

## Book Reviews

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Scott Kaufman, *The Environment and International History*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2018; x + 210 pp.; £19.99 pbk; ISBN 9781472525055

In *The Environment and International History*, Scott Kaufman argues that the desire to protect the environment in the twentieth century has been anthropocentrically oriented, despite shifts in the rhetoric surrounding environmental protection over time. To craft this argument, Kaufman uses a ‘synthesis of secondary materials’ (p. xi) to cover key events in environmental politics in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in six chapters that proceed chronologically. At the core of each chapter, Kaufman tries to unpack and understand the fundamental ‘over-arching challenge’ in ‘efforts to protect the environment,’ while balancing it with social, political, or military concerns (p. xii). Even though the book is a bit unbalanced at times, with some subjects and themes covered in more depth than others, it serves as an introductory overlay to key concepts in environmental movements.

Kaufman believes that environmental protections arose out of negative consequences of colonialism. Colonial conquests, such as British, Dutch, and Spanish territorial expansion, led to the rapid depletion of resources. As demand for these commodities increased, he points out, the need to protect the resources became more important. He identifies an early convention on environment protection – the 1900 *Convention for the Preservation of Wild Animals, Birds, and Fish in Africa*, and points out that the objective of the conference was to protect human interests in the environment, rather than a desire to protect the environment for its own sake.

Kaufman also highlights other ways early environmental policy was driven by human-centered desires. At the turn of the century, for example, hunting big-game animals was contributing to the decline of wildlife in newly acquired African colonies, yet many policy makers were hesitant to restrict hunting, fearing loss of profit and prestige. At the same time elites had adopted ‘Victorian mores’ which meant that they ‘wanted to highlight their own status’ by controlling hunting (pp. 11–12). Restrictions, when implemented, were not intended to save animal populations; rather, they were rooted in racism, by targeting for elimination the techniques of indigenous people such as the use of nets and fires.

Most of the book is devoted to outlining the changing dynamic of environmentalism through an anthropocentric lens. Because Kaufman presents a synthesis of commonly held historical analysis, it is an effective if somewhat unsurprising lens.

He shows how Americans waged a proxy war against insects because of their threat to mankind, and this justified the widespread use of the insecticide DDT, and then he connects this to the rise of political environmentalism and the Cold War.

Kaufman's book also devotes substantial space to what is commonly accepted as the first international environmental conference of the contemporary era, the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm. He notes that it was driven by a desire to protect the environment for non-human needs, but that this collapsed because of human-centred interests. Stockholm began with 'new environmentalists,' such as Paul Ehrlich and members of the Club of Rome, who were focused on sustainable development for the environment's sake after the environmental disasters of the Vietnam War. But anthropocentric concerns returned to prominence in the aftermath of Stockholm. Kaufman believes this is connected to the collapse of communism and a growing desire by Lesser Developed Countries for economic freedom, which overshadowed the optimism of Stockholm and led to its eventual demise.

Kaufman's book is at times nuanced but at other times seems oversimplified. He acknowledges that some international agreements, such as the Paris Climate Accords, have reflected state interests while also revealing less anthropocentric attitudes than in the past. He also includes discussion of lesser known environmental topics, such as the pollution of the Techa River with caesium-137 from the Mayak Chemical Combine in the Soviet Union during the Cold War. As an example of oversimplification, he suggests that protecting the environment played a large role in détente and that inclusion of environmental protections, such as the signing of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, would 'enhance the president's [Nixon] reputation as an environmentalist' and would then 'offer an means of encouraging détente' (p. 78). Historians might disagree that détente was, at its core, an environmental strategy for Nixon.

Kaufman wants readers to consider the cost of human caused environmental damage, such as climate change, as environmental protections have become increasingly more politicized. And he makes clear that humans have played a significant role in framing and shaping environmental policy for their own interests. Whether or not future policies should be anthropocentrically focused is not so clear, but rather something future environmentalists must decide.

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Helen McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood*, London, Bloomsbury, 2020; 560 pp.; £21.00 hbk; ISBN 9781408870761

The central question animating Helen McCarthy's *Double Lives* is how and why it was that between the mid-Victorian period and the present, mothers' paid labour was transformed from a social ill to a widely accepted phenomenon. McCarthy