Transnational history: a review of past and present scholarship

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This essay reviews the development of transnational approaches within recent historical scholarship. It is intended principally as a historiographical introduction, offering an overview of relevant scholarly debates and varieties of practice. Insofar as it is a programmatic intervention, it grows out of discussions about the work the UCL Centre for Transnational History is engaged upon, and reflects the Centre's priority that transnational history should be an open field for discussion, capable of interesting historians working across a range of different perspectives, rather than a dogmatic exercise. As will be seen, this openness emerges prominently in a number of the recent accounts aimed at setting out the case for transnational history, and has been characterized as its most pronounced heuristic strength.

This essay is divided into three parts. The first and largest section examines discursive or schematic accounts of transnational history, outlines the development of transnational approaches, and sketches how these have been situated in relation to a series of related approaches, such as comparative history, 'connected histories', and world and global history. The second section discusses the variety of areas of enquiry where transnational perspectives have been taken up in practice, surveying a range of recent historical writing. The final section considers some of the ongoing debates about the future of transnational history approaches.

As a relatively recent and still developing field of study, transnational history has been noted for the diversity of approaches it encompasses, and this essay highlights some of the ways in which this looks set to continue. But this account also suggests that some salient points of scholarly consensus can be identified regarding transnational approaches. In particular, attention is paid here to how historians increasingly regard transnational history less as an outright corrective to (inter)national or comparative frames of analysis, and more as a necessary complement to them; indeed, many strands of transnational history writing can be seen as working symbiotically with national historiographies, and offering them significant research dividends. Also highlighted here are the ways in which claims about transnationalism as an inherently progressive exercise, concerned with themes such as the advance of cross-border conjunctures in their most positive aspects, are now being qualified by a greater attentiveness to counter-currents. Finally, along with documenting the case made for transnational history by its various proponents, this essay also takes a measure of areas of outstanding disagreement, and highlights the kinds of critique which transnational history has received.

While the discussion of transnational history in this essay cannot be exhaustive in its coverage, it does seek to encompass a broad range of the relevant literature. Attention here focuses on the origins and development of transnational history writing in particular, rather than tracing the history of transnational studies more generally; and for the most part the transnational history writing discussed here is delimited to works explicitly identified as such by their authors. This latter focus is not, however, intended to exaggerate the novelty of transnational perspectives: for, as will be seen, various historiographical accounts point to larger traditions of historical inquiry which can be seen as antecedents of transnational approaches.

I.

What is transnational history? No single account of the term has met with wide endorsement by historians, but a number of working definitions can be cited. For example, Akira Iriye, a prominent contributor to the development of transnational history, has proposed that it may be defined as 'the study of movements and forces that have cut across national boundaries'.[1] While commentators seem agreed that one constitutive element of transnational history is its concern with cross-border flows, it has also been observed that this does not amount to an exhaustive definition of ongoing work in the field.[2] Sven Beckert, a historian whose work focuses on the nineteenth-century United States, has provided a useful conspectus which describes transnational history as an evolving approach taking as its starting point 'the interconnectedness of human history as a whole, and while it acknowledges the extraordinary importance of states, empires, and the like, it pays attention to networks, processes, beliefs, and institutions that transcend these politically defined spaces'.[3] In this way, the idea of 'nation' referred to within the term transnational is itself often understood as encompassing a variety of kinds of political unit rather than just the nation-state.

Moreover, as has been emphasised by a number of scholars, transnational history's relativization of given state formations is not only concerned with placing these within wider contexts, or transcending them, but also seeks to recognize the extent to which they were themselves the products of the very processes of exchange and circulation on which transnational history focuses.[4] In this light, transnational history has been cast as engaging with a series of historiographical 'master narratives', and perhaps even a pioneer in the development of a new one, in that it relates closely to the history of globalization.[5]

Nevertheless, as several scholars have observed, one of the most striking aspects of the development of transnational history approaches has been the relative lack of outright manifestos for it.[6] As will shortly be discussed, much of the early development of the term 'transnational' took place in academic disciplines other than history, and its adoption and elaboration by historians has tended to be more accretive and pragmatic than programmatic. As the contemporary history scholar Patricia Clavin has noted in her discussion of the valencies of the term, transnationalism's value 'lies in its openness as a historical concept'; even so, she also cautions that some transnational approaches might be critiqued for excessive looseness or catch-all, with 'almost as many meanings as there are instances of it'.[7] It is partly on account of this very diffuseness, it has been suggested, that uptake of the term has been widespread.[8] On the other hand, this looseness has also been characterized as a potential advantage, in that it is seen as helping to assure pluralism, productive debate, and the avoidance of teleology.[9]

According to this view, transnational history is best understood as an umbrella term embracing and borrowing from a number of related approaches. Indeed, insofar as claims have been advanced for transnational history as a methodological intervention, this has

[1] Iriye 2004: 213.
[2] Van der Vleuten 2008: 978–979.
[3] Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1459.
[4] Conrad 2003: 260; Bayly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1449; Connelly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1452.
[5] Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1460; see also McGerr 1991: 1064–1065.
[6] Saunier 2008: 159–160; Tyrrell 2009: 460–461.
[7] Clavin 2005: 434, 438. See also Tyrrell 2009: 453.
[8] Haupt 2011: 174.
[9] Saunier 2006: 130–131.

tended to be limited to calls for transnational historians to demonstrate appropriate respect for — and capacity to synthesise from — pre-existing methodologies associated with national, local or regional historiographies, with these posited as essential components upon which any transnational angle must draw extensively. By the same token, specific historical sub-disciplines such as political, cultural, intellectual or business history can also be transnational, and it has been taken as a strength of transnational history that it is not bound to any single approach.[10] To the extent that a point of unity can be observed, this is consequent upon transnationalism's central interest in circulation, movement, and exchange: from which it follows that transnational history is open to a wide range of analytical approaches which correspond to these objects of study.[11] However, as will be discussed in more detail below, a number of scholarly interventions have attempted to construct more methodologically precise or discrete frameworks for specific approaches related to transnational history.

What, then, is the history of 'transnational' history? The widespread use within historical writing of the word 'transnational' and its cognates did not begin until well after the term had been launched and relaunched in a series of other contexts. In recent etymological research, the coining of the term — or at any rate its earliest known use — has been traced to the German philologist Georg Curtius's 1862 inaugural lecture at Leipzig University, which discussed the transnational language families which encompassed particular national languages; the first appearance of the term in English to have been identified came in the form of a quotation from Curtius, 'every language is fundamentally something transnational', which appeared in an anonymously-written article in 1868 for the *Princeton Review*.[12]

A divergent early usage can also be noted, in which the term was used to describe phenomena traversing a given nation rather than extending beyond its borders: an article published in 1893, for example, discussed 'a trans-national canal leading from London to Liverpool'.[13] For the early twentieth century, however, notable uses of the term in English-language contexts seem to have revolved around the notion of border-crossing, although whether those who used the term were aware of Curtius's work remains unclear. Conspicuous appearances included Randolph Bourne's 1916 essay 'Trans-National America', published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, which discussed migration and identity in the United States: 'America is coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors'.[14] Another prominent example was the work of the peace-movement publicist Norman Angell, who invoked the terms 'trans-nation' or 'trans-nationalism' several times in his book *The Fruits of Victory* (1921), especially with reference to worldwide economic integration.[15]

Subsequently, the use of 'transnational' and related terms remained occasional, before gaining greater currency when expounded — or rather reinvented — in political science during the 1970s. Particularly of note was Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye's influential work on 'Transnational Relations and World Politics' (1971), which described

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[10] Saunier 2006: 128; Saunier 2008: 167, 171–174; Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1454.
[11] Hofmeyr in Bayly et al. 2006: 1444; Saunier 2008: 177.
[12] Saunier in Iriye and Saunier 2009: 1047.
[13] Emory R. Johnson, 'Inland Waterways, Their Relation to Transportation', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 4, supplement 5 (1893), p. 95.
[14] Bourne 1916: 96. See Thelen 1999: 967–968.
[15] Norman Angell [i.e. Ralph Lane], *The Fruits of Victory: A Sequel to 'The Great Illusion'* (London, 1921); Ceadel 2009: 3, 247.

transnationalism in terms of 'contacts, coalitions and interactions across state boundaries', and put forward the notion that a transnational relationship should be seen as one where at least one of the participants is a non-national actor.[16] A further upsurge in the use of the term occurred during the early 1990s through its deployment as part of responses to globalisation in the social science disciplines, with a focus on capital flows, migration patterns, and their interrelation.[17]

Historians began to use the term widely only at around this point. Their eventual take-up of the term has been seen, in part, as a response to Akira Iriye's influential call in 1989 for new research 'to search for historical themes and conceptions that are meaningful across national boundaries', drawing on the insights of disciplines which have 'long been interested in the phenomenon of cultural diffusion and transformation' such as anthropology and sociology.[18] But, as Iriye herself has highlighted, this was a period when the adoption of the term was in effect overdetermined, with transnational history enjoying especial potential purchase within scholarship because it was consonant with changes in contemporary geopolitics and with larger debates about globalisation.[19] The impact of globalisation and new technologies upon historical research has itself been cited as an instance of a transnational dynamic in practice, and, simultaneously, as a major stimulus to the elaboration of transnational history approaches within scholarship.[20]

The first appearance of 'transnational' in a work of academic history has been credited to Laurence Veysey in 1979, writing in the context of United States history, but this intervention seems to have found little immediate echo.[21] More widespread deployment of the term can be dated from the early 1990s, when a series of major journals began to publish forums and special issues discussing transnational history, with the study of United States history again being especially prominent.[22] Transnational has also became a notable topic in German scholarship, often with reference to the new German colonial history as advanced by scholars such as Jürgen Osterhammel, and more broadly as part of a wide-ranging interest in rethinking the conceptual categories guiding study of (inter)nation histories.[23]

In appropriating transnationalism for their own use, historians have significantly changed and even inverted some of the term's political and social science significations, and brought a series of new priorities to bear. In particular, the development of transnational history studies has been associated with, and animated by, a concern to correct 'methodological nationalism' in the various forms this has taken in historical scholarship.[24] Indeed, the development of transnational history can be seen a response to the consideration that the development of history as an academic discipline has been closely linked to the consolidation of nation-states.[25] As Jim Secord has noted with reference to studies of nineteenth-century science on either side of the Atlantic, the

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[16] Keohane and Nye 1971: 331. See also Clavin 2005: 433–434.
[17] Saunier 2008: 166–167.
[18] Iriye 1989: 2, 8.
[19] Iriye 2004: 211–212.
[20] Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1455.
[21] Veysey 1979: 473.
[22] See the relevant special issues produced by the *American Historical Review* in 1991, 2006, and 2009; and those of the *Journal for American History* in 1992 and 1999.
[23] Lepenies ed. 2003; Budde et al. eds. 2006; Haupt and Kocka eds. 2009; Geyer and Paulmann eds. 2001; Osterhammel 2009. See also Saunier 2008: 163.
[24] Saunier 2008: 161.
[25] Saunier 2006: 118. See also Thelen 1999: 966–967.

national compartmentalisation of scholarship means that scholars 'have been even more nationalistic than the people we study'.[26]

To this extent, recent contributions on transnational history have often taken their cue from the historicization of nationalism associated with scholars like Benedict Anderson, and from the wider postnational or postcolonial currents with which such work has been linked.[27] As one commentator has recently summarized it, the belated nature of historians' interest turn to global and transnational questions can be seen as reflecting the extent to which such priorities challenge 'the preeminence of the very narrative framework, the nation, that provides the primary if not exclusive domain of recognized disciplinary expertise'.[28] In the context of the United States, for example, the development of professional history writing has been described as 'overdetermined by the processes of state making'.[29] This helped foster a situation where the primacy of concepts of nationalism and the nation-state for the study of modern history was too readily assumed by historians.[30]

Tied to transnationalism's aim to further the historicization of nation-states has been a continuing sense that comparative history alone was insufficient for this purpose.[31] As Jürgen Kocka has summarized, comparative approaches presuppose 'that the units of comparison can be separated from each other', but in this assumption there lies a concomitant risk of overstating and reifying the boundedness of those units, and of overlooking continuities and mutual influences across given comparanda.[32] Other commentators have more pointedly referred to the 'failure of comparative history to transcend the boundaries of nationalist historiography'.[33] In particular, critics have seen comparative history, in taking its origins from notionally discrete national units, as inextricably bound up with the idea of national exceptionalism. Often, as Iriye has noted, a comparison between given countries 'ends up reiterating their unique natures'.[34] Even endorsements of comparative approaches have lamented a commonplace tendency to fall back on nation-states as the unit of comparison notwithstanding 'their possible artificiality in relation to the subject at hand'.[35] Other accounts have highlighted the pitfalls of 'asymmetrical comparison', where the emphasis of analysis falls excessively on one side of a given comparison only.[36] Furthermore, criticism has been made of a lack of reflexivity where undertaking intercultural comparisons, identifying a tendency for comparison between given cultures to cast such cultures as monads, and so to repeat the pitfalls of reification associated with comparisons at the national level.[37]

These various problems, it has been suggested, constitute 'major methodological reasons' why comparative approaches have not greatly prospered across historical scholarship as a whole.[38] In this context, transnational history forms one of a series of terms which have developed in order to help study engagement beyond the terms of state or nation-centred

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[26] Secord 2004: 669.
[27] Anderson 1983. See Thelen 1999: 1015; Saunier 2008: 163–164.
[28] French 2011: 4.
[29] Tyrrell 1999: 1035, 1039; 1043–1044.
[30] Tyrrell 1991: 1033.
[31] Kocka 2003; Saunier 2006: 127.
[32] Kocka 2003: 41. See also Tyrrell 1999: 1035–1036.
[33] Tyrrell 1991: 1033.
[34] Iriye 1989: 5. See also Kocka 2003; Tyrrell 2009: 457; Tyrrell 1999: 1069.
[35] Grew 1990: 331. See also Tyrrell 1991: 1033.
[36] Lorenz 1999: 33.
[37] Rusen 1996: 7, 10–11; see also Bayly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1452.
[38] Kocka 2003: 42.

history, and especially so as to revise, renew or go beyond comparative approaches. Transnational history differs from comparative histories, as the labour historian Leon Fink has noted, in its emphasis on 'the supranational or subnational aspect' of the phenomena being studied.[39] Other key terms include the continuum of approaches which embraces 'world history' — concerned with the analysis of historical configurations which occur on a world scale — and 'global history', concerned with the history of globalization.[40] Furthermore, with particular reference to early modern Eurasia, Sanjay Subrahmanyham has proposed the case for 'connected histories', encompassing a wide spectrum of 'supra-local' flows across political boundaries, as an antidote to some of the pitfalls of comparative approaches.[41] In his account, historians have failed to see the contamination between the neat categories which they have adopted: nationalism 'has blinded us to the possibility of connection', and it is incumbent upon historians to seek to transcend particular area studies 'not by comparison alone but by seeking out the at times fragile threads that connected the globe, even as the globe came to be defined as such'.[42]

Further relevant work has involved complex considerations of 'histoire croisée', which has variously been translated as 'crossed' or 'entangled' histories. As proposed by Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, this 'histoire croisée' has been described as the points of crossing between different historical formations: 'intercrossing can be distinguished from intermixing'.[43] While this approach has been critiqued as somewhat over-sophisticated, it can also be seen as a symptom of a desire for greater reflexivity in relation to transnational history writing.[44] As presented by Werner and Zimmermann, this reflexivity 'is not empty formalism, but is rather a relational field that generates meaning'.[45] Also relevant in this context is the earlier work of Michael Werner and Michel Espagne on the concept of 'culture transfer', especially in Franco–German contexts: an approach which in turn has been linked to earlier interventions by Allan Mitchell and Claude Digeon.[46] According to this perspective, not all cultural differences map onto national differences: but where cultural differences do exist, they imply processes of acculturation, whose proper study requires that valorized notions of national cultural paradigms should be corrected by attentiveness to the particular economic, technological, and human vehicles of cultural transfer.[47]

That these various critical interventions have been proposed over recent decades, and by scholars working across a series of different historical periods and approaches, suggests that to some extent they draw on similar originating impulses. In other academic disciplines, advocates of a transnational turn have occasionally cast it starkly as a new paradigm superseding nation-centred patterns of organizing knowledge.[48] Historians have largely avoided such tendentious rhetoric. Jürgen Osterhammel, a leading contributor to German scholarship in this context, has observed that comparative and transnational

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[39] Fink, 'Preface', in Fink ed. 2011: x.
[40] Mazlish 1998: 387, 390, 395; Geyer and Bright 1995.
[41] Subrahmanyam 1997: 744–745, 747–748.
[42] Subrahmanyam 1997: 759, 761–762.
[43] Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 38; see also ibid.: 43. For examples of work involving *histoire croisée*, see Zimmermann, Didry and Wagner 1999; Werner and Zimmermann eds. 2004.
[44] Saunier 2006: 125–126; see also Tyrrell 2009 : 459–460.
[45] Werner and Zimmermann 2006: 49.
[46] Saunier 2008: 177.
[47] Espagne and Werner 1987: 988. Another notable invention which is significant in this context is the recent interdisciplinary 'manifesto' by Stephen Greenblatt on cultural mobility, which declares that only when 'conditions directly related to literal movement are firmly grasped will it be possible fully to understand the metaphorical movements' (Greenblatt 2010: 250–251).
[48] See Van der Vleuten 2008: 991.

approaches are not incommensurable or incompatible: rather, they 'complement one another', with many instances in recent scholarly work happily marrying the two approaches.[49]

The views of Osterhammel are perhaps particularly representative of current consensual approaches. This stands in contrast to some of the more combative claims which have been advanced for transnational history, which have treated not only comparative but also various other approaches not as complementary perspectives so much as outright rivals. Sebastian Conrad, for example, has suggested that comparative and transfer history approaches fail to escape from 'the logic of national histories', whose paradigm they in fact add nuance to and, in the final analysis, reproduce.[50] This account, in turn, has been critiqued as something of a caricature of comparativist approaches, and as symptomatic of transnational history's wider ambition to monopolise the field of history-writing beyond the nation-state.[51]

Such disagreements, however, may give off more heat than light. Most recent accounts, by contrast, are, like Osterhammel, careful to avoid prioritizing one approach above any of the others. This may also be prudent, given that, as Isabel Hofmeyr has noted, the various terms at stake are themselves 'far from stable or self-evident'.[52] Indeed, particular attempts to provide conceptual specificity have been rejected as more of a hindrance than a deobstruent: the notion, for example, that transnational analysis should examine three countries — a stipulation originating in political science discussions — has tended to be ignored by most historians in favour of including bilateral exchanges and phenomena within its rubric.[53]

Moreover, a significant implication to have followed from scholarly debate about transnational history over recent decades is that, in highlighting certain possible pitfalls with some models of (inter)national and comparative history, the development of transnational approaches has to some extent helped to inform and advance the renewal of these very fields.[54] A certain symbiosis between the various fields of study also holds, because transnational approaches require the check of comparative analysis: a transnational analysis which ignored differences between comparanda would reproduce in reverse the flaws in comparative history which transnational interventions first set out to correct.

Rather than seek to create a false hierarchy, then, many commentators agree that the various approaches aligned alongside transnational history should be seen as having certain family resemblances, in that all revolve around the study of conjunctions and divergences, share various common points of reference, or have comparable goals.[55] According to Sven Beckert, global, world, transnational and international history 'are all engaged in a project to reconstruct aspects of the human past that transcend any one nation-state, empire, or other politically defined territory'.[56] Insofar as transnational history has been delimited among these wider approaches, this has been by focussing on

[49] Osterhammel in Haupt and Kocka eds. 2009: 39.
[50] Conrad in Lepenies ed. 2003: 260.
[51] Haupt 2011: 174.
[52] Hofmeyr in Bayly et al. 2006: 1443.
[53] Clavin 2005: 430, 434; Van der Vleuten 2008: 981–982.
[54] Tyrrell 2009: 459. See also Clavin 2005: 435
[55] Hughes-Warrington 2008: 761; Saunier 2008: 163.
[56] Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1445.

its special concern with 'border crossings' and circulation.[57] By the same token — and unlike the situation with world or global history — the object of study in transnational history does not necessarily have to have world-wide purchase, so that it is possible to have 'transnational' analyses of a particular locality or nation.[58]

The elaboration of ideas about transnational history has gone hand-in-hand with the identification of debts or precursors from earlier traditions of historiography. Notably, attention has been given to how, even during the period of national history's supposed primacy, there existed various submerged or latent aspects of historical scholarship which went beyond the confines of nation-centred models. Even supposed founding figures of given national historiographies can be cited in this regard: thus, the pioneering United States historian Frederick Jackson Turner, writing in 1891, noted that 'local history can only be understood in the light of the history of the world'.[59] The methodological work of Marc Bloch on the subject of 'histoire comparée' has also been cited as a key text in the genealogy not just of comparativist but also of transnational approaches.[60] In his account, Bloch decried limited views of comparative history, whereby the point of comparison was restricted to nations or states, arguing that it was necessary to 'abandon obsolete topographical compartments in which we pretend to enclose social realities'; he also highlighted how certain 'broad causes' could be seen as affecting proximate and synchronic societies in a way which overrode their alleged topographic compartmentalisation.[61] Accordingly, while transnational history has been partly schematized around a distinction from comparative history's supposed tendency to treat national borders as a given, the implication of identifying lines of affiliation to Bloch has been to suggest that early formulations of comparativist approaches were less restrictive than were many later practices.[62]

Similarly, accounts of transnational history at the level of scholarly practice have also been able to cite the work of a range of historians and other scholars who, even at the high water mark of nation-centred historiography, can be cited as 'pioneers who had presented alternatives to the nation-centered focus of professional history'.[63] It has been noted, for example, that the historicization of the nation-state is not an insight confined to recent interventions, but rather was also one which had also been implied in influential nineteenth-century histories, such as Jacob Burckhardt's account of the state as a work of art in Renaissance Italy.[64] Another act of scholarly recovery has examined the ways in which the concerns of transnational history were prefigured in the various intellectual contributions of the nineteenth-century ethnologist Adolf Bastian; notably in his museum project, which attempted to provide a comprehensive map of global interconnections.[65]

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[57] Thelen 1999: 968.
[58] Bayly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1448.
[59] Turner, 'The Significance of History', in Turner, *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: 1961), p. 20 [cited in Bender, 'Introduction', in Bender ed. 2002: 4].
[60] Tyrrell 1991: 1038; Tyrrell 2009: 458.
[61] Bloch 1928: 44, 19 ['soumises dans leur développment, en raison précisément de leur proximité et de leur synchronisme, à l'action des mêmes grandes causes'; 'briser les compartiments topographiques désuets où nous prétendons enfermer les réalités sociales']. See also pp. 28 ['un phénomène général ne saurait avoir que des causes également générales'], 30; Sewell 1967: 211–212. There are two English translations of Bloch's text, of which the most recent is Bloch 1969: 44–81.
[62] Tyrrell 1999: 1041–1042.
[63] Thelen 1999: 969.
[64] Thelen 1999: 970.
[65] Glenn Penny 2011: 509; Glenn Penny 2007.

Beyond these more isolated examples, larger traditions of scholarship have also been invoked as forebears of transnational approaches. The *Annales* school has been highlighted for deploying perspectives where bounded national units were not given priority as frames of analysis.[66] Attention to the extensive porosity of borders to movements of capital and population was a keynote of both early twentieth-century internationalism and its critiques; and economic historians in particular have been cited as long aware that the borders of the nation state do not necessarily correspond to those of political economy.[67] Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory has been cited in this respect, with its discussion of the development since the fifteenth century of a capitalist 'world-economy' which goes beyond the boundaries between states. Equally, however, the work of other economic historians such as Patrick O'Brien has been noted as offering an important corrective to exaggerated views of the extent of international trade before the twentieth century.[68] It has been acknowledged that transnational approaches will not greatly surprise historians of the medieval period, or specialists in the history of religion, intellectual history, and the history of the book: but what makes these areas of research transnational is that they involve the translation of ideas into different contexts, and so, from this vantage point, transnational approaches have the potential to develop new connections and insights both within and between these various scholarly traditions.[69] Meanwhile, other commentators have noted that some of the most lively precursors to transnational history writing have come from scholars practicing new and non-mainstream specializations, especially the study of aspects of social history such as issues of class, race and gender.[70]

Particularly thoroughgoing attention has been given to excavating the pre-history of transnational approaches within the historiography of the United States. In a notable study of the 'global vision' of black history writing in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Robin D. G. Kelley has identified a series of attempts 'to write transnational history before such terminology came into being'. In this analysis, the same forces which 'compelled these scholars to look to the world' also contributed to their relative low profile within wider scholarship.[71]

In this way, studying prefigurations of transnational approaches brings out how relatively recent and brief the primacy of nation-centred perspectives has been, and the extent to which this primacy was never uncontested.[72] In some accounts, indeed, transnational history is figured less in the light of a new approach and more as an act of scholarly recovery and reuse of 'inquiries, experiences and narratives' proposed by nineteenth and twentieth-century historians: with such a lineage, as Pierre-Yves Saunier, a prominent French commentator, has declared, it is 'just not possible to claim to have reinvented the wheel'.[73] More broadly, this persistence of what can retrospectively be identified as transnational currents in history writing has itself been understood as seen as but one facet of larger historical persistencies in terms of myriad practices of 'transnational connections and global connections' even amidst the rise of nationalism.[74]

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[66] Tyrrell 1991: 1038. Other commentators have questioned whether the *Annales* historians lived up to their claims to transcend the nation, since their work remained largely centred on France: see Lorenz 1999: 32; McGerr 1991: 1060.
[67] Iriye 1989: 6–7; Clavin 2005: 432, 435.
[68] See Tyrrell 1991: 1042–1043, 1045–1046.
[69] Saunier 2004: 111.
[70] Tyrell 1999: 1037, 1042; Saunier 2008: 162.
[71] Kelley 1999: 1063–1064. See also Tyrrell 1999: 1018.
[72] Thelen 1999: 969.
[73] Saunier 2008: 161–162. See also Clavin 2005: 433–434.
[74] Glenn Penny 2011: 509.

This identification of more substantive antecedents for transnational history approaches within historiographical traditions has gone hand-in-hand with a greater level of nuance in the kinds of claims made about it as a historiographical intervention. In particular, even if transnational history can be seen as part of a larger project of historicizing the nation and the national, this does not make it inherently antagonistic to the study of nations and states. Instead, as numerous scholars have emphasised, an especial advantage offered by transnational approaches is their efficacy in enabling better delineation and comprehension of considerations relating to state power.[75] In this way, Patricia Clavin notes that studying transnational communities of merchants and criminals can serve to emphasise how 'particular groups exploit and work to sustain national boundaries because they profit from their honed ability to cross them'.[76] By the same token, transnational perspectives have a valid role in a more negative guise, in that they can help reveal the failure of certain kinds of border-crossing endeavours.[77] In some cases, this can serve to highlight the extent to which given states were able to police their material and cultural boundaries. In this connection, Beckert has suggested that one fruitful topic for transnational history would be to study 'the global spread of nationalism'; the corollary of this, in the utility of transnational approaches for the study of ideologies of 'internationalism', is a research agenda which has already been taken up extensively.[78] As Osterhammel has remarked with relation to scholarship in Germany, while transnational history and its neighbouring approaches can be seen as complementary, and indeed used in combination, this emphasis on a plurality of perspectives should also embrace a respect for the enduring value of national history writing: as transnational history approaches should not be seen as innately superior or preferable to national ones.[79]

With this greater sophistication in how transnational history approaches have been conceptualized, there has also come a greater sense of the full research agenda which the term implies. Recent commentators have also emphasised that transnational approaches should not be restricted to a focus on progressive themes, while acknowledging that such positive causes have tended to be over-represented in scholarly studies which have appeared to date. Saunier has noted that connections and circulations have tended to be valorized positively, and sees this as underpinning why more historical study has been given to concerns such as 'the travels of democracy than to the open and underground ties between dictatorships; to the flows of relief rather than to those of corruption'.[80]

According to this view, transnational history can be characterized as having sought, in some of its earlier iterations, to legitimate and sustain itself by reference to a modish and teleological enthusiasm for globalization, cast as a public good.[81] Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, for example, points to signal omissions from the Iriye and Saunier's *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* (2009), notably its reticence in tackling themes relating to the numerous mechanisms of exclusion which formed the counterparts to dynamics of transnational inclusion. Haupt ascribes this tendency to a somewhat celebratory or progress-minded frame of reference in the selection of topics for discussion.[82] But in fact these dangers are also recognized to a large extent by contributors to transnational history

[75] Thelen 1999: 972; Rüger 2010.
[76] Clavin 2005: 423, 430, see also 436.
[77] Clavin 2005: 424.
[78] Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1446; Tyrrell 1991: 1050, 1053. See also Tyrrell 1991: 1070–1071.
[79] Osterhammel in Haupt and Kocka eds. 2009: 39–40.
[80] Saunier 2008: 169–170.
[81] Clavin 2005: 424.
[82] Haupt 2011: 178–179.

scholarship.[83] In this way, Isabel Hofmeyr has cationed against 'an over-reliance on a "grand narrative" of domination and resistance'.[84] As Saunier has put it, while one of the 'obvious' aims of transnational history is 'to contribute to historicize what we call globalisation by a careful and detailed study of connections in the modern era', nevertheless, by the same token, there is a risk that transnational history may become the handmaiden of globalisation, 'just as national historical scholarship contributed to legitimisation of the nation state'.[85]

II.

What kinds of transnational histories, then, have been written to date, and what is the shape of current scholarly work? Numerous commentators have noted that a disproportionate amount of scholarly attention has been given to debating ideas about transnational history rather than the business of empirical research.[86] In part, this has been attributed to the relative infancy of transnational history.[87] Nevertheless, as will be seen here, there have been several areas of notable strength in recent empirical work, even if the wider picture remains somewhat patchy. Discussion in this section will canvas two areas in particular: first, a case-study focus on the activities of historians associated with the UCL Centre for Transnational History; second, a survey of the wider historiography picture.

Established in 2007, the UCL Centre for Transnational History (CTH) can itself be seen as an institutional confirmation of — and further contribution to — the development of transnational history. Having a research hub built around transnational history has provided a focus for collaborations between colleagues working on a diverse range of themes, and across disciplines extending well beyond History alone, who might otherwise not have encountered each other's work; it has also provided a nexus for engagement with visiting scholars. More specifically, while the Centre for Transnational History provides a forum for bringing together a variety of existing threads of research, it also seeks to develop new lines of enquiry. In particular, it has been a major contributor to recent expansions in the field of interest of transnational history, and especially the development of transnational approaches so as to encompass a more far-reaching challenge to nation-state teleologies. As has been noted, an elaboration of the scholarly purchase of the term 'transnational history' is now well underway, so that its earlier focus around non-governmental activities across borders in the context of the twentieth-century has become just one of many areas of research which it now embraces.

The activities of the Centre for Transnational History were showcased in a major international conference which it hosted in April–May 2010, 'Rewriting Histories — The Transnational Challenge'. Presentations at this conference ranged in focus from methodological to empirical concerns; with topics covered stretching chronologically from the eighteenth century to the present day, and encompassing a range of subfields including the histories of art, ideas, medicine, and science. More recently conference ventures in which the Centre has been involved have included the major Rousseau tercentenary conference held at UCL in 2012, and it also hosts an active programme of

[83] Saunier 2008: 164, 169–170.
[84] Hofmeyr in Bayly et al. 2006: 1450. See also Kozol, ibid.: 1450; and Bayly, ibid: 1456.
[85] Saunier 2006: 128; see also Saunier 2008: 169–171.
[86] Beckert in Bayly et al. 2006: 1446; Clavin 2005: 434.
[87] Connelly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1457; Beckert in ibid.: 1459.

graduate study, workshops, and colloquia.

In combination with its activities as a forum for the exchange of ideas, the Centre has also been developing its involvement in the publication of research. Notable recent projects associated with Centre participants have included the 'East Looks West' research into East European travel writing on Europe, directed by Wendy Bracewell and her colleagues, a programme of work which has resulted in several books to date. Representations of the United States has been another area of focus, for example with Axel Körner, Nicola Miller and Adam Smith's recent work on *America Imagined: Explaining the United States in Nineteenth-Century Europe and Latin America* (2012).

Other scholars associated with the Centre have drawn attention to the importance of links between transnational and international fields of study: major interventions include Sarah B. Snyder's *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (2011). Meanwhile, more established fields of transnational studies, such as non-government actors involved in cross-border activities around the interwar period, have also been a focus of attention for scholars with connections to the Centre: notable examples of such work include the recent edited volume by Daniel Laqua, *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (2011), a work which highlights how far internationalism was enabled by transnational agents.

A further emphasis in transnational history as practised by scholars associated with the CTH has been on the travelling of ideas as constituting a transnational area of study. This differs somewhat from the 'traditional' transnational history approaches, but remains an area with potential to be developed. One of the advantages of this approach is that it allows for engagement with the longstanding interests of historians specialising in the study of ideas: the work of Avi Lifschitz, *Language and Enlightenment: The Berlin Debates of the Eighteenth Century* (2012), provides an emblematic case of this kind of work. Other researchers associated with the Centre work on related areas of study involving news networks, book history, and translation.[88]

In particular, transnational approaches to the history of ideas are concerned with taking seriously the questions of the reception, negotiation and appropriation of given texts as they cross cultural and linguistic boundaries. Work of this kind, highlighting how new contexts change the way in which ideas are deployed and understood, seeks to go beyond a focus on the study of canonical texts in their isolated initial contexts; this approach of course draws on the work of earlier critics such as Hans Robert Jauss, but also engages with and contributes to a variety of transnational approaches. In this regard, transnational history offers a kind a kind of radical contextualization; and this kind of approach stands as much for literary, musical and artistic representations as it does for the history of ideas narrowly understood.[89]

The work of scholars associated with the UCL Centre for Transnational History, then, offers a case study of current trends in scholarship, complementing and extending wider dynamics in the field of transnational history studies. Other key aspects of the Centre's remit include graduate teaching, notably through its interdisciplinary MA in Transnational Studies. At an institutional and organizational level, the Centre is perhaps the most prominent of a series of developments which have helped better situate transnational history on the scholarly map. Other notable steps in this regard include

[88] Peacey 2010; Gusejnova 2012; Macdonald 2013.
[89] Miller 2007; Körner 2011.

recognition in academic publishing: transnational history is now represented through at least one dedicated monograph series, edited by Akira Iriye and Rana Mitter.[90]

It is a measure of the sophistication of the wider field of current transnational history work that any attempt to provide an overview is bound to be somewhat selective. Nevertheless, several salient characteristics can be usefully highlighted. Perhaps the most substantive use of transnational approaches has been by scholars working from a series of different national contexts who have used transnational history so as to de-centre the nation-state, an approach dubbed by Saunier as 'national reasons to go transnational'.[91] This approach has been particularly extensive in relation to the historiography of the United States, with notable recent contributions including surveys by Thomas Bender and Ian Tyrrell.[92] These more panoramic studies build on a series of more specialist interventions: Daniel Rodgers, for example, has reviewed the New Deal in transnational perspective, indicating how far it was part of larger patterns whereby progressive ideals were put into practice in varying national contexts.[93]

Similar work has also been undertaken for other national historiographies: among the most prominent recent examples has been that of Osterhammel, whose work highlights the impact of transnational considerations on German history during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[94] Further notable recent contributions from German scholarship include edited volumes such as Martin Geyer and Johannes Paulmann's *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (2001), and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka's *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (2009). From other scholarly centres, the work on the history of Australia associated with Ann Curthoys and Marylin Lake might also be noted.[95]

Twentieth-century globalisation, it has been argued, has developed in tandem with growth of the state, but also with the elaboration of transnational practices. States, according to this view, have continued to provide key sorting houses for transnational exchange networks and practices, even while these activities have also had dynamics of their own and have impacted closely upon the configuration of states.[96] In particular, transnational approaches have been cited as key to the ongoing renewal of the historiography discussing the development of European institutions from the mid-twentieth century.[97] More generally, interest in questions of European integration has been seen as a key stimulus in fostering a series of studies of transnational relations in Europe at the level of technology and migration patterns.[98]

Particular causes, such as the temperance movement, have also received dedicated study.[99] International non-government organizations and causes coordinated across

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[90] The *Palgrave Macmillian Transnational History Series*, launched in 2006, and with twenty-two volumes published to date.
[91] Saunier 2008: 163.
[92] Bender 2006; Tyrrell 2007; Bender ed. 2002.
[93] Rodgers 1998.
[94] Osterhammel 2009. An English translation is due to be published by Princeton University Press.
[95] Curthoys and Lake eds. 2005.
[96] Geyer and Bright 1995: 1054, 1056–1057.
[97] Saunier 2008: 179–180; Kaiser, Leucht and Rasmussen eds. 2008.
[98] Tyrrell 2009: 454; Saunier 2008: 178; Van der Vleuten 2008; Van der Vleuten et al. 2007; Van der Vleuten and Kaijser eds. 2006.
[99] Tyrrell 1991.

borders have been the objects of substantive study.[100] For example, a rich stream of recent work by scholars including Matthew Evangelista and Sarah Snyder has focussed on transnational groups during the Cold War, such as the peace movement and human rights activism; this growing body of research indicates how far such groups were not simply peripheral idealists, but rather need to be integrated into historians' assessments of international questions.[101] Transnational approaches have provided a new lens for the writing of histories of intellectual life across borders; the work of Jonathan Israel in the context of Enlightenment studies has been particularly prominent in this debate.[102]

Work on borderlands, migration and diasporas more broadly has been a further abiding interest of empirical research involving transnational history approaches, and seems set to remain a major focus of transnational history.[103] Studying migrant communities through a transnational prism has involved attention not to their role in relation to one place — as emigrants from their place of departure, or as immigrants to their 'host' societies — but a sense of the interaction of these two dynamics, and wider relevant fields. Notable work in this context includes the studies by Donatella Gabbaccia on Italian migrant connections, especially but not only within the United States.[104] Chinese diasporas have also received substantial 'transnational' attention, for example in the work of Madeline Hsu and Adam McKeown; a further relevant scholarly tradition which is relevant in this context is the study of Jewish diasporas.[105] Other studies have considered particular racial categories in transnational terms.[106]

Alongside this interest in the movements of different kinds of travellers and migrants, a growing related body of scholarship has focused on involuntary movements of people, with studies of the slave trade, prisoners of war, the transportation of convicts, and other constrained trajectories.[107] In tandem with this, the development of larger transnational systems — of commerce, administration and technology — which animated such constrained movements of peoples is also receiving renewed critical attention.[108] Much of this work seeks to overcome a double pattern of historical forgetfulness: not only reconstituting transnational exchange, but highlighting its most rebarbative and often overlooked aspects.

These areas of work bring transnational history into dialogue with social history traditions. It has also been observed that adopting a transnational perspective in studies of human circulation across borders brings out individual trajectories which are 'almost invisible if the nation is the unit of observation'.[109] The work of Marcus Rediker on Atlantic piracy and traders during the first half of the eighteenth century has been cited as a notable example of a 'transnational cultural system' involving non-elite historical actors.[110] A growing scholarship now revolves around transnational labour movements.[111]

This emphasis on the role of the individual and social groups has been highlighted by

[100] Saunier 2008: 169–170.
[101] Evangelista 1999; Snyder 2011.
[102] Charle, Schriewer and Wenger eds. 2004; Israel 2006: 1–42.
[103] Bayly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1461.
[104] Gabaccia and Iacovetta eds. 2002.
[105] Hsu 2000; McKeown 2001; Benton and Gomez 2007.
[106] Marble and Agard-Jones eds. 2008.
[107] Recent examples include: Christopher, Pybus and Rediker eds. 2007; Way 2011.
[108] See, for instance, Maier 2006.
[109] Saunier 2006: 120; see also Thelen 1999: 967
[110] Rediker 1987; Tyrrell 1991: 1051. See also Bracewell 1992.
[111] Van der Linden 2003; Fink ed. 2011.

scholars as a salient characteristic of transnational approaches. For example, Patricia Seed emphasises that transnational history's primary contribution is to track migratory phenomena, but above to follow the movements of people.[112] Similarly, Patricia Clavin stresses that transnationalism is 'first and foremost about people: the social spaces they inhabit, the networks they form and the ideas they exchange'. As a field of study, Clavin highlights that it is also inscribed as part of a larger attention to understand 'the international architecture of the modern world' by making distinctions between inter-, trans- and supra-national power considerations, and the relations between them.[113] Meanwhile, the work of Matthew Connelly has examined how and when notions the measurability or even controllability of 'world population' began to circulate.[114]

The development, especially during the twentieth century, of transnationalism regimes of power, often predicated on the elaboration of communications and control systems, has also been highlighted; relevant areas of research — albeit not always themselves using the label 'transnational' — have included study of the gold standard, futures markets, and maritime power projection.[115] Some of the most ambitious work of this kind has been as much a contribution to world history as to transnational history, for instance James Belich's recent study of international flows in capital and migration in an 'anglo-world' embracing both the British empire and the United States over the course of the nineteenth century.[116]

Finally, the dynamic and somewhat uneven state of the field of transnational history writing in terms of empirical work has had the advantage of making more apparent where new research interventions might profitably be focused. Scholars have highlighted a series of understudied or overlooked research avenues for transnational history, both in terms of its conceptualization and its fuller application. A number of themes which have been the subject of exploratory work look likely to continue to be active research areas. For example, it has been argued that transnational approaches have particular relevance to the study of the history of the environment and of ecology.[117] Other areas of current research which seek to fill acknowledged lacunae in transnational history approaches include, for instance, work examining non-progressive themes such as the politics of the extreme right.[118]

III.

Finally, what are the open questions and areas of outstanding disagreement about transnational approaches? Much of this article has focused on the proponents of transnational approaches. However, as has been noted, substantive critiques have been directed at transnational history writing as a whole, both in terms of its principles and its practice, and these are worth reviewing in closer detail. The kinds of transnational histories which have been written to date partly reflect its appeal as a way of revising or challenging existing categories of analysis. However, transnational approaches — or, more particularly, specific advocates' accounts of it — have been challenged for

[112] Seed in Bayly et al. 2006: 1443.
[113] Clavin 2005: 422, 424–425.
[114] Connelly 2006a; Connelly 2006b.
[115] Geyer and Bright 1995: 1047.
[116] Belich 2006. See also Tyrrell 1991: 1047.
[117] Tyrrell 1991: 1048–1049. See also Tyrrell 1999.
[118] Mammone 2008.

caricaturing and seeking to supersede comparative history, and for jettisoning valid factors of national distinctiveness and undermining 'nation-centered historical writing'.[119] With these tendencies, it is suggested, can come a tendency to create a 'false antagonism' by mischaracterizing opponents as small-minded exceptionalists or provincial, as opposed to transnational historians' greater progressiveness. Meanwhile, the claims of transnational interventions both to historiographical novelty and to critical substance have also been questioned. In this way, one notable critic has asserted that, notwithstanding its various advantages, transnational history seems in effect 'to offer another means of avoiding the realities of nationalism and of national power'.[120] Transnational history has also been seen as excessively focused on social and cultural history at the expense of economic history.[121] The too-ready use of the term has also been cautioned against: Ostermannel, for instance, has noted that religion can be seen as a key worldwide communication network during the nineteenth century, but argues that it would be 'banal' to describe such a network, which predated and outlived many nineteenth-century nations, as transnational.[122] Meanwhile, as has been argued earlier in this article, transnational history is not bound to modern nation states as they emerged in the nineteenth century.

In a recent critique, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt suggests that examples of transnational history writing in practice often fail to live up to their own claims: and, in particular, that they overstate the efficacy of the transnational phenomena they document, assuming rather than demonstrating their valency within given contexts. According to this assessment, identifying connections is only one part of the task at stake: beyond indicating, for example, that ideas crossed borders, transnational historians need also to show how far they penetrated into the larger political and social practices.[123] This, however, is less a critique of transnational approaches in themselves than of the conclusions drawn by particular studies; and, of course, as Haupt also notes, transnational history approaches are not in fact only of interest when showing impact, but can also be of value in enabling better delineation of the limited impact or failure of cross-border conjunctures.

Other scholars have also highlighted the particular difficulties posed by the challenge of writing transnational history. Chris Bayly highlights that writing transnational history often requires the use of a wider variety of kinds of analysis than may suffice for the study of aspects of national or regional history: in particular, transnational accounts of the origin of change may need to heed the changing dynamics of a whole series of different 'drivers' — which might relate to the role of the state, or of economy or ideology — rather than emphasising just one prism of analysis.[124] Along the same lines, Matthew Connelly has noted that a transnational narrative cannot be arranged 'around one centre, or give all agency to one set of protaganists, which make it inherently more challenging'.[125] Connelly cautions against transnational history limiting itself, by inference from its connections with cultural studies, to explorations of representation and identity, 'rather than actually explaining why some are rich and others are poor, and why we have war or peace'.[126]

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[119] McGerr 1991: 1056; Haupt 2011: 174–175.
[120] McGerr 1991: 1066.
[121] Tyrrell 2009: 466.
[122] See Penny 2011: 507
[123] Haupt 2011: 180.
[124] Bayly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1450; see also Bayly 2004: 469; Glenn Penny 2011: 505–506.
[125] Connelly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1458; see also Seed in ibid.: 1458.
[126] Connelly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1452–1453; see also Beckert in ibid.: 1453–1454.

Scholars have also debated how far the term transnational can be used with reference to border-crossings for the pre-modern period. The term 'nation' itself, of course, changed meaning throughout the early modern and modern periods. According to one account, only with the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 can nation-states be see to have emerged as 'important phenomena in world history', so making it possible to begin discussing transnational history.[127] Conversely, historians of early modern Europe have highlighted that to moor the development of states and nations around the touchstone date of 1648 has become problematic in the light of recent scholarship; and it has been suggested that transnational phenomena were so ubiquitous in the early modern period as to be almost unremarkable.[128] In this way, while debates about the periodization of transnational history are entangled with larger debates about when nations and states can be said to obtain especial analytical validity and purchase, there is neither consensus nor agreement about what the implications of this are.

Moreover, it has also been remarked that much transnational history has little to do with nation-states as such, but rather deals with considerations below, beyond or beside them — for example, the history of ideas or of non-governmental institutions.[129] To this extent, it may be in fact be entirely plausible to use transnational approaches to consider state formations and political units pre-dating the nation-state itself. The anachronism of a critical term, as Patricia Seed and Isabel Hofmeyr have noted, is not an automatic bar to its utility as a heuristic tool: in this way, 'transnational' can arguably join terms such as 'race', 'class' or 'postcolonial' in being of value for the study of periods of the past which did not have these precise concepts.[130] As William Sewell has observed, while 'transsocietal processes are certainly more prominent in recent history than previously, they are hardly new'.[131] And, of course, figurations of both 'nation' and 'state', as concepts and as a set of practices, predate the nation-state of the modern period. Arguably, whatever precise terminology is adopted, it is useful for historians from a range of different periods to be able to draw on shared concepts, vocabulary, and larger historiographical debates which consider questions which run across state formations; the advantages of this, when properly historicized, may outweigh the potential pitfalls. Indeed, Seed emphasises that 'the shared vocabulary of the present — employed to subtly compare with the past — remains one of the methodologically central mechanisms of the cohesion of history, for it allows members of the profession to share a common ground rather than to fragment'. In this way, transnational history is a topic which 'allows us to follow migratory phenomena under a common rubric'.[132]

Finally, a series of further research priorities have also been outlined by recent scholarship. Clavin has noted that transnationalism's contribution to the development of twentieth-century regional organisations and identities is strikingly little-studied.[133] Chris Bayly has highlighted that 'a fuller transnational history of ideas' is a particularly pressing and potentially highly fruitful area for early modern and modern history. In particular, Bayly emphasises the need to study 'the lived experience of those ideas' and to go beyond elite-subaltern binaries, so escaping from the notion that ideas were 'simply disseminated' from the West: 'we need to see how liberalism, Marxism and other systems of ideas were transformed and often deepened or generalized in extra-European and

[127] Tyrrell 2007: 3; see also Tyrrell 2009: 454.
[128] Duindam 2010: 610–611. See also Fisch 2001: 237.
[129] Saunier 2004: 111.
[130] Seed in Bayly et al. 2006: 1442.
[131] Sewell 1999: 55.
[132] Seed in Bayly et al. 2006: 1442–1443.
[133] Clavin 2005: 432.

extra-American settings. This, rather than a search for "authentic" indigenous culture, is a productive way of "provincializing Europe".'[134] Similarly, Matthew Connelly highlights that the transnational history of ideas needs to be studied in tandem with the tangible effects of the circulation of those ideas: examining how, for example, ideas about caste, class, race, or reproduction shaped 'policies and programs that had life-and-death consequences for millions'.[135]Many of these proposals can be seen as fitting in with a broader shift in emphasis in transnational approaches: while transnational history initially functioned a challenge to international history, it can now also be seen as of value as a challenge to national history. It is in this vein that Thomas Bender has highlighted the importance of attending to 'the transnational nature of national histories'.[136] A variety of work — such as the recent contributions of Maurizio Isabella, Dominique Kirchner Reill, and Ilham Khuri-Makdisi — now exists which emphasises the shallowness and teleology of particular national historiographies for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and nationalism itself, in common with other international movements, has thus begun to be studied within transnational perspective.[137]

Arguably, the ultimate demonstration of the success of transnational approaches would be for them to become second nature to historians engaged in a wide variety of research areas. As Jim Secord has indicated, in his appeal for greater attention to the 'transit of knowledge' in the field of the history of science, the best tribute to the adoption of such perspectives could be their incorporation to be seamless: 'Historians have a tendency to neutralize fundamental challenges by creating new subdisciplines that allow their advocates to work while minimizing their impact'.[138] On the other hand, it has also be argued that historiographical concepts 'are judged by their ability to inspire new research'; and by this measure it would seem that transnational history is very far from having exhausted its capacity to animate new debates and interventions.[139] The diversity of terms which share a measure of common ground with transnational history may constitute a further indication that these historiographical debates retain their currency and are far from over.[140] As has been reviewed in this brief survey, transnational history can be seen in practice to offer a series of innovative possibilities, and its future may be as great as its past.

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[134] Bayly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1452, 1461.
[135] Connelly in Bayly et al. 2006: 1453.
[136] Bender 2006: ix.
[137] Khuri-Makdisi 2010; Reill 2012; Isabella 2009.
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