

The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800. Part I: Foundations. Part II: Patterns of Change. On CWH volumes VI,1 and VI,2

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So far, Cambridge histories have been known as systematic and exhaustive presentations of the histories of the regions of the world. The New Cambridge Modern History, despite its focus on Europe and the West, also contains satisfactory information on the rest of the world, however from the perspective of expanding Europe. But if one expects to receive similar information from the new World History, one will be disappointed. Certain things one is looking for are missing or at least not discovered easily. This is a consequence of the basic concept of a balanced treatment of the whole world, at a time when the state of research and the participation in historiography are not at all balanced worldwide.

The output is a collection of essays meant to demonstrate the actual open-ended character of research. And it became an exclusively anglophone undertaking – which, however, uses metric measures such as hectare and kilometre. Only six out of the 39 authors are women; 31 live in the US, the three editors included; five in the UK; and just one each in Jerusalem, Kyoto, and Leiden. They are all experts of their subjects or have at least published in that field. The editors claim proudly to have recruited authors with knowledge of the archives instead of mere generalists. The first of the two volumes dealing with the period 1400–1800 concerns foundations and the second is on patterns of change – the most banal of possible historical differentiations, that is between continuity and change. But even this most general distinction does not work neatly. Nevertheless, each volume has separate sections, chapters, and pages as well as an index of its own. Footnoting is comparatively light, and recommended further readings are exclusively anglophone. Maps are sufficient, illustrations rather exceptional.

The introduction by Sanjay Subrahmanyam has a specific problem with the loosely defined period 1400–1800, which is well known to this reviewer in his capacity as volume editor of another world history.¹ Whereas after 1800 world history can be to a large extent presented in transverse sectional views, there is no alternative to regional chapters before 1400. Between 1400 and 1800, however, a global world is under construction, but with different speeds and intensities in different fields and regions. Therefore, out of necessity, contributions require different approaches and comparison. Subrahmanyam mentions global problems such as demography, the expansion of world trade together with bullion flows, and environmental history. And he reminds us of parallels and contacts between Asiatic and European monarchs. He employs the dubious Eurocentric category “early modern” without reflecting upon it, but, on the other hand, following Kenneth Pomeranz,² he attacks quite aggressively every kind of European exceptionalism, Wallerstein’s world system included.³ Nevertheless, at the same time, he insists on Europe’s unequal power relations with the rest of the world, which “not only sully the immaculate birth of European modernity, but might even lend itself to the language of ‘reparations’” (p. 16).

Five chapters present “global matrices” as fundaments of globality, despite obvious processes of change such as the development of the biological old regime, which is described by the environmental historian Robert E. Marks. With an increase of population by 223 per cent, which corresponded to only a 200 per cent increase in agriculture, the Columbian Exchange had to save the world! The mixed regime of agriculture plus stock farming, however, is not even mentioned – perhaps because it was a European achievement? The historian of malaria James L.A. Webb, Jr, in his particularly wide-ranging contribution, analyses what already four decades ago has been called “l’unification microbienne du monde”. In contrast, Francesca Bray finds it difficult to present global technological transitions because sources exist only in China (her field of research) and Europe. She solves her problem with four vignettes on silver mining in Potosí, the Chinese cotton revolution, and European import substitution of porcelain and printed cotton. The famous historian of culture Peter Burke uses big cities as paradigms of urbanization. Finally, the genderologist Merry Wiesner-Hanks starts with the story of gender historiography – a very Western subject. Next, she presents gleanings from the wide world on intercultural marriages and transgender while focusing on Europe and the Sikhs’ religious influence on gender relations.

“Macro-regions” are the leitmotiv of the next section and are, according to Subrahmanyam, considered as significant clusters of historiographical interest. They should provide a certain number of spatial building blocks in order to have a better-balanced world history. But he considers it outdated to define these blocks in terms of culture or religion

1 W. Reinhard (ed.), *Weltreiche und Weltmeere 1350–1750* (Geschichte der Welt, vol. 3), Munich 2014.

2 K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton 2000.

3 I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, 4 vols, Berkeley 1974–2011.

following Max Weber (p. 19 sq.). Unfortunately, the static and monolithic concept of culture that he insinuates is also outdated. In contrast, a differentiating concept of culture open for unlimited interaction is still a more promising way to build regional blocks compared to the vague geopolitical assumptions suggested by Subrahmanyam. The very practice of later chapters demonstrates this.⁴

The long-term geopolitical realignment after the breakdown of the Mongolian empire when the empires of Eurasian nomads were torn apart and taken over by China and Russia, which is the subject of the chapter by the specialist Thomas W. Allsen, coincides with cultural changes, such as the replacement of religious plurality by Buddhism in the East and Islam in the West. Jos Gommans, an expert in Mughal history, starts with the geography of the Indian Ocean world and continues with China and the Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman empires. According to him, the expansion of the latter three was more important than the European activity in the Indian Ocean, which anyhow first of all served to enforce Asian influence on Europe (p. 202). He considers the Arabic “cosmopolis” between Morocco and the Philippines also more important than the Latin, Buddhist, and Confucian “cosmopoleis”. The historian of the Conquista Matthew Restall also attempts an affected approach to his subject: America’s indigenous empires. According to him, 1492 is not the key date but 1519, when the deplorable Caribbean empire of Castile started not so much to destroy but to appropriate the higher developed indigenous empires. In contrast to Carlo Ginzburg (vol. II, p. 471), Restall doubts that literacy was a comparative advantage of the Spanish conquerors (p. 235). To Ray A. Kea, a historian of Ghana, is left the Herculean task to present the whole of Africa on the basis of a limited and unequal fund of sources and state of research. He makes the Islamic empires and movements of the Sudan together with the coastal towns of Guinea parts of “Greater Sahara” and Ethiopia, the Swahili coast, the Zambesi area, and the impulses of the Lunda-Lunda core country parts of “Greater Zambesia”. But I cannot follow his conclusion that the distinctive properties of early modernity in terms of travel, global trade, urban-rural dynamics, political theology, and individualistic anthropology proclaimed in 1999 by Subrahmanyam apply to Africa.⁵

The chapters of the section “large-scale political formation” are closer to empirical results. Jorge Flores, an expert for Portuguese India, treats both Iberian empires as similar but still different cases of composite monarchies – not a very surprising conclusion. Sometimes their economic and personal networks look like a single one. The Qing historian Laura Hostetler focuses on the imperial competition between China and Russia in central Asia, for a second time. This time the focus is on diplomacy, mutual information, cartography, and geographical research in Russian Asia. Kangxi and Peter the Great practiced a similar style of policy. Giancarlo Casale, known as a historian of Ottoman Eastern expansion, proves, in his chapter on early modern Islamic empires, is more successful

4 Reinhard, *Weltreiche*, pp. 13–15.

5 S. Subrahmanyam, *Connected Histories: Notes toward a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia*, in: V. Lieberman (ed.), *Beyond Binary Histories. Re-Imagining Eurasia to 1830*, Ann Arbor 1999, pp. 289–316.

than others with his elegant attempt to invert established convictions. The victory of Morocco over Songhay in 1591 demonstrates that this history is not limited to the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals. In addition, according to him, the influence of Islam on politics was rather limited. Effective empire building between Morocco and Aceh on Sumatra did not start before 1500. Only a minority of the subjects of the Mughals were Muslims; for some time, this was also true of the Ottomans. Most Muslims lived elsewhere anyhow. In contrast to European confessional policy, religious plurality should even be considered a strong point of these empires. The basis of their success can be found in their three-level land tenure with a privileged layer of rent collectors between the ruler on top and the peasants at the bottom. Slave elites of foreign origin made the system complete, in the case of the Mughals, however, only metaphorically. Fire arms were important but did not constitute “gunpowder empires”. The “oriental despotism” of Montesquieu, Marx, and Weber is another legend. In reality, life was safer and trade more free under the shari’a than under European law. Because the shari’a could even be turned against them, the rulers turned to legitimation through messianism in the case of the Safavids and secular law in the case of the Ottomans, and finally even to Shiite or Sunni confessionalization.

Besides large empires, the early modern world consisted of at least four so-called “crossroads regions”. Morris Rossabi, a historian of China and the Mongols, considers central Asia, for a third time, as a meeting place of cultures and religions. Decline and subjection of indigenous polities only reduced but did not extinguish this capacity. He refers to the extinction of the Zunghars and the Chinese conquest of Xinjiang, to the rise of the Uzbeks in the West, and to the relations of central Asian khanates with Russia. As an expert on Indonesian Islam, Michael Laffan is responsible for Southeast Asia, which is characterized by a double bifurcation – continent versus islands and Theravada-Buddhism versus Islam – as well as by a plurality of polities and empires of complex ethnicity. In addition, Chinese influence was important, but both the leader of the famous Chinese naval expeditions Zheng He and his chronicler were Muslims. Finally, the spice wars of the Iberians were replaced by the sea power of West European chartered companies. Alan L. Karras, who publishes on smuggling, insists on the role of the Caribbean as the first theatre of global conflicts between the old world and the new, which made it the crucible of modern world history. But this fact is widely ignored because the lack of common identity of the islands has resulted in separate research in different languages and because the recently created Atlantic history is colonized by US scholars (p. 395) – a Berkeley professor should know. He records colonization and piracy, trade and smuggling, sugar and slaves, premature and limited decolonization, and consumers who simply did not want to know how sugar was produced – not much of a change in attitude in history. Last but not least, Filippo de Vivo, professor of Italian history, once again contradicts the contention that the discoveries ruined the Mediterranean economy and insists that the contrast between Christians and Muslims in spite of armed conflicts and piracy did not prevent trade and other peaceful interaction. Besides Bosnia and Crete, several port cities were crossroads centres. Crossroads people were either outstanding individuals such

as *Leo Africanus* or groups such as merchants, slaves, mercenaries, and Jewish or other minorities.

The final section “Overview” contains just one contribution, “political trajectories compared”, by Jack A. Goldstone, an adept of global history. For the first time in this volume, Europe is focused upon, because the thoroughly organized modern state is a product of the European nineteenth century. It differs from the loosely structured polities and empires that developed since early times everywhere in the world. But the slow rise of this modern state in Europe must not be treated as “the Rise of the West”, because, according to Goldstone, Europe has adopted a lot of technological and administrative innovations from Asia. For the latter statement, Voltaire’s theoretical enthusiasm for the Chinese examination system is considered as sufficient verification. In addition, the rising European state allegedly was formed by military competition and economic exchange with Asia. And finally, the European state has quickly been adopted and improved by the rest of the world. Therefore, the rise of the modern state should not be considered as a European, but as a global process, which would not have happened without the globalization of the world 1400–1800.

Supported by a warm phase of the Little Ice Age, stable, but structurally different empires were established worldwide, about 1550, after political chaos. America’s and, to some extent also Africa’s underdevelopment in that respect are explained as a consequence of European dominance. In contrast to Asia, Europe based its political growth upon trade – an incorrect statement, because war was the decisive factor. Nevertheless, according to Goldstone, Europe was an underdeveloped nation because it exported bullion as raw material to import finished products. This statement would make today’s US an underdeveloped nation if we consider their balance of trade and payment. The climatic crisis of the seventeenth century led to popular uprisings worldwide, which were answered with restructuration, in particular with cultural and religious retrenchment. But in about 1700, Asian armies were still superior.

In the eighteenth century, however, Western exception was developing and has to be explained in a new way “falling out of love with ancient wisdom” (p. 470) – just notice the emotional language! According to Goldstone, Britain and Europe in general took the lead not because of superiority or particular advantages but rather because of benefits from relative backwardness. Europe from 700 to 1500 has been comparatively isolated – at least for 1150–1350, exactly the opposite is true. Next, Europe has also lost contact with its cultural roots in antiquity – no expert in Medieval or Renaissance history will confirm this statement today. Finally, the European system of government was less strong than that of Asian monarchies because of the limited authority of European rulers. Recently, I could indeed demonstrate how the English, in particular during the eighteenth century, managed to transform this handicap into an advantage.⁶ But, according to Goldstone, Europe’s essential achievement was the revival of the classical tradition,

which – somehow, in an unexplained way – led to an explosion of scientific discovery and practical invention during the Enlightenment. Politics became a kind of science. In addition, Europe now remembered republican ideals. After Locke and Montesquieu, this process would culminate in the American independence and in Thomas Paine – *Quod erat demonstrandum*. I think we had better not fall in love with this new globalized wisdom.

The second volume has a better chance because patterns of change need less conceptual acrobatics. The section on “migrations and encounters” starts with a chapter by the leading specialist Dirk Hoerder on global migrations. Migration happened always and everywhere, not only from villages to cities and between villages but also on the macro-regional and the global levels. Migrants might be fugitives or conquerors, workers or settlers. Labour regimes produced the forced migration of African slaves as well as the status of indentured servant, which was used by one-half or even two-thirds of the immigrants on their way to North America. Jeremy Black is an expert on warfare. He describes “little wars” of nomads and bandits and “big wars” of empires. Despite endless varieties of violence, he is able to identify some global common patterns: war is an affair of men – Dahomey’s female force is not mentioned – human and material resources are limited, large armies cannot be mobilized at harvest time or during winter, and communication and transport are cumbersome and slow. Europeans wage worldwide wars but not yet world wars because the participant powers remain still a minority. The explicative value of the thesis of the “military revolution” is limited.⁷ European success oversea was more often a matter of indigenous allies. The Ottoman empire as leading land power and the rise of British sea power deserve special consideration.

The first intercultural relations, as described by John E. Wills, Jr, were still not global but rather regional processes, dialogues with obvious spatial and temporal limits or sometimes even a triologue between Tibetans, Mongols, and Chinese under the Ming and the Qing. Under premodern conditions religion remained the essence of culture. Being an expert on China mission history, Wills presents not only Islam and Christianity in China extensively but also the spread of Chinese culture, in particular of Confucianism, to Korea and Japan. For some time, Japan was also under the influence of Jesuit missionaries. After the extermination of the Christian church, this impact was replaced by “rangaku”, the Dutch science, a carefully calculated reception of Western useful knowledge. Muslim expansion into a world of unbelievers happened quite often under the lead of Sufis and their fraternities. Especially in the multicultural world of India, Sufi influence played a key role beside different Hindu sects and the syncretistic new religion of the Sikhs. Because of many open-minded Muslims, Jews, and Christians, the Eastern Mediterranean became the field of many-sided intellectual exchanges characterized by mutual respect. Even in Latin America, the clash of cultures did not end with suppression but resulted in remarkable syncretism. The same is true of Africa, not to speak of the Afro-American

7 G. Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1550–1800*, 2nd edn, Cambridge 1996.

religions still alive today: “We find no barrier of cultural difference that was unbreachable” (p. 76).

The search for “legal encounters and the origins of global law” is much less promising. Was there anything else besides Western designs of international law? Nevertheless, the legal historian Lauren Benton and the global historian Adam Clulow are unable to present a common theory but do offer an equally not common but at least converging global legal practice, which can be extracted from abundant sources of intercultural legal transactions. The first common assumption was that political and legal transactions had to be handled correctly according to whatsoever rules. The second is a kind of mutual respect for the plurality of law and government that existed. The third is that protection was a universal (quasi-)legal relationship, which sometimes even included European chartered companies.

Of course, the section on “trade, exchange, and production”, which includes eight chapters, is the focus of this volume. Once again, most of the processes in question concern entire continents but nevertheless only parts of the globe. True global extension remains exceptional. The Columbian Exchange is one of these exceptions. Noble David Cook, who published on the mortality of Amerindians, presents it perfectly and makes us forget that we read about it in two other chapters. Equally brilliant is the chapter on the slave trade and the African diaspora. John Thornton, historian of the Black Atlantic, describes not only the slave trade, which, by the way, has been declared a crime against humanity in 2001 at Durban, he includes as well slave life in America, the cultural achievements of African America, and slave resistance together with the autonomous communities founded by fugitives.

The task of Francesca Trivellato, who is a historian of Sephardic trade in the Mediterranean, is more difficult. “The organization of trade in Europe and Asia, 1400–1800” concerns subjects that correspond to each other but remain separate most of the time. It is during the early modern period that they start to interact and therefore have to be compared. In the meantime, we know a lot about Asian merchants and bankers and learn to accept that, despite all differences, they were at least on par with their European counterparts for most of the time. Therefore, Trivellato discovers many parallels and analogies between Europe, the Ottoman empire, India, China, and Japan in the fields of technology and infrastructure, business organization and procedure, brokerage and business on commission, credit market, and financial transactions. The problem of public credit, which was invented in Europe but did not exist in Asia (p. 178), hopefully has been solved recently.⁸ The different consequences were the constant European superiority at sea. But according to Trivellato, the rise of Britain cannot be exclusively explained with the profits from the slave trade and the plantation system as Williams⁹ and Pomeranz¹⁰ want to have it. Nevertheless, because of economic links, this business

8 Cf. Reinhard, *Staatsmacht und Staatskredit*.

9 E. Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Chapel Hill 1944.

10 Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*.

had consequences that should not be ignored (pp. 161, 187) – a conclusion I had arrived at as early as 1997.¹¹

Another difference was the reduction of business risk. Did Europeans use formal legal institutions to reduce uncertainty, whereas Asians had to rely on family networks? Charles H Parker, a convert from Dutch to global history, treats this problem again in his chapter on entrepreneurs, families, and companies. Besides the maritime trade circuits of the Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, trade over land was still important. Paradigmatic family networks demonstrate that: the Russian Stroganov and the Armenian Shahrman of Isfahan. The activities of women inside these networks have to still be appreciated. Jews and Christians even made dowries a part of their capital stocks. In contrast, large organizations such as the German Hanse or the later chartered companies were European exceptions. The rule was self-organizing “trade diasporas” of Armenians, Jews, and other particular groups.

The basic condition of early modern world trade consisted in the streams of silver that originated from Spanish America and ended in China. This is perhaps the most global subject of all. The leading expert Dennis O. Flynn presents silver movements in a global context, visualized as a hydraulic model of the unified theory of prices. He falsifies the theory of the balance of trade, which explains the flow of silver as a consequence of the lacking offer of goods from the side of Europe. If that were true, other means of payment such as gold had to flow in the same direction, which was not the case (p. 217). James D. Tracy, another convert from Dutch to global history, wrote a chapter on Dutch and English trade to the Indian Ocean and the Levant to around 1700. He is still working with the trade-balance model. Armed trade was the secret of European success, when Asians had to rely on mere networks. Through Trevor Burnard, we had the dubious pleasure to make the acquaintance of the disgusting planter Thomas Thistlewood.¹² In his chapter, he describes slave trade and slave life once again. According to him, the plantation model of Barbados was more successful than the Brazilian one because of the better access to capital and sales management on the one hand, and of the system of gang labour on the other hand. Around 1800, the plantation economy was not declining but ready for a new upswing.

This section ends with another theoretically oriented comparative chapter, this one on industrious revolutions in early modern world history, written by Kaoru Sugihara for Japan and by Roy Bin Wong for China. Jan de Vries presented this concept in 1994.¹³ According to him, many Britons had created additional buying power and demand by working longer and harder for the same wage. This increase of demand was consequential for the industrial revolution. Global historians ask if this behaviour occurred in other economies as well, and if yes, why no industrial revolution happened there. Certainly,

11 W. Reinhard, *Parasit oder Partner? Europäische Wirtschaft und Neue Welt 1500–1800*, Münster 1997.

12 T. Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World*, Chapel Hill 2004.

13 J. De Vries, *The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution*, in: *Journal of Economic History* 54 (1994), pp. 249–270.

differentiation is necessary. Britain was not Europe, and Pomeranz's Yangzi delta was not China. Nevertheless, despite differences in all three cases, elements of the growth of industriousness as a result of greater labour absorption can be identified (p. 304). The European variety, however, became more visible because of the new taste for imported luxury goods. But the East Asian "peasant path" did not imply the total integration in a growing market economy but led to pursuing the rise of land productivity through a combination of commercialization and proto-industrial bi-employment (p. 306). Formal and informal political and cultural conditions are responsible for the differences. Therefore, the industrial revolution altered the modern world, not because the emergence of an industrial work force in England was repeated in most other countries, but because different regions provided a variety of institutional mechanisms for creating a modern workforce (p. 307). Once again: *quod erat demonstrandum*.

Even if we accept this world history's programme "comprehensive but not exhaustive" (vol 1, p. XIX), this section, which is particularly close to empiric research, is nevertheless obviously insufficient in several respects. Iberian activities in the Indian Ocean are covered superficially elsewhere. But the activities of the English and Dutch companies in the eighteenth century, which became essential for the course of world history, are not even mentioned. And "production" appears nowhere else but in the headline of the section. Instead, the book pays tribute to a comparatively recent development of the historical mainstream and includes a section "religion and religious change". Religion is back again!

Guy Stroumsa starts with a chapter on his field of interest "the scholarly discovery of religion in modern times". According to him, Vico, Lafitau, and Fontenelle were the beginners, after ethnology instead of theology, because the discoveries had become the basis of the study of religion. Stroumsa returns to Paul Hazard, an unjustly forgotten pioneer of intellectual history.¹⁴ But he does not even try to define "religion". Or is that simply impossible?¹⁵ Next Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, extremely competent as volume editor of the Cambridge History of Christianity, presents a masterly sketch of Christianity worldwide, including Orthodox churches, which quite often are simply left out.

Because of their universal pretensions and their missionary activity, both Christianity and Islam are true global religions. But Islam is much less institutionalized. Therefore, it is difficult to create a complete overview. But we are lucky to have the Sufi specialist Nile Green as the author of the respective chapter. He is able to present a popular Islam of alphabets guided by Sufi dynasties and organized in fraternities around the shrines of saints. On the other hand, according to him, all Sufis are, at the same time, ulama, that is learned experts of religious doctrine and law, some of them even celebrities with worldwide networks. Therefore, a collective religious identity is still possible. Quite often, Sufis are the spearheads of collective conversions, which are analysed in detail as well as the individual ones. However, because the conversion consists in a simple declaration,

14 P. Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne 1680–1715*, Paris 1935 (English 1952).

15 P. Schalk (ed.), *Religion in Asien? Studien zur Anwendbarkeit des Religionsbegriffs*, Uppsala 2013.

an acculturation has to follow, which is quite often combined with a kind of religious negotiation. The chapter ends with the forced “confessionalization” of Islamic empires – in India, for example, two gurus of the Sikhs were executed – and the reform movements of the eighteenth century.

The final chapter concerns religious change in East Asia. Eugenio Menegon, expert on Chinese Christianity, writes on China, Gina Cogan, who specializes in Japanese Buddhism, on Korea and Japan. Chinese religious policy used to change not only with dynasties but even with singular emperors. Sometimes Buddhism and Daoism exerted remarkable influence, but one has to distinguish between the popular Tibetan and the rising Chan (that is Zen) Buddhism. The popular religion, with its local deities and shamanist traditions, was able to amalgamate elements of Buddhism and Daoism. In addition, there were Christian and Muslim minorities. Whereas the ancient Muslims, the Hui, were signified, the recently conquered Uyghurs remained obstinate, until today. In Korea, a Confucian dynasty replaced a Buddhist one in 1392. One consequence was the enforcement of patriarchy. Christianity originally was introduced by laymen from China. In contrast, Jesuits had created a church with numerous members in Japan, which, however, was mercilessly extinguished after 1600. From now on, the established Buddhist sects, recently complemented by Zen schools, were employed to control the subjects. The unifiers of the empire had already broken the political and military power of the big Buddhist monasteries in the sixteenth century. The Shinto deities, the Kami, were identified with the different Buddhas. Shintoism as a separate religion is a product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but pilgrimage to shrines was always an essential element of popular piety. In addition, a new Japanese political Confucianism practiced a critical attitude towards Buddhism.

The two chapters of the final section, despite or because of the promising headline “questions of method”, are rather disappointing. In the first place, Sanjay Subrahmanyam uses an imposing collection of readings from different cultures to falsify Hegel’s verdict that non-European cultures have no sense of history and therefore no historiography. Certainly, although never the Chinese, many historians from other parts of Asia used to include information on other cultures besides their own and even on Europe in their works. That is all. No further information on content and methods of the different historiographies follows. The second essay by the leading micro-historian Carlo Ginzburg is a complete stranger in the volumes, however an interesting one. An extensive philosophical investigation and a remarkable case study on the practice of censorship end with the statement that such micro-historical case studies might contribute to global history. What an exciting conclusion.

Most essays demonstrate impressive scholarship. Some are even excellent. But to enjoy some chapters does not include satisfaction with all the volumes. It looks as if papers of a conference on global and entangled history had been pasted together in a not very successful attempt to make them look coherent. Some topics are repeated again and again. Openness must not, by necessity, lack orientation as a consequence. A dose of German “Begriffsklauberei” might prove helpful. For nobody reflects on possible dif-

ferences between world history, universal history, and global history and possible useful consequences of this distinction. The terms are just used as synonyms.

Do the editors follow the lead of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which presented the monumental *History of Humanity* published from 1994 to 2008 with the statement: “This work can serve only as a history of the world and not as a universal history”? That is, an almost complete “bookbinder’s synthesis” of the histories of all peoples of the world, which uses analytical plurality to achieve “a maximum of diversity”. This relapse into positivism serves to demonstrate political distance from UNESCO’s universal *History of Mankind* published from 1963 to 1976 and prepared since 1948 with much pathos. This and other attempts to discover a common goal and meaning of human history were all doomed to fail. In 1789, Friedrich Schiller defined universal history as a selection of those historical facts and events that contributed to the formation of the present world. In the 1990s, the notion “global history” was invented for the prehistory of our economically, politically, and culturally unified world. That means, “global history” is the most recent variety of “universal history”, but this time with a solid empirical basis.¹⁶

Because of unreflected terminology, these volumes of the *Cambridge World History* oscillate between a positivistic inventory of knowledge and the attempt to trim this knowledge to a global look. Therefore, the chapters differ conceptually. The editors declare this a merit, but according to the state of affairs they had no choice. At one end, we find four chapters about processes that included the entire globe: environment and disease, Columbian Exchange and silver flow. Most contributions, however, assemble at the other end, where regional phenomena are discussed, some of them – such as Asian trade or slave trade, Christianity or Islam – with gigantic dimensions, but still regional. As a rule, these chapters insist upon interactive agency, that is they practice entangled history. But to do this they need the very cultural concepts that have been banned by Subrahmanyam in his introduction.

The chapters between these extremes are the problematic ones. The essays on the modern state and the industrious revolution are debatable because of their empirical flaws and their ideological leanings. Other chapters collect gleanings, use them to identify worldwide parallels, and then declare the result as global. For different reasons, this procedure succeeds with migration, law, and technology. In other cases, such as gender and urbanization, I am not convinced.

This has to do with the ideological bias of the work, which, in my opinion, has become obsolete in the meantime anyhow. “Europe bashing” may be too strong a terminology but it indicates the tendency very well. Axiomatically, Europe is not allowed the slightest exceptionality – as if not every country or people were in some sense exceptional. Firstly, is it obvious that Europe was not better but only different, even if comparatively late, and with mere contingency competitive advantages originated from those differences? Both

16 W. Reinhard, *Weltgeschichte, Weltsysteme, Globalisierung. Geschichtskonzept und Konzeptgeschichte*, in: *Saeculum. Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte* 63 (2013), pp. 53–69.

undebatable impulses of European origin, the modern state and the industrial revolution, are minimized as much as possible with much learning and some additional fakery. Nevertheless, the very dubious argument that their relative historical insignificance is proved by the quick takeover and improvement by others (vol. VI,1, p. 452, vol. VI, 2, p. 307) demonstrates indirectly that the ideological downgrading of Europe has become superfluous in the meantime. Because Europe's so-called achievements have been transferred to the complete property of others, with Greek philosophy and Roman law becoming European a long time ago, nobody downgrades Greeks and Romans for their achievements today.

But the most effective technique of downgrading is silence. Therefore, according to the first of the two volumes under review, Europe was not allowed to be a macro-region, England and France not large-scale political formations, and the Baltic not a crossroads region. Only the last chapter cannot avoid the European state. Significantly, the authors of the second volume cannot employ that strategy to the same extent.

Inspected closely, this anti-European attitude turns out an absurd comedy. Because besides the usual expatriates, no author from Africa, Asia, or Latin America, on the one hand, or from Germany, France, Italy, or Spain, on the other hand, is to be found among the 39 chapters. Claiming that “contemporary world and global history is overwhelmingly Anglophone, and, given the scholarly diaspora, disproportionately institutionally situated in the US and the UK” (vol. I, p. XX), the editors make dubious virtue of apparent necessity. That is to say, continuously blaming Western colonialism, at the same time American scholars are not ashamed to colonize global historiography (cf. vol. I, p. 395).