

ic tale” (98), and the “family saga” (102). Although she is clear about her motives for doing so, I remain uncomfortable reading this section. As she notes, the internal rifts and conflicts, the shifting alliances, the often unsuccessful attempts to deal with issues of sexual, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity all constitute a history that many white, middle-class women involved in early feminist collectives will undoubtedly recognize. And it is, of course, vital that feminists take responsibility for past mistakes and learn from history and experience. At the same time, I feel some empathy for the women whom Davis interviewed, especially the older women. They cannot undo what they did in the 1960s and 1970s, and at times I feel that their story is being held up as a kind of negative moral exemplar, and their actions scrutinized through a twenty first century lens—and, unsurprisingly, found deficient.

Chapter four presents a valuable discussion of the ways in which *OBOs* could bridge the gap between feminist body theory and feminist health activism—a gap that Davis and other feminist theorists aptly attribute to postmodernist body theory and its abstract and esoteric concepts. She makes a convincing argument for the future role of *OBOs* in “contributing to a transnational feminist body theory and a transnational feminist politics of health” (141). Overall, I would strongly recommend this book for university courses on women’s health, women’s history, transnational feminism, and feminist activism.

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**Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2006).**

In *History and Cultural Theory*, Simon Gunn provides a grand overview of theoretical issues that historians have been faced with from other disciplines over the past three to four decades, as well as issues which theoreticians from other disciplines have identified as having to do with historians. Therein, after a general discussion in the first chapter about the nature and character of these issues, Gunn addresses narrative, culture, power, modernity, identity and postcolonialism on a chapter by chapter basis. Laudably, Gunn’s approach in discussing these topics is to address them not only as individual thematics, but also as interlinked issues constituting the milieu of late twentieth and early twenty-first century human scientific theorizing. In *History and Cultural Theory*, many if not all the important figures are present: Foucault, Ricoeur, Bourdieu, Geertz, Said, Bhaba, White, Derrida, Butler and so on. Indeed, Gunn explains their ideas in a very straightforward, readable manner. The scholarly level is high in *History and Cultural Theory*, but Gunn is concerned to keep his vocabulary direct so that the historian who might be a bit less-attuned to the philosophical and otherwise interdisciplinary issues surrounding historical studies might be able to follow them and be brought up to

date. Gunn has thus produced a highly useful volume.

There are some issues with Gunn's book. Firstly, he does not make it clear whether in fact he is targeting such an audience, or whether he imagines his book as a more dramatic theoretical statement in itself. The general manner of the book's presentation—that of a kind of topography of “theory” issues with which the historian might come into contact—suggests the former. Gunn's conclusion to the book—that theorizing about history will lead to a heightened sense of the past's relevance for the present—is simply too weak to be satisfactory if his goal is the latter, i.e., adding in a meaningful way to the theoretical debates surrounding historical studies themselves.

Secondly, one might wonder a bit at Gunn's use of the term “cultural theory.” Generously, Gunn defines his book's central concept (cultural theory) as the larger collection of theories related in various ways to postmodernism (x). As it turns out, however, culture as such is but one facet of what he terms “cultural theory,” as opposed to being the object that a specific set of theories from a wide variety of disciplines attempts to define. Depending on one's own academic background and (inter)disciplinary positioning, this can give *History and Cultural Theory* a bit of an odd ring at times. Having spent time myself, for example, considering the relationship between cultural studies and history, my own expectation with the term “cultural theory” is that the book would have to do with the more philosophically oriented dimensions of the cultural studies movement—i.e., the now more or less globalized field whose origins lay in the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies and the University of Birmingham. Gunn certainly mentions cultural studies, and many of the thinkers he addresses have been influential in cultural theory as practiced in the context of that field. However, Gunn has something broader in mind whereby, again, “cultural theory” is perhaps better understood as just “theory,” or a broad swath of issues that theoretically-minded historians and historically-minded theoreticians have been discussing since the late 1960s.

Finally, given this point, there are a couple of issues and figures that might be considered as surprisingly absent from *History and Cultural Theory*. The non-presence of Hans-Georg Gadamer is one example. As such, Gadamer may not fit as neatly under some of the different section headings Gunn uses as other thinkers (would he be best placed, for example, as contributing to “narrative,” “culture” or “identity”?). However, if phenomenologically-influenced and hermeneutically-concerned figures such as Ricoeur may be included in a survey of theoretical issues surrounding history, surely Gadamer deserves to be there as well. Moreover, Frank Ankersmit—elevated to the status of Dilthey and Collingwood as a philosopher of history in Martin Jay's *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (2004)—would be considered by many to be one of the premier theorists of narrative in historical studies. As such, he plays a surprisingly minor role in Gunn's section on the issue; indeed, many would consider him second to none, even in a line-up including White and Ricoeur. And

though he points a bit to the issue by way of his address to postcolonialism, Gunn does not devote any explicit space to intercultural comparative historiography—an increasing theoretical concern in historical studies brought largely to the fore by Jörn Rüsen, and justly so, given the increasingly globalized state of humanistic academics, including historical studies.

Nonetheless, Gunn covers an impressive amount of theoretical ground in *History and Cultural Theory* and has generated an eminently useful book for both beginning graduate students and established scholars looking to ensure that their theoretical fluency is more or less up to date and in tune with scholars who specialize in such issues. *History and Cultural Theory* should thus have a place on the bookshelves of many historians and on more than a few of their colleagues' in other departments who see their interests as related to theoretical issues in historical studies.

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