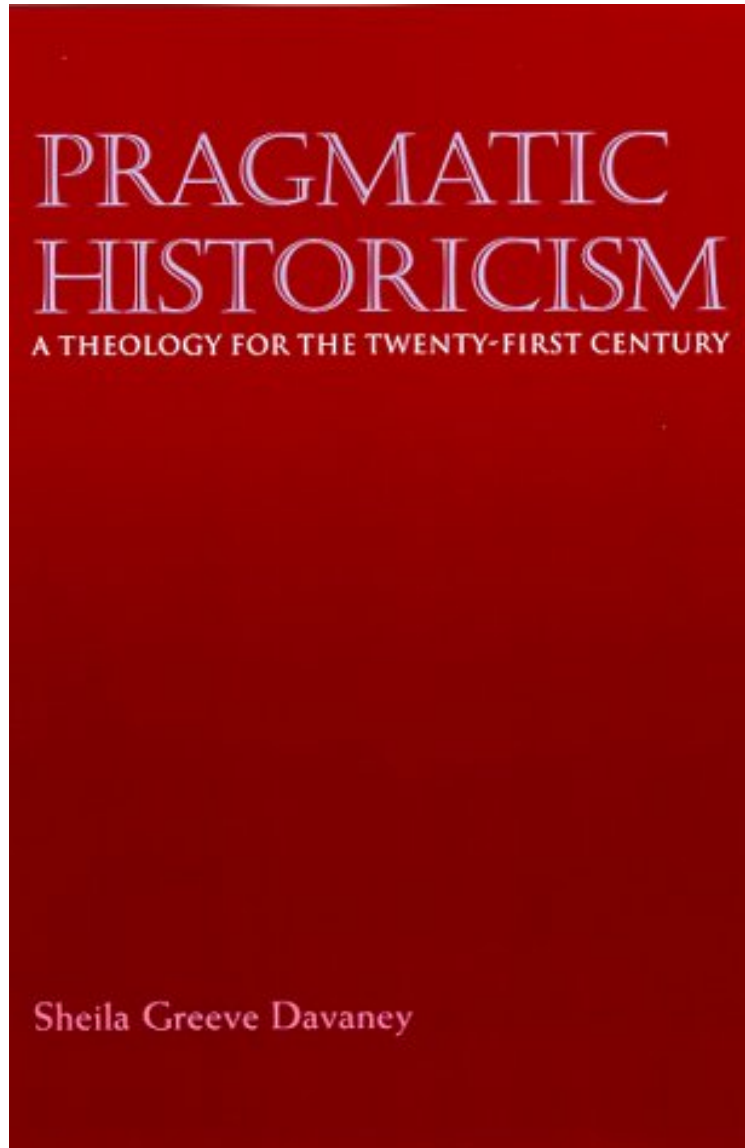


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Pragmatic Historicism: A Theology for the Twentyfirst Century

Professor of Theology Sheila Greeve Davaney
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Sheila Greeve Davaney develops a bold new option in theology and religious reflection--pragmatic historicism--which emerges out of the historicist assumptions of human situatedness, particularity, and plurality that have come to characterize Western thought. The major theological attempts by postliberal and revisionist theology to incorporate these insights have failed to contend fully with the historicist challenge; Davaney's pragmatic historicism more clearly repudiates essentialism, universalism, and confessionalism. The theology that emerges is constructive and critical, resisting all forms of confessionalism without resorting to new forms of universalism. In its academic mode, it is interpreted not in opposition to religious studies, but as one subdiscipline within the study of religion whose major concerns are the identification, analysis, and critical reconstruction of religious ideas. As such it is a form of cultural analysis and criticism. The work includes a detailed exploration of the thought of philosophical pragmatists Richard Rorty, Cornel West, and Jeffrey Stout, and theologians Sallie McFague, John B. Cobb Jr., Gordon Kaufman, Delwin Brown, and William Dean, among others.

By not going down the road of either postliberal or revisionist thinking, Davaney's theology emerges as an exciting new way of doing theology: a theology that seriously confronts theological pluralism, and a theology that transcends the extremes of foundationalism and relativist forms of nonfoundationalism. J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, author of *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* Davaney has done an impressive job in providing a clear and comprehensive overview of major currents in contemporary theology, and situating the alternatives against the backdrop of broader intellectual developments. She goes beyond depicting the contemporary theological scene to make a case for the identification of an emerging trajectory pragmatic historicism that deserves recognition and nurturing. Linell E. Cady, author of *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life* "By not going down the road of either postliberal or revisionist thinking, Davaney's theology emerges as an exciting new way of doing theology: a theology that seriously confronts theological pluralism, and a theology that transcends the extremes of foundationalism and relativist forms of nonfoundationalism." -- J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, author of *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* "Davaney has done an impressive job in providing a clear and comprehensive overview of major currents in contemporary theology, and situating the alternatives against the backdrop of broader intellectual developments. She goes beyond depicting the contemporary theological scene to make a case for the identification of an emerging trajectory--pragmatic historicism--that deserves recognition and nurturing." -- Linell E. Cady, author of *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life* About the Author Sheila Greeve Davaney is Professor of Theology at Iliff School of Theology. She has published many works, including most recently *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*.