Book Reviews

Lynn Hunt. *Writing History in the Global Era*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2014. Pp 208. Paper $25.95.

In *Writing History in the Global Era*, the late UCLA History Professor Lynn Hunt, argues that globalization should be embraced as a new paradigm to meet the rising need for a reinvigorating method that encompasses and addresses the global reality of "interconnected and interdependent" relationships across the world. Paradigms are theoretical models that guide historical research and their shifting effects are vital to explore as our world continues to change. More than a trend in academia, globalization is changing the way that history interacts with established historical narratives. Such a new paradigm is needed to help historical theories break away from the fading grip of much criticized existing paradigms that have resulted in limiting our understanding of history in a "global era."

Hunt lays out her argument in four chronological chapters outlining shifting relationships with changing political, social and cultural realities. Her examples at times may seem too general and wide-ranging and might benefit from a deeper historiography. However, she is honest about her intended generalizations, explaining that she does so to establish a general understanding of her examples.

Although she cites various historians like Benedict Anderson and Dipesh Chakrabarty, she does not offer a detailed description of how their work is essential to her argument. Her opening chapter, "Rise and Fall of Cultural Theories" offers a general summary of some of the most common approaches to

history as well as their shortcomings. She explores the history and contributions of the leading four paradigms in history (Marxism, modernization, the *Annales School*, identity politics) as well as how emerging cultural theories challenged their assumptions and impacted their meaning with new political and social perspectives. For example, the Marxist model was criticized for over-looking the cultural impact on historical change and prioritized economic factors. She acknowledges that these major narratives responded to "particular moments in time" and while all have provided rich contributions they have also "blocked our understanding in other ways." As critical as she is of these paradigms, she values their relevance and contributions.

At a time of worldwide relationships, Hunt advocates for a much more global-oriented approach to history and is critical of the "nation-obsessed" culture of History departments that are more concerned with learning their own national narratives rather than seeking to understand how nations have developed. She contends that these approaches limit the overall purpose of globalization because the concept cannot be caged into national boundaries. Hunt argues that older paradigms of history can no longer be used to address the needs and demands of our international community. She appreciates the critiques that cultural theories have made on the four established paradigms but she is critical of their failure to offer a solution. Instead globalization should be studied in a "bottom up" approach to analyze how global processes impact society. She disagrees with historians who have equated globalization with modernism arguing that globalization predates modernism. She also reiterates that globalization is not an economic-only model but rather a paradigm that should include all aspects of human interconnectedness and interdependence. She argues that globalization should include cultural, social, economic, and political perspectives in order to capture a more holistic understanding of historical processes.

Although Hunt covers vital theoretical frameworks in a very concise manner, her book would benefit from a richer bibliography and examples of historical events that reflect how each paradigm failed or succeeded as explanatory devices. Her argument is far bigger than four chapters can contain, however,

readers will appreciate the accessibility of her writing in a field that is not known for readability. This book is suitable for an audience already familiar with the established historical paradigms and is ready to welcome a new narrative.

Citlalli C. Anahuac