

*THE ATLANTIC in World History* by Trevor Burnard. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. xviii+320. £24.99.

Effective, well-written, interesting works that address theory and historiography as well as events, are relatively unusual, and academic historians in particular are apt to favour theory and historiography over clarity. For these reasons, Trevor Burnard's new book is most welcome. An experienced master of British Caribbean history, and now Professor of Slavery and Emancipation at Hull, Burnard sets out to consider interaction and does so with great success, not least in so far as the slave trade and slavery is concerned. However, there is so much more here, from war and trade to dance and religion, and, in particular, a welcome integration of elements not generally to the fore in similar work on Atlantic history. Thus, for Spanish America, we see Venezuela discussed in part in terms of the 1749 rebellion by Juan Francisco de León in what was in part a rejection of attempts to control contraband commerce. As Burnard points out, the rebellion was both in part about the evils of monopoly and corruption and important to the gradual evolution of a local creole identity.

There is a valuable chapter on the movement of things which considers, among other topics, changing trends, rum, cotton, food and material culture. There is also a perceptive chapter on the Atlantic in global consciousness. This includes a particularly insightful location of historical work. As Burnard points out, and the same point is more generally applicable, the current move against globalisation 'should make those of us who study Atlantic history take pause, as one of the characteristics of Atlantic history is that it takes historical progress towards globalisation as a given... Changes in how we view the contemporary effects of globalisation make us question whether globalisation is both inevitable and historically longstanding.' (pp. 297-8).

Burnard's discussion then moves on to a perceptive consideration of how and when best to date the onset of Atlantic globalisation, but the general point needs to be underlined, because globalisation, like its alternative transnationalism, are often cited by commentators on and of the present, whether Marxist liberal or neoliberal. The equivalent ideas can be found in other fields, such as military history, and relate in my view to contrasting usages of differing versions of modernisation theory. Now, it would be absurd to underplay the transformative character of change, but Burnard is helpful in undercutting the moralisms, Social Darwinism or other, so often applied to modernisation theory.

The book is excellent both as a teaching tool and as a short but effective introduction to cutting-edge work on the subject.

(421 words)