term in a much more limited sense, suggesting that the East African Asians, many of whom ended up in Britain, are 'a rare case of a really "transnational" population, devoid of strong national-political loyalties' (*Global Indian diasporas*, p. 268).

Brown rightly points out how living in the diaspora is 'an experience shot through with ambiguity and tension' (p. 148). It is an experience perhaps most successfully understood through the medium not of history or social science but of literature,[1] a subject strangely absent from both the studies reviewed. Migrants embody the quintessence of the global human experience, one that scholars might seek to understand but can never quite evoke in the same way that a singer or creative writer might.

Global migration and the world economy: two centuries of policy and performance

By Timothy Hatton and Jeffrey Williamson. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2008. Pp. 488. Paperback £18.95, ISBN 978-0-262-58277-3.

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doi:10.1017/S1740022809990210

Sometimes a book appears at just the right moment to have an impact and find a readership well beyond its particular academic specialism. A decade after they published *The age of mass migration*, Hatton and Williamson return to the same topic but with much more emphasis on recent (post-First World War) history and with a wider geographic focus. Today, as we are coming to grips with the impact of a new, more global, recession on migration, the analysis in this book contains a rich source for ideas on how it might unfold. Likewise, in terms of policy, the authors tackle lucidly the vexed question of why the OECD countries have developed policies restricting migration when the economic benefits are clearly so significant. This is undoubtedly the most significant economic history of global migration to date, containing a wealth of information and penetrating analysis. It is also entirely readable, in itself a major feat in my opinion.

It is hard to do justice to such a wide-ranging and complex analysis in a short review. The historical focus is a welcome antidote to 'presentist' accounts of migration as something particular to the late twentieth century. The authors also focus on how the earlier nineteenth- and twentieth-century patterns of mass migration are limited compared to the way in which, today, even the most remote Third World village is within reach of some OECD country or another. The widening economic gap between rich and poor countries only exacerbates the pressure on those who are able to seek work elsewhere. The argument builds up from what drove European mass emigration from the mid nineteenth century to the First World War and the impact of that emigration on inequity in the rich countries and on the poor periphery. The demise of mass migration in the following period is followed closely and related to economic trends. Then the authors turn to the impressive rise in world migration after the 1960s as part of the 'golden age' of modern capitalism. What is most noticeable is that this second wave of mass migration took place in the context of an unremittingly hostile policy environment. As the authors remark, 'imagine how much bigger those migrations would be today were we still living in the age of unrestricted migration that characterized the first global century before 1941' (p. 3).

One theme that comes across strongly in *Global migration and the world economy* is the potential gain to be made in terms of global income if migration controls and restrictions were to be freed up. For the first global century, prior to the First World War, Hatton and Williamson argue that 'World mass migration was *much* more important in contributing to income convergence than were booming world trade and booming world capital markets' (p. 3). Today this is less the case because, while migration flows are as high in absolute terms, in relative terms they are not. Nevertheless the material in this book feeds in a much-needed historical perspective to current debates on migration and development. The gains that could be made from higher levels of global free-market liberalism have refused to recognize that the arguments for free trade are the same as those for free migration. The inward-looking period between the two global centuries described by Hatton and Williamson saw a backlash against free movement of people. It is as yet unclear how serious the backlash will be in the OECD countries now, as the global slowdown takes a grip.

1 A recent example is the New York-based Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (Penguin, New Delhi, 2008). The first of a planned trilogy, it seeks to imagine the story of a shipload of indentured labourers taken from Calcutta to Mauritius in the 1830s.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022809990210 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The long view of migration compares mass migrations before the First World War and those since the Second World War. In both phases, what we now call globalization promoted the movement of people (through cheaper travel costs, for example) but also increased the development gap between sending and receiving countries. The main difference between the two periods of world history lies in the basically favourable attitude towards people movement in the first compared to the restrictions on immigration characteristic of the more recent period. So today, as globalization in its neo-liberal guise comes to a halt (or at least seriously slows down), what will be the impact on migration. Already we are witnessing a massive return of migrants to their countries of origin. In previous depressions there was always somewhere else to go, but not this time. If, as the International Labour Organization predicts, some 20 million jobs will be lost worldwide in 2009, then we can surely expect restrictions on migration to increase. Migrants will suffer, development will suffer as migrant remittances drop dramatically, and global development though increased labour mobility will be set back for a whole historical period. *Global migration and the world economy* is a must-read for any scholar, activist, or policy-maker who is interested in what history has to tell us about globalization and migration.

Small worlds: method, meaning, & narrative in microhistory

Edited by James F. Brooks, Christopher R.N. DeCorce, and John Walton. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2008. Pp. 332. Paperback US$29.95, ISBN 978-1930618-94-7.

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doi:10.1017/S1740022809990222

Twelve authors, involved in a research seminar, here offer us their views on microhistory. They come from backgrounds in history, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, and anthropology. Two things unite them: a common geohistorical frame – the Atlantic world from fifteenth-century West Africa to twenty-first-century Yucatán – and a desire to emphasize social history from below, relying on a broadly defined concept of resistance (to domination, traditional interpretations, and so forth). In this sense, writing microhistory 'can be a political act', according to the editors (p. 9).

That apart, the contributions are truly diverse, partly because of their focus and the particular examples from which they derive, but also because of the ways chosen to approach what the authors call microhistory. Three examples of this diversity will suffice. Michael Harkin (Chapter 7) focuses on the lost sixteenth-century colony of Roanoke Island, North Carolina. He puts the emphasis on landscapes, perceived as the result of communities' actions and representations, and argues for wide-ranging comparisons, for instance with 9/11 or pre-war Paris. Should we talk here about microhistory or comparative history? Meanwhile, Richard Maddox (Chapter 2) studies the Spanish transition from dictatorship to democracy, thanks to the individual itinerary of 'Juan Vargas' (a pseudonym), who was born in 1918 and lived in the small town of Aracena. Describing Vargas' experiences as a combination of conservative and radical elements, but without criticizing Vargas' discourse or telling us why it might or might not be representative, Maddox questions the idea that, during the period 1975 to 1985, 'liberal democratic institutions were firmly enough established that the country could turn decisively toward building the future' (p. 16). But should we confuse 'macrohistory' with 'conventional wisdom', or use macrohistory as a synonym for 'prevailing interpretations'? The last example relates to Christopher DeCorce's examination of the history of El Mina castle and settlement, in what is today coastal Ghana. Oral traditions, historical sources, and archaeological remains are mobilized, to describe a specific 'multi-layered perspective'. The chapter is very interesting, but is the use of multiple sources really specific to microhistory?

In their introduction, the editors write that they wish to respect the diversity of contributions, so as to illustrate that of their seminar. This intention is good in itself but it really complicates matters for the reader. The book is divided into two unequal parts: 'Interdisciplinary perspectives and concerns' (four chapters), and 'Shifting lenses, embedded scales, event, biography, and landscape' (eight chapters). These section titles, like that of the book, give the impression of a work dedicated to theory and methodology, which is not exactly the case. The collection of essays does not offer a really original

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740022809990210 Published online by Cambridge University Press