

**Barry K. Gills and Williams R. Thompson (eds)**, *Globalization and Global History* (London: Routledge, 2006), ISBN: 9780415701365.

*Globalization and Global History*, as a series of articles on the affinity of globalisation and history, is a product of theory and empiricism. By suggesting that ‘history is a matter of perspective’, (p. 2) Gills and Thompson introduce their work as human past viewed from a global perspective. However, as the introduction reveals, while the empirical knowledge presented in the book seems to focus on our human past to examine its bearings on our human present, the ultimate objective of the book is to theorise ‘our common human future’ (p. 4).

Emphasising the importance of human proximity at present, tracing the evolutionary identity formation processes throughout the past, giving credit to the genealogical affinity of humankind throughout time and space and despite colour and race, and assuming the inherent multiplicity of world histories as narrated from different perspectives, this work, as its introduction suggests, opens up a path to globalising history as a human continuum and to historicising globalisation as a human construct.

Starting from the theoretical end of the continuum, *Globalization and Global History* smoothly passes through theory to tangibly analyse human history as one single entity analysable in different sites, with varying starting points, and leading to a future where globalisation will ultimately face limits to its ever-expanding sweep. This book includes thirteen chapters (including the introduction by its editors) in 291 pages, followed by a well developed index at the end. Each chapter follows a similar introduction-body-conclusion structure, quick to follow for scholars of globalisation history and easy to comprehend for both undergraduate and postgraduate students of history.

Chapters Two to Five discuss globalisation and global histories under different theoretical lights, from opposition to Eurocentric accounts of history in Chapter Two to endorsing the empathic/ethical potential in humankind as a result of centuries of globalisation in Chapter Four, and from tracing the '*global animus*' as a fact of the ancient Greek and Roman schools of thought in Chapter Three to the wider *spectroscopy* of globalisation throughout the pre-1945 histories of world imperialism and even the *Homo sapiens* migration from Africa in Chapter Five.

Parallel to the general outline sketched in the introduction, these four chapters set their arguments in a context where a.) a definitive understanding of globalisation is yet to arise; b.) globalising trends are believed to have been in plural throughout history; c.) global history is understood as a new field of inquiry, open-ended and challenging; d.) historicising globalisation(s) provide(s) a non a priori *humanocentric* global pattern; and e.) the world system(s)' peripheries are properly studied as the forces behind every change which befall the so-called centres.

The second part of this engaging volume draws interesting and intermittent arguments from the theoretical discussions in the first part. To some extent, it departs from the contours set down in Chapters One to Five, finally to present several empirical matter-of-fact models, charts and graphs; in Chapter Six, Cioffi-Rivilla brings in his Big Collapse *multigenic model*, highlighting the four main sites of globalisation which, he believes, have interacted throughout history 'collapsing into a single highly interconnected structure with increasingly dense interaction networks' (p. 79). The next two chapters put emphasis on the world system model that Hall and Chase-Dunne had developed in 1997, namely the Integration Model. Chapter Seven devotes much of its space to delineating this model and its constituent quadruple networks (Bulk Goods, Political/Military, Prestige Goods, and Information/Cultural nets), and briefly applies it in diverse pre-capitalist

communities, from Arcadia to the USSR. Chapter Eight applies this model in a pulsating sense (growth/decline, rise/fall) to the south-western Asian world systems including Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, finally arguing that the two empires, as their empirical method demonstrates, became interconnected throughout centuries of core-periphery expansion of networks singled out in Chapter Seven.

The world system theory continues to provide the backbone of the arguments in Chapters Nine and Ten. Chapter Nine focuses on a study of the Iron Age economic pulsation in the Afro-Eurasian world between 1200 BCE to 200 CE. Largely empirical throughout, this chapter traces patterns of economic fluctuation in different Iron Age economic centres, with emphasis on such matters as proximity to centre, periods of unification and pacification, patterns of interdependency, and synchronisation of expansion/contraction cycles among centres. Still focusing on periodisation as a means to facilitate historical research, Chapter Ten tries to detail how ecological crisis in a region has historically served as a prelude to social system crises called *dark ages*. Such crises' symptoms, the chapter shows, include deforestation, climatological changes, ecological disturbances, and natural catastrophes; events which have happened throughout different phases of our human past.

Chapter Eleven draws attention to the way Phoenician (and later Genoese, Venetian and Portuguese, etc.) commercial maritime networks started a long path in globalising trade which has evolved today into digitalised communications. Defining world cities as nodes of connection, this chapter outlines a history-long global network, whose final cycle has been digitalisation. Chapter Twelve narrows its time span to the last five centuries as the starting point of globalisation (1571). Likewise, Chapter Thirteen limits its scope to world trade between 1815 and 1948. The two final chapters, in other words, take a slice of global history and focus on one aspect of it mainly: trade.

In sum, *Globalization and Global History* has its own limits, indistinct yet distinctive; its main focus, dissimilar to what is argued in its introduction, is on economic cycles, wealth, and trade networks as foundations of globalisation in the past. This notwithstanding, it should receive more credit than criticism. Well-received among historians and scholars on globalisation alike (see the back cover for five short reviews), it deservingly stands out in the *Rethinking Globalizations* series. Thick with information, facts and figures, and rich both in theory and empiricism, this volume appeared in 2006 as a pioneer in its field with remarkable depth and brevity; though a series of introductory essays on the topic, it does not remain on the surface, tackles challenging issues on multiple levels, and holds a prism to the study of our interconnected human past.

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