approach. Although microhistory dates back to Carlo Ginzburg's work in the 1970s, the editors nevertheless present it as something relatively new. Some chapters borrow from various scientific disciplines, which is helpful but is not really new. Some of the editors' *a priori* views are also questionable: for example, the statement that 'a historical phenomenon can become comprehensible only by reconstructing the activities of all the people who participated in it' (p. 4, citing Ginzburg). In reality, an entity cannot be understood solely by adding its different components.

In fact, what is relatively new about this book is neither the project nor the method but the contribution to the defence and illustration of microhistory, through the subtle mixture of the words 'small' and 'worlds'. This introduces the idea that microhistory opens up real and specific *worlds*. The editors are right that the classical opposition between small and large, or micro and macro, leads to an ambiguity, since a village is micro if analysed in relation to a state but macro in comparison to a household. Moreover, interesting phenomena often lie at the intersection of scales, between micro and macro. However, the examples developed in the chapters do not really intersect with macrohistory. To talk about *worlds* is perhaps a way for microhistorians to answer the challenges introduced by global and world history, but the authors seem to ignore current studies in global and world history, and to play with words is insufficient to resolve this tension.

This should not imply that the book is of secondary interest. On the contrary, each of the contributions offers interesting insights, thanks in particular to the combining of various sources. Kathleen Blee (Chapter 3) studies an incipient social movement in 2004 Pittsburgh, and notes that social movements, which are often seen in retrospect as structurally determined, are also shaped and reshaped by the contingent action of ordinary people. Dale Tomich (Chapter 11) enlightens our knowledge of nineteenth-century Cuban planters. Mary C. Beaudry (Chapter 9) reconstitutes the lives of two New England merchants at the end of the eighteenth century, and convincingly demonstrates the importance of archaeological sources for historians, who too often neglect them. In a similar manner, Linda Gordon (Chapter 8) reveals how photography, as well as the microhistorical itinerary of a photographer, can refine our vision of New Deal political culture and of the era of the Great Depression. John Walton (Chapter 6) focuses on two cases drawn from nineteenth-century California, so as to understand the social significance of arson. Thanks to an impressive processual, quantitative, and comparative analysis, borrowing at least as much from good classical social history as from microanalysis, he stresses that arson could express a method of social control and protest in frontier communities characterized by a quasi-absence of law. A similar combination of 'qualitative' and quantitative data enables Rebecca Jean Emigh (Chapter 10) to suggest that fifteenth-century Tuscan peasants could work with figures and possessed numeracy skills.

Emigh further recommends that historians should aggregate and compare microhistories. I can only agree with her, but that raises a question that brings me back to the beginning of this review: is the aggregation of multiple cases, analysed through the confrontation of various sources and quantitative data, really specific to microhistory? Reading this book, one gets the curious impression that it is now difficult for microhistory to renew itself without transforming itself radically, and even abandoning its founding concepts.

## Global lives: Britain and the world, 1550–1800

*By Miles Ogborn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. 368. Hardback £45.00, ISBN 9780521845014; paperback £17.99, ISBN 9780521607186.*

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This book considers the history of globalization over the period 1550–1800, in particular the centrality of Britain to those globalizing processes. This history is told through a distinct focus upon the lives that constituted those connections and encounters that made the linkages of global relations material and lived. Ogborn reveals the multiple and contested connections through which tentative and uncertain points of contact were eventually superseded by more certain structures. In doing so, he makes clear the inequalities of power between individuals within these criss-crossing networks. These were connections that were the product of particular lives as well as ones that acted upon lives, both of those

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that directly constituted these connections and of others who were enrolled in them.

Ogborn's introduction outlines the opportunities attendant upon restoring life to global history through the writing of lives – writings that complicate older narratives, the 'big arguments' (p. 4) that tend to gloss over the multiple connections of global processes. Following this, the book works through ten chapters, each focussing on a different set of processes and geographies of globalization over a period in which Britain became a global power. Ogborn begins by sketching out the nascent forms of globalization set in play in Elizabethan England, and moves on to consider settlement in North America, trade in the East Indies and the Atlantic, the labour of those who plied these maritime worlds as sailors, pirates, and others, the Atlantic slave trade, plantation slavery, the crusade for abolition, and the voyages of 'discovery' in the Pacific.

Each of the chapters follows a distinct structure, one where the broader processes of Britain's globalizing role are tied to and told through short biographical sketches of those who made these global connections. These lives – briefly sketched in a series of short entries prior to the introduction – are both the familiar and obvious and the less so. Thus, Elizabeth I (Chapter 2), who is shown as a key instigator of many of the motifs of globalization over this period – colonial settlement, the transatlantic slave trade, and the establishment of chartered companies – sits alongside Essa Morrison (Chapter 6), whose life was entangled with global flows on the banks of the Thames, where she met a sailor recently returned to land, James Glass. The encounter led to Glass accusing her of theft. A court finding Morrison guilty, she became part of another set of global processes, as she was sentenced to transportation to North America. These lives also demonstrate how these processes were in a state of change, how the beneficiaries of them at one point in time became marginalized and ultimately eradicated by them, as, for example, the pirate-hunter-turned-pirate William Kidd (Chapter 7). The lives told are not just British ones but also those of people they encountered. Although often much less is known of the latter, they are shown to be just as important in the mediation of the processes described. For instance, Kasi Viranni (Chapter 4), an Indian merchant, was an indispensable conduit through which, in its early years of operation, the English East India Company traded. Even though he took advantage of the Company through the high profit margins he achieved in selling goods to them, their initial lack of knowledge and connections meant that they were dependent upon him. The telling of these lives clearly demonstrates the importance of Ogborn's intention to put life back into global history, and the role that human decision and action have on what can otherwise appear as abstract processes.

The networked topography employed by Ogborn is useful in highlighting the multiple ways in which lives became global and how globalization occurred through a lived series of connections. This approach, however, also shows that the biographical necessarily needs to attend to the non-human, to objects that allow for human understandings of, and participation in, the worlds described. These objects are crucial elements of how the human subject relates to the world. It is through such human–non-human assemblages that human perception and intervention in the world are worked through, that make networks *work*. Ogborn describes the working of ships, some of 'the most complex machines of their age' (p. 147), in some detail. These were an intricate web of smaller technologies, a network in themselves, that had to be put to work if their potential for moving cargoes across distances was to be achieved (p. 146). And, of course, for others in these networks, they could hinder or reduce their potential to rework sets of connections. The interiors of ships engaged in the slave trade were designed with the intention of reducing their human cargo to the condition of any other commodity, partitions and shackles severely limiting the capacity of slaves to resist capture and transportation (pp. 212–13). Technologies can also act surprisingly, against their initial human intention. The interior configuration of these ships was later mobilized by abolitionists as an image of the inhumanity of the slave trade – a technology used to constrain being mobilized in an effort to liberate, and to end the trade (pp. 271–2). Such relations, then, are clearly central to the lives and processes sketched out in the book; they might, however, be usefully given more conceptual weight, showing agency as less human-centred and flowing through a series of connections that go beyond the human.

Written in an accessible and pithy manner, this book is an important text to those new to global history and should find its way onto the reading list of many a global history module. Each chapter ends with a useful list of 'further reading', pointing the reader to both general surveys and studies of the lives discussed. It should also appeal to the more established practitioners within the field, as an exemplary instance of how global history can be

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written differently. Reading that history through the lives of individuals, we become aware of the many and multiple processes and connections that were at play, ones that can too often be lost amid more aggregate renderings of the histories of globalization. Indeed, as Ogborn makes clear (p. 7), his account is very much a starting point, one that instances just a few of the many takes on globalization possible, and should act as a prompt for further research.

## Women in the Portuguese colonial empire: the theatre of shadows

*Edited by Clara Sarmento. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008. Pp. xxi + 304. Hardback £39.99, ISBN 978-1-84718-718-5.*

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This book is the first of its kind, and if only for that reason is a welcome contribution to the interdisciplinary study of the Portuguese empire. Comprising twenty-one essays by scholars in the fields of history, literature, law, anthropology, and Asian studies, the volume attempts to provide a corrective to the 'absence of women in Portuguese historiography ... throughout the vast Portuguese colonial and metropolitan empire' (p. xi). Although the quality of the essays is uneven, taken together they begin to illuminate the commonalities and divergences in the experiences of women – a multiply subaltern category that traverses the colonizer–colonized dichotomy – across the Portuguese empire.

The book is divided into three parts. The first section brings together seven chapters under the rubric of 'Female slavery', although one chapter ('Women's work in the fairs and markets of Luanda') details the activities of free women. The eight essays in the second section, 'Literature and female voices', address the works of Portuguese women writers, non-Portuguese women writing about the Portuguese colonies, and Portuguese male writers' representations of women in the colonies. The final section, with the catch-all title of 'Cultural behaviour', includes four historical essays on women in religious and civic institutions (the Santa Casa de Misericordia in Macau and Brazil, the Portuguese Beneficence Society in Brazil, and mystical Catholicism in Portugal); one essay on women and political power in contemporary East Timor; and a reflection on the potential for female power in patriarchal societies. Geographically speaking, the volume is weighted towards Brazil: eight essays focus on Brazil, four on Portugal, two each on Angola and Macau, one each on Mozambique and East Timor, and three on the empire as a whole or large parts of it.

What this volume makes abundantly clear is that the absence of women from studies of the Portuguese empire is not the result of their absence from the historical record. The kinds of sources that these authors draw on – newspapers, court records, sermons, maps, legal texts, annual reports, letters, and diaries; the works of travel writers and photographers, novelists, autobiographers, and poets; and oral histories and interviews with both women and men – are not all by or for or about women. Yet, read creatively and meticulously, these sources can be made to reveal much about the lives and circumstances of women. For example, drawing on advertisements for the sale or purchase or recapture of slaves, announcements of runaways and suicides, and denunciations of owners who mistreated their slaves that were published in nineteenth-century local newspapers, Maria Ângela de Faria Grillo, in her article 'Memories of slavery', evokes the conditions of life for enslaved women – as well as for the women whose menfolk owned them – in Pernambuco, Brazil. Leny Caselli Anzai's 'Contribution of the *Anais de Vila Bela* to the study of slavery in the Portuguese empire' uses a newly uncovered set of documents from a town in frontier Brazil to reveal, through accounts of the destruction of a *quilombo* (a settlement of escaped slaves), the role of African and native American women running these outlaw communities. Exactly how much the archival record can reveal about the daily life of enslaved women – and exactly where the limits of this record lie – is amply demonstrated by the essay 'Female slavery, domestic economy and social status in the Zambezi *prazos* during the 18th century', in which Eugénia Rodrigues describes the unique division of labour and social institutions that held sway on the plantations of Mozambique, where slaves were often the property of women.

But the volume also reveals as much about men as it does about women, and as much about other aspects of life in the Portuguese empire as it does about gender. Thus, the case of a divorced woman whose ex-husband has her confined against her will in the Santa Casa de Misericordia reveals not only

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