

In order to make these claims, Kalinovsky examines declassified documents from the Soviet Union and the National Security Archive in Washington D.C. as well as interviews with key Soviet military and party leaders. Kalinovsky's assessment of the Soviet Union's withdrawal process from Afghanistan is not without its shortcomings. Throughout the book, Kalinovsky argues that Afghan officials repeatedly sabotaged the withdrawal attempts made by the Soviet Union but fails to support this claim. Despite the need of some clarification, Kalinovsky's insightful analysis of the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan is valuable and significant. Students or historians interested in Soviet military history, Cold War history or modern war history should read this book. It is by no means the whole story of the withdrawal process, but it is an important contribution to the larger historiography of the topic.

Elizabeth Fragosa

Shawn William Miller. *An Environmental History of Latin America: New Approaches to the Americas*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. 272. Paper \$25.99.

Upon first contact with Latin America, many Europeans poured over its beautiful, lush, and wondrous landscape, equating it to Eden. Spanish conquistadors emphasized this myth in their quest for gold in the lost city of El Dorado. Disease decimated the indigenous population, inspiring belief of an untouched paradise. People exploited Brazil's fertile soil to satiate global appetites for exotic products like sugar. Wars erupted over possession of Peru's wildly profitable guano-covered coastal islands. Shawn William Miller, Professor of History at Brigham Young University, incorporates these and other events alongside various themes into a survey and synthesis of environmental history in Latin America. Environmental historians like Miller study the complex relationship between people and their environment, reinforcing nature's active role in shaping the human experience. His book is not a historical monograph, but an evaluation of method utilizing historical events. It is a discussion of ideas, a

way to hammer out distinct characteristics that embody this broad and interdisciplinary subfield.

Miller seamlessly navigates through 600 years of Latin American history while exploring specific themes such as attitudes toward nature and consumption, population, rapid industrial development, and environmentalism. Following a chronological format, first he illuminates new perspectives on pre-Columbian sustainability, cannibalism, and the “pristine myth” in an effort to dispel common misconceptions about indigenous societies. Utilizing European diseases and the decimation of the indigenous population as an investigative lens, Miller then discusses colonial labor issues and nature’s brief respite from human exploitation. Next, he explains how exhaustive agricultural methods and ravenous mining practices in Latin America encouraged globalization. Moving forward, natural disasters and industrialization further emphasize the tumultuous relationship between humans and nature. The last chapters discuss societal and political responses to pollution issues and the economic meanings of environmentalism, especially the counterproductive effects of ecotourism and the successful sustainability of Cuba’s urban gardens.

Thoughtful and engaging, this survey clearly defines many of nature’s various devices for affecting history. The absence of endnotes, while alarming at first, is a testament to Miller’s methodology. He maintains that this work is a survey and synthesis of ideas and approaches meant to present open questions under the guise of “forceful assertions” (xi). A list of “Suggested Further Readings” and sparsely placed footnotes outline “direct contributions,” specifying authors from various scholarly disciplines. While this work alludes to an immense amount of original research, the end goal is to limit the focus on sources and direct it to the discussion of method.

Environmental history emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in large part due to a growing international movement dedicated to nature conservation, appropriate stewardship of natural resources, and public health. This connection emerges in the book through the occasional appearance of political idealism regarding these matters. However, Miller’s dialogue about current issues does not distract from the argument but

emphasizes history's connection to social change while questioning, investigating, and understanding the tenuous relationship between nature and humans. Furthermore, his extensive research highlights this link and includes published works focusing on the environmental history of Brazil and Latin America during the colonial period. Awarded the 2008 Melville Book Prize for Environmental History, this work is useful for historians, sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, and researchers in other natural and social science disciplines as it expands the realm of historical players outside of human constructs and encourages interdisciplinary research methods.

Jennifer Huerta

Louis A. Perez Jr. *Cuba in the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. Pp. 333. Cloth. \$34.95.

Tracing the origins of an international conflict is a difficult and risky task for historians. Yet, Louis A. Perez Jr., professor of Cuban history at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, succeeds in providing a fresh look at U.S.-Cuban relations. Perez argues that in the 1890s, Cuba became a figment of the American imagination as it recreated its national identity on the path to building imperial power. By comparing itself to Cuba, the U.S. carved out a moral high ground in which to measure itself. The use of metaphors allowed the ideas of U.S. politicians, journalists, and private citizens to re-shape unfamiliar international events into a simplified version based on American moral and cultural creations.

As the United States's global ambitions increased, Americans developed a self-image that depicted expansion as morally acceptable. Capitalizing on atrocities against Armenians in the mid-1890s, the American government and press compared Ottoman war crimes to Spanish offenses toward Cubans. U.S. policymakers urged Americans not to stand for violence near their borders. Pastors warned of the sins in abandoning the needy and private citizens responded by staging pro-Cuban plays advocating for a U.S. defense of Cuba. Perez proposes that a