of environmentalism, suggesting that both

wildness and wilderness have been subsumed into a pernicious new doctrine of sustainable development. Sustainable development, in Oelschlaeger's view, presents a contradiction in terms: a "psychological subterfuge by which our political and economic elites avert their vision from the sordid reality of the relentless growth of human population and the spread of industrialism grinding life beneath its heel . . ." The argument gets derailed by the unmindful use of the very vocabulary under discussion. Oelschlaeger uses environmentalism and sustainable development interchangeably. Assigning environmentalism this new definition highlights the term's lack of a consensus definition and consequent susceptibility to misuse. Sustainable development is *not* a synonym for environmentalism. It remains a contested term in its own right, a mantra of the Wise Use movement, of proponents of an ecological steady state, and of many who fall in between. Oelschlaeger selects an ecologically pernicious doctrine as his definition of sustainable development, and then designates it to encompass environmentalism as well.

The only good environmentalist, we learn, is one who takes the next step and subscribes to Oelschlaeger's doctrine of "earth-talk." Earth-talkers are those who "lay down the illusion of the *ego cogito* and accept themselves as flesh of the earth." Oelschlaeger offers no further insight into either "earth-talk" or his conception of a post-environmentalist rhetoric and so his vision remains somewhat opaque.

The three other sections in the book are: Cross-Cultural Wild, which deals with the varying cultural visions of wilderness; The Art of the Wild, which focuses on different ways of perceiving the natural world; and The Wild Revised, a section concerned with challenging contemporary notions of wilderness.

One of the most noteworthy essays from these sections is Lois Lorentzen's "Reminiscing about a Sleepy Lake: Borderland Views of Women, Place, and the Wild" in Cross Cultural Wild. Lorentzen situates the wilderness debate within the context of the day-to-day existence of indigenous women. She offers stark examples of ill-fated western attempts to bring developing nations into step with industrial norms. One especially shameful case is India's White Revolution, where cows have been desacralized and turned into milk machines. This process pushes Indian women—traditionally the experts in animal husbandry, food processing, and the making of ghee, butter, and buttermilk—out of their traditional roles in their society. As a result, the rural social structure has become dangerously weakened, while seventy percent of the milk produced in India goes to make products like cheese, butter and chocolates—products consumed by only two percent of the population. Wilderness, Lorentzen suggests, has no place in the cosmology of people struggling to live off the land.

Subsistence communities care little for nature preserves, but they are vitally concerned with healthy ecosystems that will continue to provide firewood, plant products, and other essentials for day to day life. This practical environmentalism falls somewhere between the traditional demarcations of nature and culture and, Lorentzen argues, deserves an honored place in the pantheon of ecological thought.

Several other essays in this volume deserve mention. David Abram's essay, "Out of the Map, into the Territory: The Earthly Topology of Time" is a thoughtful, articulate attempt to locate Heideggerian notions of time and space within eco-philosophy and the elusive sense of place. Heidegger describes time using "horizon" as a structural metaphor to describe the perceivable present always unfolding. From a geographical perspective, horizon describes much the same phenomenon. Linking the two, Abrams argues that "places not explicitly present within the perceivable landscape are nevertheless joined to the present landscape by the visible horizon" and then inquires whether "the perceptual place of *the past* and *the future*, are precisely beyond the horizon," both chronologically and topologically.

Andrew Light's concluding essay in *The Wild Revised*, entitled "Urban Wilderness" argues that in a world where the frontier has long since dissolved, the heart of darkness now beats in the inner city, a place where middle-class fears have combined with racism and difficult living conditions to create the urban "jungle," first depicted by Upton Sinclair. He asserts that over the last century, the myth of the urban jungle has become firmly ensconced and perpetuated through city planning and a fortress mentality, evolving over time into a de-facto environmental racism. Light points to the recent film, *Falling Down* where an L.A. defense worker decides he cannot take it anymore and attempts to clear out the jungle by force. The filmmakers claimed the film was a critique of racism and simplistic attitudes about the inner city. Unfortunately, film audiences saw it as an "accurate portrayal' of the urban wilderness and audiences closely identified with this vision of a righteous inner-city crusader."

In Light's view, absent a prevailing notion that the inner city is the only truly uncivilized place remaining, films like *Falling Down* would not be possible. Given that the federal government defines wilderness as three square miles without a road and that you need a government-issued "wilderness permit" to enter it certainly lends credence to Light's contention that the term's original meaning has been diluted. In addition, many of those who gaily embark on wilderness adventures with little fear for their personal safety would never dare set foot in the inner city. This juxtaposition seems to support Light's depiction of an urban wilderness as closer to the spirit of the term.

Still, it is a concerted discussion of the spirit of the term that this volume lacks. Though there are a number of fascinating essays and some truly noteworthy scholarship, there is much unevenness both within and among the essays. When a collection offers this many different ideas and perspectives, the editor's job becomes particularly important and formidable. Rothenberg's introduction and conclusion demonstrate the diversity of the contributions but do not satisfactorily explain why these essays belong in the same volume. Consequently, the reader is left without a narrative compass. That is a crucial failing for a book purporting to "point a new direction for environmentalism."

David N. Cassuto

ENERGY POSSIBILITIES: RETHINKING ALTERNATIVES AND THE CHOICE-MAKING PROCESS by Jesse S. Tatum. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996. Pp. 155. \$9.95.

In a capitalistic society such as ours driven largely by market concerns, energy plays an integral economic and cultural role, impacting upon almost every facet of our lives. Research and public policy discussions about energy issues have traditionally focused on economic considerations such as how we can control the energy resources or experiment with energy alternatives in order to bring about greater productive power.

Energy Possibilities by Jesse Tatum challenges the way energy is socially integrated in our society, whereby energy is viewed predominantly as a commodity. Tatum is an assistant professor of Science, Technology, and Society at Michigan Technological University. He argues that energy research and debates are dominated by two groups: engineering and economic experts. As a result, the average citizen contributes little to energy decisions and has instead become accustomed to uncritically accepting the policies framed by technical experts. Tatum urges that energy problems should not be solved by scientific or economic formulas, but rather, by incorporating individual and collective judgment based on the diverse values and assessments of the persons and societies involved.

Readers searching for a solution to the energy dilemma will not be entirely satisfied by this book. Tatum carefully emphasizes that he offers no solutions because to do so would only reinforce our presently unproductive social attitudes towards energy. Instead, *Energy Possibilities* impels the reader to question her own attitudes towards

energy applications. As such, the book encourages a more “forceful engagement with the range of technical and sociocultural possibility inherent in energy decisions.”

Tatum begins by describing some of the particular ways energy is socialized. He suggests that technology, innovation, and corporate profit combine to reinforce each other in well-established patterns that condition our economic perception of energy. However, the fact that we focus energy research and alternatives in an economic context seems an inevitable result of a capitalistic, economically driven society. In this regard, Tatum’s task appears daunting if he hopes to change the perceptions about energy in a population already deeply socialized by capitalism. Fundamentally, energy is the fuel of our market based system. Our capitalistic society is inextricably linked to and dependent upon energy and it has become an integral part of our economic perspective. One may find that his objective in writing this book—to change our society’s attitude toward and use of energy—does not appear very realistic.

Energy Possibilities urges the reader to contemplate how our society is arranged around energy issues and how we make decisions regarding energy. Without analysis, Tatum proposes alternative views of energy: as an ecological resource; as a social necessity; or, as a strategic material. While these ideas are not novel, they have never played a very significant role in policy decisions, because to do so would require a radical reformulation of some of our core values concerning money and technology. Tatum’s approach shifts the responsibility from institutional collective policy making to the exertion of individual consciousness and influence to change current attitudes and practices. He urges that for energy alternatives to become a reality, each reader must be willing to accept and cultivate divergent behavioral approaches towards energy.

The third chapter attempts to debunk the faith we have placed in the two widely accepted solutions to the energy problem: the “engineering solution” and the “economic response.” The former solution relies on a “technical fix,” bringing to bear expert technical innovations to solve our energy problems. Tatum contends, however, that technological innovations are unlikely to solve the energy shortage while concurrently avoiding harmful environmental side effects. The engineering solution tends to give institutional and corporate energy arrangements preference over other potential sources for change. Tatum questions whether this priority best serves social interests. He believes that the engineering solution is based on the notion that the public is uninformed and ill-equipped to make the necessary complicated technological choices. The consequent absence of citizen input

creates an extended cycle of energy enhancement at considerable social and environmental costs.

The book criticizes the "economic response" solution for taking people's preferences as the pivotal issue and assuming that those preferences are market driven. However, Tatum's analysis of the "economic response" is rather cursory. He glosses over complex economic models and theories, summarily dismissing them without fully supplying the reader with sufficient means to analyze the economic perspectives presented. The short shrift given to the economic response leaves the reader feeling that the author has failed to construct a sufficiently balanced thesis, since his writings are directed toward the novice of the energy debate.

Energy Possibilities' central thesis does initiate a useful discussion of how and why society has come to view energy as an economic commodity, and whether such a perspective is socially beneficial. Yet the author's economic premise is weakened when he questions whether energy's primary identity is truly imprinted by market forces. It seems that the real strength of *Energy Possibilities* lies in its ability to extol the benefits of other non-economic values while concurrently outlining the problems connected with our present energy viewpoints and policies.

Tatum takes up such questions quite credibly in chapter four by reviewing alternative social principles that contrast with the firmly established institutional ones. The choices made by economic and engineering experts are often more political than technical, he argues, producing policies premised on the assumption that society could not sustain conventional standards of living if energy were reduced. He asserts that because energy is the essential element that brings technology to life, our energy consumption increases at the same rapid rate that we advance technologically. Energy technologies are rarely noticed, however, because they are such an integral part of our lives. In a sense, we measure affluence through technology.

Tatum artfully engages anthropological and historical perspectives, such as ancient Roman society, where economic concepts did not dictate social or individual behavior. Many previous societies produced little but were affluent in leisure time because they valued leisure time highly. The author presents these societies as evidence that economic growth, technological progress, and increasing efficiency are not "natural" virtues. While this is a valid point, Tatum fails to address the reality that they have in fact been foundational elements in the development of *our* society. The prominence of these virtues in our society will make effective change all the more difficult. After alerting the reader to the needed changes in our value system, Tatum

skillfully delivers the appropriate tools for making this value shift possible in the following chapter.

Chapter five is devoted to studying alternative solutions through a critique of the two bases of our present responses to energy issues. These bases are first, institutional or collective momentum, and second, individual or popular non-participation. The former suggests that key energy decisionmakers are induced through funding and policies to proceed in ways that reflect the structure and interests of the major institutions they represent. Challenging this approach, Tatum argues that as individuals we do have some influence over the direction of energy research. He charges that our present reliance on economic market policies "are neither explicitly democratic nor fundamentally technical. They simply reflect preexisting distributions of established interests."

Tatum advocates a grass-roots effort to gradually recast our energy research practices. He deliberately avoids making any specific recommendations as to how the average citizen might effectuate such changes. This absence of specific guidelines is the true strength of *Energy Possibilities*. The author draws the reader into a position of thinking independently about how, as an individual, she might begin to usefully influence energy decisions: by the power of the vote, by altering one's style of living or commuting habits, by changing business practices, etc. Tatum's objective, as he candidly admits, is to free us from our "popular non-participation" and induce us to engage actively in struggling with the energy problem.

Despite his assertion that we can wean ourselves from our unflagging dependence upon technology to provide us with cheap, abundant energy, Tatum does concede that "society's response to energy concerns is too complex to treat exhaustively." This admission denotes a conspicuous weakness with a book that merely scratches the surface in attacking a highly complex, and arguably technical, problem at such a general level. The author skirts this dilemma, explaining that to delve into deeper analysis might well discourage the reader from grappling directly with the problem. On the other hand, problems result if readers capitulate to feelings of helplessness, unconvinced that they can affect such an intricate problem so firmly influenced by the economic and social patterns of America.

In chapter six Tatum introduces the "home power movement" as an example of a sociocultural means for individuals to experiment with energy alternatives. He cautiously emphasizes that he does not propose the model as a solution to the energy problem. This relatively small movement consists of people living rustic, simple lifestyles and employing energy supply systems built for environmental conservation rather than economical efficiency. Participants are linked by a

common desire to “reshape the human relationships of community and traditional definitions of work roles and a desire to redefine relationships with the natural world.”

Tatum juxtaposes their environmental values to the “upward[ly] mobile middle class” value assumptions which define traditional energy policy analyses. Energy production does cost more for the participants but they believe the environmental improvements are worth it. Tatum offers the home power movement as proof to dispute the common presumption that energy consumers act solely from very narrowly conceived self-interest.

He closes by encouraging closer working relations between energy experts and ordinary citizens and exhorting change in the criteria for distribution of public resources. He sees both as potential means to facilitate broader energy experimentation. Through his suggestions, Tatum again manages gently to push the reader to actively enter the energy fray, armed with an increased awareness and a willingness to risk radical change.

Upon finishing, readers may feel frustrated that they are left with more unanswered questions than when they started the book. Tatum’s principal thesis is fairly simple and straightforward, yet potentially too radical for citizens of a market driven society such as ours to accept. He is not an idealist, acknowledging that if people follow his path and begin to form alternatives stemming from the divergent individual experiences they bring to the creative process, differences and conflicts may arise.

On the whole, the book carries an effective message because the author is not attempting to argue a specific energy policy or direction. *Energy Possibilities* is a wake-up call for those who have felt a sense of inadequacy and powerlessness in the energy debates waged by experts. Tatum strips the energy debate down to a matter of naked value preferences.

Many will no doubt view his grassroots approach as unrealistic and ineffective. The accomplishment of the book, however, is to pose a powerful and unavoidable question that provokes a response from the reader: “Is our focus on people and the development of their capacity for perception and choice or on maintenance of the material necessities of life?” Through this inquiry, Tatum attains his overall objective of engaging the reader with energy issues.

Matthew Fischer

STORM OVER MONO: THE MONO LAKE BATTLE AND THE CALIFORNIA WATER FUTURE by John Hart. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. Pp. 211. \$29.95.

Mono Lake. The name has become synonymous in California water politics with an emerging paradigm shift in how we value our most important natural resource. Even the meaning of the word "resource" has been reevaluated in the wake of the fifteen-year (some would say ninety-year) battle to save Mono Lake. In a book that recollects this battle, John Hart recognizes that what began with a few letters from some "bird freaks" concerned about the effect of a falling lake level on bird populations has grown into a story much bigger than initially imagined. The tale of the battle to save Mono Lake is important not only because an invaluable and unique ecosystem was saved from the brink of extinction, but also because it has become "an illustration that we can take something from nature without taking all, a reminder that we can change our minds, sometimes, and give a little back."

Article X, Section 2 of the California Constitution requires water use to be "reasonable and beneficial." These words have historically meant that water would be utilized for consumption, serving the needs of agriculture and quenching the thirst of California's booming cities. Prior to Mono Lake, these terms were never applied to the role of water in sustaining a healthy ecosystem. The battle to save Mono Lake provided a major impetus for sweeping changes in the most basic assumptions behind this interpretive process. It demonstrated that the usefulness of water extends beyond growing food or washing cars. Water is also valuable because it can provide healthy streams and lakes teeming with wildlife, which in turn serve as strong backbones of vibrant and complex ecosystems. The Mono Lake conflict has helped to teach us that it is "resourceful" to use water to these ends as well.

Hart's excitement for the Mono Lake story flows from his conviction that it is in fact a "story." His plot outline reads like a Hollywood movie script: a cast of determined but inexperienced heroes take on a powerful and recalcitrant villain. Through hard work, dogged determination, and some luck, the heroes emerge victorious. The best part about this story is that it is true.

After providing a rogue's gallery cast of characters in the prologue, Hart begins with two chapters to establish the setting. These chapters, though somewhat dry, educate the reader on the geological, ecological, and early cultural history of the Mono Basin. Chapters three and four introduce the villain, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP). Arriving on the scene in 1904, the DWP

had by 1940, through a series of ruthless and underhanded dirty tricks, acquired a stranglehold on Mono Basin water and begun shipping it south to Los Angeles. The trout-filled creeks that fed Mono Lake dry up and the lake's surface elevation begins to fall. Complaints from a few locals go unheeded as Mono water is diverted to serve what was then considered the greater good: the growth of urban Los Angeles.

Chapter five introduces the first of our heroes—the bird watchers. Concerned about falling lake levels that are gradually exposing a land bridge to the lake's islands, these enthusiastic graduate students fear that coyotes will soon be able to cross to the islands and rout nesting sites located there.

Other parties soon join the bird watchers, all fighting to save Mono Lake for different reasons. The lawyers in Chapter six see a chance to write a new chapter in California environmental law. The fishermen in Chapter seven hope to protect some of the West's most productive trout streams. Finally, the ecological scientists in Chapter eight are alarmed that the opportunity to study an ecosystem seen nowhere else in the western hemisphere may soon be lost forever. Although each group has its separate reason to fight for Mono Lake, Hart prefers to focus on what unites them: a deep love for the peculiar Mono landscape. Their commitment to the lake binds them together as they work to wrest control of the lake from the powerful forces of the DWP. The coalition's challenge is particularly formidable: once water diversion rights have been established in California, they have never been revoked.

The ensuing chapters chart the growth of the Mono Lake coalition into a successful political power. Aided occasionally by the mistakes of the DWP, the Mono Lake team achieves what had never before been accomplished in California: recognition of the value of water for conservation principles. Hart emphasizes that the culmination of their campaign, the landmark decision in 1983 whereby the California Supreme Court recognized that public lakes and streams are held by the state in public trust for the benefit of everyone, was a "judicial earthquake." Departing from the general judicial principle of addressing only the facts of the case before it, the Supreme Court declared that all water allocations in California were subject to the public trust principle, not just Mono Lake water. No longer were water rights the functional equivalent of property but instead truly belonged to the people. The claims of all interested parties, including conservationists, must be considered in making water allocation decisions.

The final chapters chart the happy conclusion. Prodded by the public trust decision and its progeny, the DWP grudgingly returns water to the long-dry Mono Basin streams. Fish and birds return, the

lake begins to rise once again. The motley band has overcome odds that once seemed insurmountable. Hart's avoidance of invective commentary or opinion at this point well suits his allegorical intentions. Clearly his sentiments are with the Mono Lake activists, and he unquestioningly disapproves of the DWP's earlier underhanded maneuverings to resist the coalition's challenge. Once the tide turned, however, and the activists' victory became inevitable, Hart provides some redemption for the DWP. Choosing not to vilify it, he instead expresses sympathy for the DWP and its continuing conundrum: providing an ever-growing city with water from a finite supply.

Hart presents a story that entertains as it educates, appropriately enhanced by a fine series of color and black-and-white photographs, illustrations, and maps. While some may view Hart's version of the Mono Lake struggle as an attempt to over-dramatize a serious scientific and political endeavor, he accomplishes his goal of making the reader see the Mono Lake story not as a dry history of the dead past, but as a story full of lessons for the present and the future. He romanticizes or vilifies real people and entities almost as a fiction writer would with his characters: we see the scientists, lawyers, and activists as dauntless heroes, while the DWP appears as a heartless bureaucracy devoid of human compassion. Facts are presented not as dry data, but rather as exciting discoveries or sobering revelations, each one susceptible to a spin from either side. His writing style is clear and engaging. He also includes small biographies of the most important players that supplement the text well.

Hart's creative style induces the reader to draw four notable lessons from his story. First, Hart believes that no party is too powerful and no interest too entrenched that it cannot be uprooted with dogged determination, teamwork, and cooperation. Each interest opposing the DWP could not have succeeded on its own. While each party wanted to save the ecosystem for different reasons, they all soon came to the realization that mutual concerted effort was their only hope. Many of the parties did not like each other, nor did they agree on the best strategy for the fight, but competition from within fostered innovation and determination, and ultimately resulted in victory.

This cooperation is symbolic of another lesson Hart wishes to expound. Often the sheer complexity of environmental disputes leads different environmental groups with the same general goal to clash over details. Compromise and resolution of minor disputes from within enables an environmental coalition to provide a stronger united front. Within the Mono Lake team there were many divergent interests seeking protection for their particular cause: birds, fish, air quality, recreation. Representatives of these interests realized early on that each interest would benefit optimally from a different lake eleva-

tion. Still, the desire for unity in opposition to the DWP led the coalition to compromise on a lake elevation acceptable to all and to fight as a united group for that elevation. Ultimately, such unity was crucial in the governmental decisionmaking process that established the minimum elevation for Mono Lake in force today.

A third lesson Hart offers is the need to examine the issue from one's opponent's point of view. The need to supply Angelenos with water would not go away. Taking Mono water away from the DWP without encouraging conservation would only force the DWP to look elsewhere for more water, increasing the pressure on other water resources tapped by Los Angeles. The Mono Lake team did not dismiss the DWP's concerns out of hand, but instead encouraged support for the agency from both government and private sources to develop and institute conservation measures.

Hart's final lesson is a warning: the environmental community should not become insensitive to non-environmental agendas or overly confident from the victory at Mono Lake. Echoing the California Supreme Court in its public trust decision, he warns against flippanantly dismissing the concerns of non-environmental water users such as the DWP and instead advocates a more global approach to water allocation, balancing the interests of all parties with demands on the resource. If anything, environmentalists should realize from the early history of the Mono Lake coalition itself that the potential to overcome the toughest of obstacles often lurks within what appears to be the most harmless and powerless of opponents. Hart advocates honest negotiation, recognition of an opponent's needs and problems, and a true spirit of compromise. Environmental interests looking to build on the Mono Lake victory should take heed.

Hart recognizes that the demands on Mono Lake water were unusually simple, "almost a cartoon of resource use." The combatants in the Mono Lake battle were easy to categorize into just two camps, each an exaggerated caricature of the opposite ends of the environmental philosophy spectrum. Similarly, "the Mono Lake ecosystem itself is almost a cartoon of the more typical multifariousness." Studying the effect of water diversions was exceedingly simple because Mono Lake is an isolated lake, fed only by two major streams and emptied only by evaporation. Future water rights battles will not be so simple. They will involve complex and far-reaching ecosystems, each with dozens of users each placing conflicting demands on scarce resources, and where cause and effect are not so easily analyzed. Hart does not believe the Mono Lake story can be used as a "how-to" for the nuts and bolts of fighting the war to save the West's lakes and streams. Instead, he suggests that the real value of the Mono Lake

victory is the inspiration it provides, proof that these battles can be won.

Hart's book will make worthwhile reading for those interested in the history of Mono Lake, and also for those seeking to replicate the victories of the environmental community at Mono Lake elsewhere in the water-starved West. The Mono Lake adventures are important because an ecosystem was saved, but also because they show that society can, with effort and courage, make important decisions about what limits it will place on its awesome ability to destroy and create. Humans cannot exist without altering the environment. What we can do is adjust our claims upon it to minimize the damage.

David Petersen

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE by Lamont C. Hempel. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1996. Pp. 291. \$50.00 (cloth), \$25.00 (paper).

Environmental Governance assesses the current policy-making processes applied to global environmental affairs and proposes ideas for a better system of global environmental governance. Lamont Hempel's goal is to "probe the weaknesses of the current international system, and to suggest promising alternatives that offer the possibility of sustainable living." Hempel, a professor at the Center for Politics and Economics at the Claremont Graduate School, suggests looking beyond the nation-state for solutions to environmental problems, espousing what he terms a "glocal" approach. For Hempel, a glocal approach involves working to effect change simultaneously at the global level and within local communities. At its best, *Environmental Governance* provides a broad catalog and critique of many of the events, theories, models, policymaking processes, organizations, and agreements which have occurred within the environmental arena over the past quarter century. The book stands on weaker footing in its prediction of the inevitability of global environmental governance and its articulation of why a move in this direction will necessarily involve a reformation of the nation-state.

Throughout the book, Hempel distills short, digestible explanations of the theories and jargon which permeate environmental policy discussions. These explanations result in one of the book's most valuable contributions. He includes explanations of sustainable development, green accounting, carbon emissions offsets, the proximity principle, soft law, subsidiarity and other environmental concepts.

Hempel also discusses key historical events, including the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the 1994 Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, and several recent trade and the environment debates such as the amendments to the Treaty of Rome adopted in Maastricht in 1992, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs completed in 1993.

While providing useful background tools for assessing global environmental problems, Hempel fails to fully support his assertion that the nation-state is inadequate; nor does he detail how it should be replaced. The book refers to the myriad environmental risks and dilemmas currently faced by humanity. It also notes the transboundary effects of these problems and the increased attention brought to them by active non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through the rise of the global information age. The book, however, fails to discuss why these problems cannot adequately be dealt with under current governmental structures.

In the first chapter, "Between Two Centuries," Hempel sets the stage by informing readers that we are leaving behind a century "shaped largely by world wars and ensuing cold wars," and are finding ourselves heading towards a century "shaped principally by ecological limits, redistributive politics, and the global reach of technology." He asserts that the shape of this future century is not inevitable, but one that we are designing even as we approach it. Hempel predicts a future of global environmental governance which may be distinguished from a centralized world government: global governance refers to the "people, political institutions, regimes, and non-governmental organizations at all levels of public and private policy-making that are collectively responsible for managing world affairs." Hempel does not simply advocate a strengthened United Nations or more multi-lateral treaties (although these might be elements of his solution), but a strengthening of all the local civil institutions which collectively play a role in the government of the world's population.

The environmental events which necessitate global governance are three "massive, unplanned, and unpredictable experiments:" a test of the earth's atmospheric stamina in the presence of increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases and ozone depleting chemicals; a test of the planet's biological resilience in the face of massive species extinction; and whether science and politics can be joined democratically in the transnational management of an increasingly technoscientific world.

While Hempel's analysis that these three experiments are best avoided seems accurate, he offers little support for the assertion that the danger of these experiments will require some form of global gov-

ernance. To recognize that these experiments represent at least a new challenge and even potentially a global form of Russian roulette does not inevitably lead to Hempel's conclusions. Hempel finds that present governing arrangements are "wholly inadequate" to meet the challenges of mounting global and regional threats, and there is "little prospect" that the nation-state will remain unchanged as it attempts to deal with them.

One example of how the current system of nation-states have participated in a system of global environmental governance is provided by the Montreal Protocol. This agreement, probably regarded as the most successful international environmental agreement in existence, is enforced by agencies within the signatory states. For example, the EPA ensures that the U.S. follows the provisions of the Protocol.

In the second chapter, "Earth Summit or Abyss," Hempel provides a pragmatic assessment of the 1992 United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) and the 1994 Cairo Conference. He echoes a widely held sentiment that the actual outcome of the conferences fell far short of the expectations held by many of the environmental NGO participants. However, he also applauds the conferences for their emphasis on global approaches, their propagation of environmental knowledge, and the networking which occurred between environmental organizations and individuals.

"The Causes of Environmental Destruction," the third chapter, examines how global environmental threats are defined for policy-making purposes and then proposes a model of the driving forces behind environmental destruction. The author provides three categories to describe environmental problems: a "Contamination Perspective," which addresses human destruction of the earth's environment; an "Eco-Simplification Perspective" that is concerned with the loss of biodiversity, and thus the simplification of complex eco-systems; and a "Natural Resource Consumption Perspective" that focus on the loss of valuable natural resources. The importance of the distinctions between these three categories surfaces when different solutions are proffered depending upon which category is used to describe a given situation. Hempel analogizes this situation to the economist who approaches a problem with a market-based solution while an engineer might find the same problem solvable only through a technological fix.

In the same chapter Hempel also provides a model of eight variables or driving forces, which may result in environmental destruction. The variables used are: (1) the human tendency to exercise dominion over nature (anthropocentrism); (2) the tendency to live for the moment with little concern for the future (contempocentrism); (3) the additional ability to impact the earth which has resulted from technological advance; (4) overpopulation; (5) the consumption patterns

brought about by poverty (third-world countries permitting deforestation and accelerated use of limited natural resources); and (6) affluence (throw-away lifestyles); (7) market failure; and (8) the failure to have markets. This model is useful for providing discrete categories to examine in a search for the potential causes of environmental destruction. Hempel applies the model to a study of greenhouse warming in chapter four, "Global Warming: The Changing Climate in Science and Politics." This chapter provides a relatively detailed analysis of the causes of and reactions to the greenhouse effect. While the interrelation between the different elements of the model is not precisely mapped out, an overly exact model would probably be both forced and inaccurate, given the variety and combinations of factors that can act to degrade the environment.

The fifth chapter focuses on the process of international environmental policymaking. The author points out some of the characteristics that set environmental policy apart from policymaking in other areas. For example, environmental policy is often designed to benefit non-human beneficiaries, it redistributes environmental benefits to future generations, and is more significantly influenced by science in agenda-setting and formulation. The author emphasizes the important role played by "focusing events," such as the discovery of the ozone hole, as well as policy entrepreneurs and saboteurs, and advocacy coalitions. Hempel explores the different stages of the environmental policymaking process: agenda-setting, policy formation, policy selection and legitimization, implementation, evaluation and adjustment, and effectiveness monitoring and compliance. By separating out and defining the elements of the policymaking process, Hempel performs a great service to any reader who has ever found this process incomprehensible.

Chapters six and seven provide, respectively, a "Political Ecology" and a "Political Economy" framework which Hempel employs to critique current global environmental protection regimes. Hempel defines political ecology as "an inquiry into the political sources, conditions, and ramifications of environmental change." Hempel also provides a broader definition: ". . . the study of interdependence among political units and of interrelationships between political units and their environment." In this chapter the author highlights a term found throughout the book, the "glocal" perspective. Taking a "glocal perspective does not mean ignoring the nation-state, but merely downgrading its importance in addressing the ecological challenges of this planet." Rather than a focus on national affairs, attention turns to very local, community activities while maintaining a global effort to solve world problems.

Having identified potential sources of environmental threats and critiquing current methods of addressing these threats, Hempel then proceeds to briefly examines three “prospects for international governance:” (1) development of a limited world federalist system; (2) confederal reform of the United Nations and its affiliated agencies; and (3) expansion or extension of existing models of international and regional treaties and regimes. Given that a stated aim of *Environmental Governance* is to provide a vision for global governance, something more than seventeen pages could have been dedicated to the part of a chapter providing this vision. While a lengthy expansion of the three ideas suggested by Hempel may be beyond the book’s scope, and might only serve to duplicate books which have already been written on the subjects, further exploration than these three suggestions would have added something new to the field.

The author’s chapter applying a “Political Economy” approach to environmental governance does not wholly abolish the nation-state in its analysis. This chapter reviews some of the most promising market-based measures devised thus far to improve global environmental quality. These include environmental initiatives within trade agreements, voluntary corporate initiatives, green accounting, international carbon emissions offsets performed through joint implementation, government-sponsored contests to encourage private development of energy efficient appliances, and pay-as-you-drive automobile insurance. One increasingly important subject notably absent from this discussion is the role that can be played by multi-national corporations in lobbying world governments to produce common environmental standards. From the corporate perspective, these standards produce a greater homogeneity of products and a lower cost of production allowing them to take advantage of greater economies of scale resulting from higher production. From the environmental perspective, these world-wide (or multi-lateral) agreements will almost certainly have the effect of raising standards within countries with less developed environmental laws. On the other hand, smaller producers may find themselves squeezed out of the market and the homogeneity of products may itself result in some loss to consumers.

Chapter Eight, “An Ethical Framework for Glocal Action” provides four environmental ethics that may inspire more sustainable norms than those currently in vogue. *Common Heritage* represents a global acknowledgment that the wealth of the earth belongs to all nations. This recognition could give rise to such policies as a modest tax on all activities which exploit or damage the global commons with revenues earmarked for the protection and restoration of common heritage sites. *Common Equity* represents the desire for distributive justice across political units and human generations. This is not a call

for complete equality, but for limiting inequality. The development of a sense of *Common Security* would result in a recognition that our security as individuals is ultimately tied "to perceived improvements in the welfare of potentially desperate people" - those who have nothing to lose by engaging in violence to achieve their social, political, or economic ends. Finally, Hempel suggests a norm of *Deliberative Democracy*, in which a limited number of citizens are directly engaged in the "challenge of self rule" through their participation in small groups that become informed about a particular policy issue and then provide a model for how the public would act *if* better informed.

The book's final chapter, "Cornucopians, Catastrophists, and Optimizers," focuses on three approaches individuals might take to achieve global governance. Cornucopians feel that technological innovation will result in a smarter, wealthier, healthier, and happier society. For Catastrophists, the earth is already locked on a course of ecological ruin and it is too late to avoid a global disaster. And finally, Optimizers seek to avoid disaster through massive educational efforts demonstrating the connection between ecological virtue and economic self-interest. Hempel notes that there is no guiding public philosophy that commands a consensus across the world today, and that there is a pressing need for new leaders and institutions that can inspire the trust and sense of civic community to foster a broader public spirit. Hempel concludes with a plea for action along multiple fronts.

The book is completed with an excellent "Suggested Reading" section which is divided by topics and describes all of the works that it recommends, and an index that actually included almost everything that this reader, at least, had occasion to look up.

At times, *Environmental Governance* seems like an imperfectly welded collection of essays. It is not always clear why the author chooses to address each topic that he does. Some sections, such as chapters three and four that provide and apply models for the causes of environmental destruction, do not seem well-connected to a book whose purpose is to elaborate on global environmental governance. However, the breadth of *Environmental Governance* is its greatest asset. A specialist might be disappointed that her area did not receive the depth of attention that Hempel could have potentially given to each subject area, but the spirit of the book is admirable in its laudable goal of touching on all of the issues which might arise in an analysis of global environmental governance.

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