BOOK REVIEWS

Vullnetari, Julie and Russell King. 2011. *Remittances, Gender and Development. Albania's Society and Economy in Transition.* London: I. B. Tauris. xiv + 232 pp. Pb.: £56.50. ISBN: 9781848854871.

This book is certainly a path-breaking study from various perspectives. First, it offers a clear and valuable analysis of several highly significant aspects of the socio-economic transformation process that Albania has faced during the post-communist years. Second, it provides a valuable theoretical approach, by 'gendering remittances' and by looking at the migration and migrant's life through gender lenses. Third, it provides a list of useful recommendations, which primarily are addressed mainly to various policy-makers in Albania, but which could positively influence the implementation of effective means and measures also in other similar cases.

The book contains an introduction and seven chapters. Its authors have also included a series of illustrations as well as two maps. The introduction contains a general overview of the story behind the preparation of this book, a description of the methodology of the research and the sites where research was conducted, as well as the authors' concern about several ethical issues related to the research on remittances and the gender, privacy and confidentiality of respondents.

The second chapter offers a theoretical discussion of the four key concepts used by authors: gender, migration, remittances and development. The authors devalue as simplistic the approach that sees women as better remitters than men and call instead for a more cautious and in-depth analysis that takes in consideration the influence of gender in the ways social structures are built, and social links are established.

The third chapter contains an overview of the migration process in Albania since 1990. It provides a chronology of the events, rich data that include the numbers of migrants and the level of the remittances per year, as well revealing several shortfalls of the up-to-date migration studies in and outside Albania.

The fourth chapter includes an in-depth analysis of various types of transnational households of migrants originating from southern Albania who work and live in Greece. The authors continue this micro-scale analysis in the following chapter by focusing especially on the relationship between remittances and gender.

In the sixth chapter, the authors extend the range of their analysis by including development as the fourth component. They pay attention to salient elements of social life, such as social development, non-monetary transfers, socio-political and technological remittances, which influence and are influenced by the link between the micro- and macro-scales.

In the seventh chapter, the authors expand the range of their analysis, by focusing on the relationship between gender, remittances and development on local, regional, national, but also on international levels. They pay attention to the effects the remittances have on economic development in Albania, and also provide an analysis from the perspective of stakeholders in Greece.

The shift towards recommendations becomes more evident in the final chapter, which contains a set of important conclusions. The authors present several final remarks on

the basis of their findings, revise the sustainability of some key theoretical assumptions, and, finally, draw recommendations relevant for policy makers both in and outside Albania.

Many scholars have emphasised that Albanian society is one of the most patriarchal societies in Europe and as such is facing a rapid and multidimensional process of modernisation, which has affected with both massive urbanisation as well as re-traditionalisation efforts. Vullnetari and King go far beyond the limits of this assumption and in this respect their study bears a significant relevance. More than any other study on post-communist Albania, this book brings a human perspective on how people have or are coping with the effects of the social change in their lives. Migration from their underdeveloped country was and in many cases is still seen by many Albanians as a mean towards improving people's lives. Indeed, it has been so for many Albanian migrants and their families; the statistical data Vullnetari and King provide leaves no doubt about that.

Migration has radically affected social relations in Albania and remittances are one of the best tools to study this change and the effects it has on people's lives. In their study, Vullnetari and King provide a thorough analysis that reveals how migration through remittances has affected development, and thus also the gender relations. However, they deserve particular praise for their efforts to escape any determinism, and for their approach, which is firmly based on data from the field. This has allowed them to present the variety of the ways Albanian are coping with social change during the post-communist period.

Of equal relevance is the theoretical contribution this book brings in the field of migration studies. Vullnetari and King shift the focus of analysis from, so to speak, biologically determined approaches, condensed in the question 'Are women better remitters than men?', to a more sociologically and anthropologically oriented approach, i.e. towards gender roles and relations. The methodology the authors propose and have successfully applied in their research takes in consideration the effects of gender roles on the household, the kinship context, and the cross-generation relations in order to expand the spectrum of analysis in order to include local, regional and national development. This book shows without any doubt that only an interdisciplinary approach and multi-layered research will allow to fully grasp the complexity and diversity of social relations in a migration-dominated society like the Albanian one. As such, this book will be highly valuable not only to those who specialise in Albania, but also to sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists and scholars specialising in migration studies.

RIGELS HALILI
Nicolaus Copernicus University of Toruń and University of Warsaw (Poland)

Peterson, Mark Allen. 2011. ***Connected in Cairo. Growing up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East.*** **Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. 263 pp. Pb.: $24.95. ISBN: 9780253223111.**

Mark Allen Peterson offers a deeply engaging and timely analysis of the complex socio-cultural, religious and economic trajectories that have shaped young upper-class Egyptians in the decade prior to the 2011 uprising. Through a series of detailed ethnographic portraits of educational spaces, children's magazines, coffee shops and fast-food outlets, Peterson's book furthers our understanding of the many ways in which class identities – and the particular lifestyles and social expectations they harvest – are imprinted upon young people from a tender age. In particular, Peterson brings to light how education, in the Egyptian national context, is a powerful cog in a broader rigid social class system that works to crystallise and consolidate class identities. Interestingly, by maintaining a sensitive distinction of the how social practices that create class identities change between level of education (primary/higher), but also type of education (private/public/private-national/private-international), Peterson makes a unique and insightful contribution to Arab cultural studies and anthropology.

Although researchers within these subject-domains have engaged the question of class, they have often approached class as a socio-economic blueprint of behaviour and lifestyle; a rigid category that pre-exists people's agency and thus forces them to act in predictable and standardised ways. What Peterson successfully does through his in-depth ethnographic fieldwork is engage with *individuals* that can never be disassociated from the hierarchies and inequalities of the class system, yet perceive and make sense of them "selves" and their subjectivities in unique and varying ways. Such an approach makes relevant not only differences across classes, but also brings to the fore the fluidity of class boundaries and thus the internal contradictions that inevitably exist between people *within* class categories. For instance, through Peterson's engagement with Cairo's American University, we are introduced to how female students often choose to defy the liberal, Western-inspired social practices prevalent in this elite institution. They prefer to physically express their piousness and the potency of their Islamic faith by adopting the *niqab* (face veil) − even if it does challenge the dress policy put in place by the university's (largely American) faculty and administrators.

Importantly, Peterson resists subscribing to an over simplistic approach that reduces the upper-classes to westernised propagators of globalisation opposing any type of localised association. Instead, through a multi-dimensional analysis of young Egyptians' daily 'linguistic codes and registers, bodily comportments, and other practices…' (p. 12) the author thoughtfully considers the struggles these young elite face as they attempt to negotiate complex and often contradicting identities. Such identities are at once modern and cosmopolitan, yet also conform to the more rooted specificities of local religious and cultural practice. For instance, by examining class in juxtaposition with gender, the reader is made aware of how strict codes of religious morality have a significant bearing on upper class women's mobility and their presence in public space, even though they are part of Egypt's Westernised, elite class network.

Furthermore, Peterson's well-contextualised, thickly described case studies propose a framework for understanding cosmopolitanism that transcends the vantage point of Western liberal democracies from which many studies and conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism have arisen. Rather than approaching cosmopolitanism as a "fixed conception" characterised by a particular definition of what it *should* or *ought* to be, Peterson offers a bottom-up understanding of cosmopolitan as an everyday practiced identity which is lived, embodied and performed in unique ways. Such an in-depth micro-analysis of everyday cosmopolitanism in Cairo engages with the complex and multifarious ways in which the global is produced from *within*, and thus takes its meaning only *through* local religious, cultural and linguistic practices.

In addition, the case studies presented in this book engage with a very specific, almost exclusive type of cosmopolitanism preconditioned by wealth, prestige, transnational mobility and the consumption of expensive Western products. Nevertheless, Peterson makes the salient point that this should be regarded as only one *type* of cosmopolitan identity in Cairo that exists alongside others articulated on the basis of different class, gender and religious affiliations. In this way, Peterson makes sure not to define cosmopolitanism as an identity exclusive solely to privileged classes, but also not to de-value the decidedly different cosmopolitan associations and networks managed by the working class.

Although the main argumentative thread of this book in no way glosses over the complexity of young Egyptian identities, but successfully portrays how they are framed within systems of class, gender, religious and urban organisation and control, the author's use of the term "authentic identity" may be questionable. The claim that young elite Egyptians are searching for "authentic" identities almost implies that the "modern" forces of globalisation threaten these rooted authenticities. Furthermore, the concept of "authentic" identity fails to denote that identities can never be pure as by virtue of an ubiquitous cross-cultural exchange through globalisation, migration, imperialism and media communication, they are naturally comprised of a range of different cultural and temporal influences. Whether or not one agrees with Peterson's choice of terminology, however, the crux of his argument neatly captures common struggles endured by young people in the developing south as they negotiate the contour and limits of their globalisation. Indeed, in the face of a bombardment of cultural stimuli from the West, while having a reflexive awareness of their position within global hierarchies, young Egyptians are ever in search of a unique yet rooted sense of self that allows them to locate themselves in a world both immediate and faraway.

HEBA ELSAYED
London School of Economics (United Kingdom)

Collins, Michael. 2012. *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World. Rabindranath Tagore's Writings on History, Politics and Society.* London and New York: Routledge. 212 pp. Pb.: £85.00. ISBN: 9780415593953.

The 150th anniversary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011 provided an impetus for many scholars and translators across the world to engage afresh with the vast output of one of India's foremost creative artists and thinkers of the modern era. If Amit Chaudhuri's *On Tagore: Reading the Poet Today* marks one such original attempt to engage with Tagore as a modern(ist) poet, sidestepping the obdurate and unhelpful categories of mystic and seer, Michael Collins's book promises to be an enduring contribution to our critical understanding of Tagore the modern-day thinker. Though one would not wish to draw too artificial a boundary between the two, this book, coming from a historian specialising in the intellectual history of empire and decolonisation, is primarily concerned with presenting 'Tagore as an intellectual' (p. 22) within a global historical framework of the second half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, and emphasising Tagore's keen sense of (creative) agency against the backdrop of colonial domination.

Motivated by the argument that postcolonial historiography has not accorded Tagore the intellectual standing he deserves, this book strives to explain, on the one hand, why 'Tagore has been consistently misunderstood, misrepresented, sometimes ignored, and in many respects diminished as a writer and thinker'(p. 1). On the other hand, it attempts to locate more precisely Tagore's importance for historians, political scientists and theorists of modernity, postmodernity and post-colonialism alike. It does so by laying out Tagore's 'distinctively universalist philosophy' (p. 22), aimed as a critique of certain aspects of modernity, and an alternative to both empire and nation. 'Tagore can help us better understand some of the failures of postcolonial theory,' (p. 14) claims Collins at the outset.

Offering by now a standard critique of Said's unfortunately essentialist take on "the West" vis-à-vis "the Orient" or "the East", Collins goes on to acknowledge Said's latter-day shift to a more nuanced approach to the ways in which the colonised contested the supremacy of Western hegemony. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said devoted an entire chapter to intellectuals of decolonisation from various parts of the globe committed to a larger search for liberation, and Tagore is included in the ranks of the likes of C. L. R. James, Neruda, Cabral, Yeats, Fanon and others. Collins, however, questions the *lumping* together of these individual thinkers on the grounds that they are dubbed "nationalist," even though their response, according to Said, comprises nationalist resistance "at its best" because it is always critical of itself. Collins insists that in Tagore's case resistance at its best must be delinked from any notion of "nationalist." Given how difficult it is for (Indian) historians and Tagore scholars to this day to think outside the nationalist/patriotic framework when it comes to a national icon such as Tagore, it seems nothing short of revolutionary to have Collins proclaim outright that 'Tagore was *not* a nationalist in any analytically useful sense of the term' (my emphasis) (p. 15). It is precisely this claim that allows for bringing Tagore into a fresh historical focus. A prominent part of the book is therefore devoted to author's rigorous analysis of Tagore's uncompromising critique of the modern idea of a nation, the nation state and its ideological corollary of nationalism, particularly after the Swadeshi movement went into decline.

Moving beyond the limits of both postcolonial and subaltern paradigms, with their respective "imperial-national" and "elite-subaltern" dichotomies, Collins strives for 'a fully contextualised historical analysis of [Tagore's] actual ideas or activities' (p. 3). The portrayal that emerges is at once more complex and controversial. Here is a man guided by a fundamental belief that there is an inherent impulse in us – beyond instrumental reason and self-interest – for 'creative, active love, which leads us to bonds of unity with our fellow men' (p. 157). Tagore is thus portrayed in his acute concern for both "coloniser" and colonised." He cannot accept the idea of "one West" or a purely negative critique of the Enlightenment, and adopts a view of Indian history that suggests that India "belongs" to no one. These are not novel propositions in themselves, but Collins deserves to be credited for his more systematic and rigorous analysis of existing debates combined with an intellectual historian's linking of context and text. The extensive use of primary sources turns this into a path-breaking book. It is also what engenders certain new insights. As Tapan Raychaudhuri states in his foreword to the book, Collins brings 'a genuinely new contribution to our understanding of the relationship between Gandhi and Tagore' (pg. xvi). He also does away with some erroneous assumptions regarding Tagore's winning of the Nobel Prize and the English *Gitanjali,* and puts the much-discussed and misunderstood relationship between W. B. Yeats and Tagore in perspective for us.

Aside from his engagement with archival material, Collin's healthy suspicion of secondary sources has also led him to some very interesting discoveries. For example, a letter to C. F. Andrews written in July 1915, in which Tagore refers to Gandhi as 'a moral tyrant' for thinking he had the power to 'make his ideas prevail through the means of slavery' (p. 87), was excised from the sanitised 1928 book version *Letters to a Friend*. Likewise, a number of essays published in *The Modern Review* in which Tagore lays out his more controversial take on the West and India are found to be missing from Sisir Kumar Das's authoritative compilation of Tagore's English writings. Such omissions preclude the possibility of a more complex historical understanding of Tagore's unconventional position on empire and modernity.

Tagore's "anti-politics" that sees British rule in India as essentially 'a failure of imagination and intellect' (p. 13) went on to assume a concrete face in a "politics of friendship" across the colonial divide. Collins devotes a third of the book to analysing Tagore's interactions with some key individuals from the Anglophone world. The cultural elite of the colonial power, with W. B. Yeats at its helm, are shown to have instrumentalised Tagore for their own essentially Eurocentric endeavour of a cultural revival in need of a spiritual injection from "the East". The friendships Tagore forged in colonial Britain were many and guided by various motivations – C. F. Andrews and Edward Thompson, who came to live in India and learned Bengali, professed a different kind of attachment to Tagore than did Yeats – but they rarely questioned the underlying imperial power relations. The conflicts of class, race, religion and nation posed a great challenge to a transnational politics of friendship that was supposed to transcend them. Collins's book is no doubt a timely publication for bringing Tagore's complex answers to the age of empire and nation into new focus.

ANA JELNIKAR
Presidency University, Calcutta (India)

Crehan, Kate. 2011. *Community Art: An Anthropological Perspective.* Oxford and New York: Berg. 224pp. Pb.: £19.99. ISBN: 9781847888334.

Crehan's excellent and accessible book examines the work of the "Free Form Arts Trust" in the United Kingdom. This forty-year-old trust sought to bring art to working-class communities, but did so in a different way than other projects: the art was done with and for the people living in the communities. These efforts engaged preconceived ideas on art, perspectives held by both viewers and artisans, and in doing so developed a social commentary on communities and the art establishment.

The trust had several motives in launching community participant art projects. Crehan points out that those in the working class were sceptical of contemporary art and that to overcome this perspective, artists had to establish a relationship with people in the community, using this understanding to form a definition of the particular community. In many ways, the trust was conducting ethnographic fieldwork by working with community members to develop an understanding of self-definition that could be used to guide future interactions and facilitate the exchange of ideas.

An interesting and critical element both of Crehan's narrative and the concept of community art is the presence of two art forms: performance and visual. At first, community art efforts in the United Kingdom included both forms. Crehan points out that performance art had an advantage in that theatre held a more entrenched position in British cultural identity. However, the performance arts, as they were involved in community arts projects, were not as open to community participation and thus ran afoul of the uniting concept of community art. Crehan highlights how performance workshops held during community festivals were open to professionals only and that despite drawing in newly minted theatre students who wanted to try something new, the lack of community participation caused a rift and destined the trust and similar activities to be visually focused from that point. Further, Crehan notes that the performance artists were more interested in radicalism and commentary, a move that the visual artists thought might alienate some and pose an issue for the group's charity status in the eyes of the government.

The motives of these efforts were more than merely artistic; rather art, as it often is, was a vehicle for a broader social philosophy. Social change, change in social policies, and developing partnerships were all elemental to the community art efforts. However, changes came at all levels and presented unique issues. An interesting facet of the Trust's efforts was its rejection of the art establishment, a move that led to issues of defining expertise, a concept of paramount value and importance to the mainstream art community. Expertise is a sensitive issue. Crehan writes, 'The reality is that "expertise" does not simply mean a given bundle of skills and knowledge: those skills and knowledge have to be socially recognized' (p. 29). In art, this recognition comes in the form of gallery showings, study, and public recognition. What happens when an artist produces a piece that is not in a traditional gallery, but in non-art spaces like community areas? This requires a shift in a values system regimented by centuries of tradition, but when it does change, the exchange of ideas and perspectives between experts and non-experts is transformative.

Crehan does an excellent job of getting the reader to understand the complexity of

this entire movement. As the performance artists left and the movement focused on visual arts, these efforts were further refined and geared toward addressing the built environment. As noted above, the art establishment was generally dismissive, but some of the gallery crowd liked the idea of art outside of four walls. Redefining environment and making previous distressed areas more visually appealing seems straightforward and clear, but it is rather complicated considering the need for community participation and influence. Crehan notes that these projects sought to have professional levels of construction, and in creating something more durable, the artists needed to understand the community as the piece would most likely be present for decades.

The great value of Crehan's work, which at its core is a study of a process of community identification and expression, is that it highlights something that has been missing from several community art movements in the United States and elsewhere. Unlike the work of the trust, community art efforts seen by this reviewer have not involved the community closest in proximity to the art. Rather, the efforts consisted of an outside entity (planning board, charity, or other effort) bringing in art and placing it in an established community with little or no input or participation. This is not the process of empowerment that fuelled the trust; rather it is a missionary effort, one that seeks to force conformity.

As students (and protectors) of culture and the human condition, anthropologists must recognise that there are groups near us that need understanding, study, and assistance. Anthropologists can play a critical role in helping community efforts understand the people in the community and can facilitate efforts to include them in shaping their space. Thankfully, Crehan's book, through its study of the trust, shows the way.

DON ARP, JR.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln (USA)

Geertz, Armin W. and Jeppe Sinding Jensen (eds.). 2011. *Religious Narrative, Cognition and Culture: Image and Word in the Mind of Narrative.* Sheffield: Equinox. 336 pp. Pb.: $24.99. ISBN: 9781845532956.

This is a comprehensive work bringing together scholars from various disciplines – anthropology, linguistics, psychology and religious studies – to reflect on what essentially may be termed basic human questions about self, mind, brain and being human, i.e. having the capacity to reflect, to symbolise and (most importantly) to construct narratives, engage in dialogues and be able to imaginatively visualise things that may be referred to as "counterintuitive". As human beings, we have brains that can cognitively interpret and understand a world that is not material, but constructed by us and also made meaningful by us.

The emphasis throughout this book attempts to cover a wide range of narratives from the *Biblical Exodus* to the *Mahabharata, The Satanic Verses* of Rushdie to the creation of life history myths by astrology and supernatural beings in the virtual world; it is on the social world and the need for communicating with others that is seen as an integral part of evolving to be human. The interface of the brain with the social world is seen, for example, as "outside in" rather than "inside out". In other words, rather than the brain being a machine/robotic mechanism, it is now increasingly seen as something that has developed in response to the fact of being social, in relation to others rather than in inward isolation. Thus, the brain is recognised as remaining plastic almost throughout a person's life, especially if the external environment is continuously changing.

Such is the importance of the environment, to be conceptualised in social, symbolic, semiotic and cultural terms that a changing environment can keep the process of socialisation running throughout a person's life, raising questions about the relationship of self and society. Changing narratives continue to reinvent the sense of self and personhood, and anchorage may be found in myths of religion, astrology or even virtual life worlds.

As pointed out by Merlin Donald in this volume, the human brain developed the ability of conscious thinking specifically by being liberated from its biological memory limitations. In other words, to be human is to be able to transcend the biological to be able to develop a cognitive world based on collective thought enabled by culture and social living. Literacy, for example, plays a key role in changing the cognitive capacity of the brain. By storing knowledge outside of human memory, the entire process of knowing becomes liberated from authoritative control and finds free expression. Thus, as Chris Sinha points out, writing introduces a person to abstract cognitive attitudes and rather than depending on an authoritative source, as when knowledge is oral; it becomes centred in a neutral text that frees the individual learner to think independently. The externalisation of memory and the use of various technologies for storage have had serious implications for human development.

The major focus of the book is on religion, however, and how religious narratives become powerful vehicles for the cognitive development of self, culture and human society. The very ability for narrative construction comes to a human child early in life, primarily as a result of socialisation through interaction with others who tell stories. This storytelling enables the creation of sense of continuity and helps a child to develop of sense of self in

relation to others and ultimately a sense of connectedness and continuity not only with one's own life history, but with a social and even global history. Such a sense of continuity builds up in humans a sense of being part of a larger whole, a sense of purpose and being that is both transcendental and adaptive; religious narratives in particular do so by their need fulfilment and sense of collective self.

Evolutionary biology and linguistics provide a basic theoretical framework for the majority of papers in this volume,,but several focus on purely cultural theory as it relates to religion. From Durkheim and Marcel Mauss on one hand, to the "hard science" of neurotransmitters of the brain on the other, the theoretical tools used by the scholars are varied. Yet most come to the similar conclusions, that the human mind is not to be understood in terms of engineering but as something transcendental and free from mechanical constraints.

The evolutionary adaptations of humans have not been to use their already-developed organs for forming culture and society, but rather it is the need to be in society that has been the adaptive mechanism; to fulfil this requirement, other aspects (such as brain and language) have developed in the way they have. The ultimate lesson to be learnt is that we are humans because of our human qualities of communication, empathy and cooperation and sharing. An fascinating experiment done on the neurotransmitters of the brain indicates, for example, that the brain shows signs of well- being and harmony when a person takes a decision that is cooperative and in adjustment to fellow beings rather than being competitive. The message is clear: it is an evolutionary advantage to be harmonious and social rather than being individualistic and competitive. In other words, humans have evolved to be sociable, and religion is one way in which this collective mind is achieved.

This book makes for heavy but engrossing reading. Every chapter (18 in all) is specialised and makes use of a different kind of theory, and it is intriguing to note that varieties of approach lead to more or less similar conclusions. It is not meant for lay readers and is mostly suitable for a serious researcher and senior scholar. Nevertheless, it has much to offer to a person seriously considering questions regarding what is it to be human, both in a social and psychological sense. What is the self, what is consciousness, and what is the direction of human development for the future? It stimulates intellectual curiosity and attempts, at the same time, to answer a variety of questions that often come to us reflectively and speculatively.

SUBHADRA MITRA CHANNA
University of Delhi (India)

Hegeman, Susan. 2012. *The Cultural Return.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 172 pp. Pb.: $44.95 / £30.95. ISBN: 9780520268982.

In *The Cultural Return,* literary scholar Susan Hegeman tracks the rise and fall of the so-called "cultural turn" across different academic disciplines since the post-war period. After depicting key concept(s) of culture in academia during the previous decades and some examples for culture's persistent popular ubiquity, the introduction lays out the structure of the book.

The first chapter deals with the cultural turn of the 1980s and '90s when a lively debate about the meaning and utility of culture as an analytical concept was fought. Particularly due to its connotations of spatial and historical fixity, an impressive number of academics from across the political spectrum have repudiated the concept. Hegeman systematises five common complaints, which notably came from anthropology and literary studies since that time. She claims to uncover the complaints' inconsistency and to demonstrate that they rather reflect larger concerns and trends. However, the author does not succeed to contextualise and explicitly explain some quotations, and her arguments in this regard are not fully convincing.

Throughout the following pages, the author argues that the idea of culture is dialectically intertwined with the concept of modernity: it mediates between parts and wholes; between the universal and the particular; the global and the local; the structural and the contingent; between aesthetic and quotidian; and the present and future. Because it is essential to recognise the historical specificity of what those parts and wholes are, in the second chapter Hegeman exemplifies that so-called "mass culture" needs to be relegated to the decades preceding World War II. Only by historicizing various meanings and usages of the concept of culture can its political power be understood. Apart from this not being a new finding, a part of this chapter is a reprint of Hegeman's article published in 2000.

In the third chapter, the author depicts the rise of the concept of culture from the mid-twentieth century structuralism to the explosion of cultural theories in the '80s and '90s. She turns to the Cold War era and argues that "culture" became such a keyword because it seemed to offer a conceptual resolution to the central conflicts of that time. Though the concept had its greatest impact in this period, she notes that the pre-war period should not be neglected as a crucial site of the formation of the modern cultural concept. Hegeman demonstrates how the academic discourse has been in dialogue with larger concerns – political, fiscal as well as ideological – of its historical moment. She similarly argues that the recent rise of academic interest in or rather a return to professional ethics, cosmopolitanism, aesthetics and close-reading can be accounted to neo-liberalism, intensified class division and the corporatization of universities.

The subsequent chapter addresses the problem of national and, as an analogy, disciplinary borders. With the turn away from the nation-state, the discipline of American Studies had to reconfigure itself. Hegeman addresses and compares the anthropological rejection of "culture" and the late anxieties in American Studies over the concept of "America". As America is insufficiently reflective of the postnationalist habitus of American Studies, culture is insufficient for anthropology's exploration of human diversity. Hegeman

points out that there is not much point in changing names of disciplines or “getting beyond” their subjects, in particular because of the popular rhetoric attached to them. Rather, she calls for a strategical deployment of both “America” and “culture”, possible as spaces of struggle and possibility, in our current times of globalisation.

In the fifth chapter, Hegeman presents one interdisciplinary attempt to develop a conceptual frame for coming to terms with current global realities – the turn towards religion and belief. “Culture” is often allocated to the enlightened “West” whereas “belief” is allocated to “the Other”, to those still outside of “modernity”. She argues for a rejection of this romantic fantasy and for a complex conceptualisation of culture’s relationship to the narrative of modernity.

In the last chapter, Hegeman sums up how culture has historically functioned in a number of registers. She points out the continuing relevance of “culture” as a meaningful concept and category of analysis, and advocates for the acknowledgement of local articulations of culture. It is shown that “culture” is now deployed in international definitions of human rights; thus, there is still a useful and informative relationship between vernacular and technical usage of the term “culture”.

In summary, Hegeman tries to develop a positive and socially progressive idea of culture – a concept that is acceptable and useful for both scholarly research and popular discourse. She finds the calls to dislike or to get beyond culture nonsensical as one cannot wave away several centuries of intellectual history. In the current moment of global change, including mass migrations and terrorism, political, but also vernacular rhetoric about ‘culture’ has become more complex and strident. The author warns the reader that rendering the concept of culture as meaningless might concede cultural determinists, both propagandists and scholars, who then happily shape the discourse. Instead of ceding the discourse to those who use “culture” to explain a host of ills, it is crucial to responsibly intervene into public discourses.

The six chapters following the introduction can be read separately, as the author does not present one main argument, but rather erratic essays approaching the topic from different angles. Although the chapters are well referenced, this reviewer thinks that the author does not fully present her points concisely and convincingly. While some of her thoughts are certainly interesting and original, a lack of definitions and the absence of newer publications on the culture debate, both with regard to theories and policies, make this book less appealing to those who wish to gain a clear understanding and to have an up-to-date overview of the cultural turn(s) in academia and their influence on the public.

DAVID PARDUHN
Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany)

Kreinath, Jens (ed.). 2011. *The Anthropology of Islam Reader.* New York: Routledge. 420 pp. Pb.: £27.99. ISBN: 9780415780254.

This collection of essays draws attention from the usual Western focus on Sufi practices and should more correctly be titled *The Anthropology of Sunni Islam* as all articles are based on fieldwork conducted among Sunni Muslims. A particular strength of this reader is its coverage of a wide range of countries, and a comprehensive range of featured issues. The introduction to Islam includes some of the most authoritative authors – Gilsenan, Geertz, El-Zein and Asad – and their seminal texts.

The section on anthropological approaches on Islam is followed by discussions of the five most important Muslim practices. I was particularly intrigued by the article by Schielke and his insistence on studying ambivalence, ambiguity and fragmentation in religion and its practices. For example, he contends that striving for purity and perfection as demanded by religion often results in fragmentation and internal contradictions because believers cannot live up to such high ideals. Furthermore, Ramadan frequently becomes a period of excessive feasts and expensive gifts, undermining in this way its central message of asceticism and quiet reflection. By the same token, Scupin writes how, by undertaking the pilgrimage, Thai *hajj* pilgrims increase their prestige, which might have favourable economic consequences for them.

This book has substantial sections on methodological issues and representing fieldwork experiences and analysis. Unfortunately, many of the criticisms about understanding and representing Islam raised in the articles of Varisco and Said apply to this book itself. Even though several authors in this collection argue against seeing Islam primarily as orthopraxy, the book is organised around discussions on the five central Islamic practices as if its sacred book and sayings – Q'uran and Hadith – did not exist. Furthermore, as this is a book about Islam as religion, there are not many examinations of 'ongoing power plays resulting in political instability, economic disparity, cultural defamation, and misplaced self-interest' (p. 325). Because of the ascribing of such primacy to religion, the reasons for any socio-economic and politics failures tend to be ascribed to Islam.

In my view, seeing Islam as an all-encompassing *sui generis* phenomenon (e.g. Ahmed in his chapter argues Islamic anthropology as a distinctive paradigm) is ethnographically dubious, theoretically unproductive and ultimately Orientalist. I agree with the arguments of Tapper in this collection and want to stress that seeing societies primarily through the lens of religion to which many or most belong implies that Islam is the most significant focus and determinant of the lives of its adherents. This might not be the case. Saying that Islam is only one of many religions that people adhere to is not denying that this religion has inspired civilisations and continue to inspire around one billion people. It means that we can study it comparatively not only with other similar Islamic practices in different countries, as in this book, but also with other similar phenomena.

For example, if the editor did include Bourdieu's chapter on symbolic capital from his Kabylie ethnography, then Cooper in her discussion of how Hausa women enhance their status by singing about hajj would not make a call to 'let go of traditional understandings of profit maximisation' (pp. 208–209). Bourdieu's argument about symbolic capital, which

has been around for the last 35 years, could help her better understand how her Hausa women turn their "audible", "moral", "spiritual" and "religious"capital into elevated social status (symbolic capital). Similarly, I was not convinced that Mahmood in her discussions on female prayer groups in Cairo mosques challenges prevailing understandings of self, agency and ritual. Instead, it appeared to me that it fits into Lincoln's theory on the rites of transformation during which the women do not gain new, elevated social status, but have to learn to internalise and love their socially prescribed roles.

I would have particularly liked to read examinations on how Islamic values and precepts are negotiated and challenged in the contemporary modern world. Werbner's article is the only one examining ritual sacrifices among Pakistani migrants in the contemporary UK. Attempts have been made to also include conceptual fields other than religion, but they are mostly tentative. Benthal discusses the politics of almsgiving in Palestine and Jordan, and Weiss Islamic voluntarism in Northern Ghana. Let us hope that future works will examine Islam in relation to societal factors in conceptually comparative perspectives. Then, all failures of socio-economic and political factors will not tend to be ascribed to Islam.

BARBARA POTRATA
University of Leeds (United Kingdom)

Lindenfeld, David and Miles Richardson (eds.). 2011. *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism. Indigenous Encounters with Missionary Christianity, 1800–2000.* New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 328 pp. Hb.: $95.00 / £55.00. ISBN: 9780857452177.

The vocabulary we use has a profound influence on the ways in which it is possible for us to understand the world. This seems to be the fundamental motivation behind the recently published volume *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism.* The volume has as its aim to study 'the ways in which different indigenous peoples have responded to the intrusion of foreign Christian missionaries into their worlds', and the 'strategies and processes by which this negotiation typically takes place' (p. 2). The objective is to develop a more nuanced picture of such encounters than the vocabulary currently in common use, especially the notions of conversion and syncretism, can convey.

The volume delights by its broad geographical and denominational range. The articles discuss cases from North and Central America, Africa, Asia and Australia, often by comparing two cases from different continents. The missionaries often being Europeans, South America is the only continent not discussed in the volume. The Christian denominations covered vary from different branches of Catholicism, African Churches and Baptism, to the Anglicans, Methodists, Pentecostals and Presbyterians.

The book is divided into two parts, the first dealing with conversion and the second one with syncretism, although it is clear – as the editors of the volume also state – that the processes of syncretism and conversion are very much intertwined. In the chapters of the first part entitled Conversion and its complexities, Saurabh Dube looks at conversion in the context of Central-Indian people's autobiographies and biographies through the notion of vernacular translation. Mathews Samson continues with autobiographical accounts and discusses the interplay between context and agency, or the space between the processes of conversion and the potential convert, among the Guatemalan Maya population. The focus is on people's production of their ethnic identity, or Maya-ness. Elizabeth Elbourne concentrates on the interaction between imperial militaries, Christianity and alliance politics in the borderlands between New York and Six Nations territory, on the one hand, and Cape Colony of Southern Africa, on the other. She shows how conversion to Christianity was different for the colonised peoples in frontier zones than for those in settled colonial states. In his chapter, Richard Fox Young discusses Robin Horton's Intellectualist Theory in relation to the reconversion of Tamil Christians into Shaivite Hinduism and argues that rather than explaining conversion to Christianity, Horton's theory does better in explaining reconversion back to traditional religions.

The second part of the volume, *Syncretism and its alternatives*, consists of five chapters. In the opening chapter Joseph M. Murphy looks at one "syncretistic" case in the context of Afro-Cuban religion and argues that the well-established correspondence between the orisha-spirit Shango and the Catholic saint Santa Barbara is not just a way to veil fundamental beliefs in the age of oppression, but that it rather 'extends and enhances the social and spiritual possibilities of their devotees' (p. 139). Anh Q. Tran's chapter deals with a literary source called *Conference of Four Religions*, which claims to be a record of a religious meeting or debate among representatives of four religions, having taken place

in 1773 in Vietnam. David Lindenfeld compares the Chinese Taiping and the West African Aladura movements, and introduces the term "selective inculturation" to describe the processes of syncretism taking place within them. In her contribution, Sylvia Frey looks at the processes of acculturation in the context of Catholic French nuns evangelising a black diasporic community in New Orleans in the 18th and 19th centuries. Finally, Anne Keary compares missionary encounters in north-western America and Eastern Australia and the ways in which the colonial constructs and practices in each case influenced the identity politics of the parties involved.

Whether intentional or accidental, four chapters out of nine in the volume use intercultural and intercontinental comparison as a tool for approaching the topics under study. Furthermore, two of the remaining chapters develop their analysis through the comparison of biographical narratives. Comparison as a method appears therefore as one central theme in the volume and, as such, it would also have deserved to be discussed more profoundly in the introduction. It is, however, briefly discussed in some of the contributions, such as those by Lindenfeld and Keary.

In general, the volume would have benefited from a more purposefully written introduction. Perhaps because of the different disciplinary backgrounds of the editors, the introduction has been left somewhat unformed. Instead of discussing in-depth the previous uses and theorisations of the volume's key terms, conversion and syncretism, in the humanities and social sciences in general, the editors have decided to take, in my view, a more superficial introduction to the uses of the terms in the fields of history, anthropology and religious studies. Moreover, the discussion in relation to religious studies leans heavily on theological approaches disregarding the existing theorisations in the field of (more humanistic-oriented) religious studies.

Furthermore, the introduction fails to bring together and lift up the highly interesting topics and approaches commonly addressed by the majority of the chapters. Among the most important theses is the interplay between the macro- and micro-levels of culture. Most chapters approach this interplay from the point of view of colonial structures' influences on missionary encounters and on the domestication of the Christian religion. Through the comparison within and between chapters, the volume offers its readers a possibility to study and to better understand the relationship between colonialism and missionary Christianity as well as the ways in which different colonial settings influence the processes of intercultural encounters, identity formation, and religious change. Another topic many of the chapters at least implicitly discuss, and which still remains under-theorised in social sciences, is the collective aspect of conversions to Christianity. To what extent, under what conditions and how can conversion be considered and understood as collective action?

In general, the volume offers a wealth of material for those interested in missionary and cultural encounters, conversion and the processes of domestication of Christianity. It also forms thought-provoking reading for scholars and students of historical and present day Christianities.

MINNA OPAS
University of Turku (Finland)

Ní Laoire, Caitríona, Fina Carpena-Mendez, Naomi Tyrrell, and Allen White (eds.) 2011. *Childhood and Migration in Europe. Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland (Studies in Migration and Diaspora Series).* Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate. 197 pp. Hb.: £55.00. ISBN: 9781409401094.

This book claims to provide a much needed focus in migration studies – children's own perspectives on their lives on the move. On the backdrop of assumptions that migrant children are subjects of integration, require support in language acquisition and need protection, this is an extraordinarily enticing promise to anyone working with children's migration research. The authors propose an analysis of how children exert their agency in racialised, ethnicised, gendered, and classed processes intersecting with their migrant status. They argue that children are required to be highly adaptable and consequently develop strategies for making sense of their place in the world, and are active cultural mediators and decision makers in families.

The book has seven chapters. The introductory chapter and a general portrayal of migrant childhood in Ireland (Chapter 2) stand out with an impressive literature analysis, taking into account authors' disciplinary background, in human geography and anthropology. Second, portraits of childhood and migration are provided in four different groups: African/Irish, Central Eastern European, Latin American and Irish children in returning migrants' group, followed by a synthesis of findings in the last chapter. Altogether, 194 children aged 3–18 participated in the study. Children were approached as competent research participants and methods included artwork, mapping, photography, play-and-talk, group interviews.

Broad secondary source and discourse analysis prove their strength in some parts of the book. For example, they allow presenting a strong case of how relatively low numbers of migrant children with African backgrounds are brought into public discourses on how migrant children became a milestone in negotiations of citizenship, nationality and reproductive practices of female asylum seekers in Ireland.

However, the depth of qualitative analysis varies in this book's chapters. In my opinion, the qualitative analyses of Irish returning migrant children (Chapter 6) outshines those devoted to analysis of African/Irish and CEE children. The experiences of Irish return children are characterised by recounting quotes, better contextualised data on the relative invisibility of middle-class children, who are nevertheless subjected to multiple othering due to their migration experience and themselves form and claim their identity in different contexts. How children play with *difference* is well illustrated, e.g. in the following quote: 'If I'm talking to an American person, I say I am Irish; if I'm talking to an Irish person, I'd probably say I'm American' (Michelle, aged 11, quoted in p. 148.)

The fifth chapter on Latin American children in Ireland, in my judgment, was the best written in anthropological accounts. Fina Carpena-Mendez explains in nuances how the new configurations of doing family on the move come into existence, and presents a good discussion on how adolescents have learned acceptable ways of what to say and how to exercise agency in varied frames of references. Importantly, the author pays particular attention to interpreting silences, interruptions, and how children feel parents' anxieties as

in the following emotional excerpt from a daughter-mother conversation: from the daughter: 'Mom, let's go back to Argentina or Toronto [...] I don't like this place, I just have one friend; everything else is forgettable'; and mother, who later added to the researcher that 'This is the first time in long time that Estrella [daughter] vomits her discontent' (p. 117).

This book provides several noteworthy findings, both specific to the groups in the research and generally about migrant children in Ireland. The authors emphasise how children recognise and subvert processes of marginalization, and argue that agency and creativity emerge from the gaps in the control exercised over children lives by adults. Children perform and embody belonging by language code switching in different interactional spaces. Most importantly, it is well discussed how the material life is lived here and now by interpreting the meaning what children attach to the consumerism culture: music, fashion or watching popular sport events.

Several shortcomings should be mentioned. In my judgment, the research would have benefited if more attention had been paid to deeper analysis and more time spent with probably fewer participants; this could have yielded more valuable, deep trust-based qualitative data.

Short quotes from interviews with children contrast sharply with the dense analysis of existing scientific texts presented in the book. Methods are not sufficiently explicitly reflected; if the main focus was on meaning given to processes of, e.g. mapping and art work, I wanted to find it in the text. What exactly can researchers learn and how we can improve further research by applying these methods? The authors attempted to focus on other aspects of children lives apart from ethnicity, but migrancy and ethnicity-related themes remain dominant in the presented researchers' conversations with children. In my reading, the texts often lack observational 'glue' to explain what has been seen and understood by a researcher and how can it be interpreted.

Ethical considerations are seriously taken into account, and the authors should be acknowledged for that. However, the blurred faces in photos left me perplexed. Are the faceless pictures the only way how we can ethically represent lively everydayness of children? The authors stress that children speak with enthusiasm about school, friends, weekend-time spaces, but I was unable to hear it in their own voices. For example, when reading about the spatial practices of children, I really desired to have richer descriptions that would 'take me walking among those places'.

Moreover, the authors repeat themselves, and this left an impression that the book would have benefited from more careful editing. Having said that and despite its shortcomings, this book is a valuable source of literature analysis and original data obtained through a challenging work of adult researchers on migrant children experiences in Ireland. Simultaneously, it encourages to research more in detail how children work as agents of change in negotiating mobile identities and what wider implications it brings for social change on various scales.

AIJA LULLE
University of Latvia (Latvia)

Barnard, Alan J. and Jonathan Spencer (eds.). 2010. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Second Edition.* London: Routledge. x + 855 pp. Pb.: $65.00. ISBN: 9780415809368.

The publication of the second edition of the Routledge Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology, almost fifteen years after the first edition, offers a useful addition to the toolkits that practitioners and students of the discipline already have for their research. In the words of the editors 'this book aims to meet some of the need for an accessible and provocative guide to the many things that anthropologists have had to say', (p. xii) and it appears that they achieved in this task. In producing the volume, 134 authors were involved: a vast array that encompassed supportive anthropologists, such as Maurice Bloch, Michael Herzfeld, and Ralph Grillo, and younger scholars, 'whose work', in the auspices of the editors 'would become the core knowledge of the discipline in years to come' (pg. viii). Since I cannot do justice to the work of all the authors, I will restrict this review to presenting the structure of the book and propose some general comments.

Although without the extension of other encyclopaedias, such as Birx's Encyclopedia of Anthropology (2006), this volume aimed to presents some of the key themes, areas of research and traditions of anthropology. Distinct from other encyclopaedic works, such as Ingold's Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology (2002), structured as a handbook and aimed at presenting the cutting edge of anthropological debate, Barnard and Spencer's volume is a reference book, also suitable for undergraduate students and non-specialist researchers interested in grasping the state of art of the debate on crucial topics and the meanings of anthropological keywords, or the history of some of the principal schools of the discipline. In the words of the editors, the book is: 'a guide and an introduction, a map which will help them find their way around the anthropological landscape rather than an authority set up to police what counts as anthropologically correct knowledge about the world' (pg. xiii).

Like the first edition, the Encyclopaedia is divided into main three parts. Part I (pp. 1–173) includes 275 main entries listed in alphabetical order; Part II (pp. 724–53) is a bibliographic dictionary that include 300 profiles of leading figures who have been influential in the development of anthropology; finally, Part III (pp. 791–855) is a glossary of 600 terms used in anthropological jargon, such as "habitus", "stratification" or "cognate".

Hence, the volume offers three different tools to the readers for their research and studies, which are able to clarify questions and portray the state of art of an anthropological debate. In this process of research, particularly precious is the meta-textual apparatus that enrich the main entries and the biographical profiles. All of them are provided with a short list of key readings to further and complete the researches.

In its attempt of present a state of art of socio-cultural anthropology, the book deals with a vast array of subjects, spanning from "Aboriginal Australia" (by Robert Layton and Megan Warin) to "Youth" (by Deborah Durham). Analytically, they include ethnographic surveys of the main socio-geographical areas explored by anthropologists, present the history of different international anthropological traditions and some of their most influential scholars, present some of the main sub-disciplines, and explain key features

of the theoretical apparatus of social and cultural anthropology.

Since the first edition, new entries have been included in order to fill the gaps left in the previous edition and to reflect substantial transformations the have occurred in anthropology in the previous decade and the establishment of new sub-fields, such as medical anthropology, or new disciplinary interests and methodology. For example, among the new entries we can find "diaspora" (by Vered Amit), "neoliberalism" (by Andrew Kipnis), "multi-site ethnography" (by Matei Candea). Where, on one hand, the extension of the theme treated is able to portray the vastness of the areas of enquiry of contemporary anthropology, on the other, it results in a lack of the in-depth focus that can be found in specialised encyclopaedic works such as Lee and Daly's The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers, (2004), Ember and Ember's Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology (2004) or Harrington, Marshall and Müller's The Human Economy (2006). In this respect, the volume appears as a possible first tool, particularly fit the early stages of research, that does not substitute more specific publications.

Moreover, this publication still appears quite anglophone-centric. The claim of internationalism that sustains the volume is achieved by the editors, 'by combining "social" and "cultural", the American and the European' (pg. xii). Although in doing so they 'tried to indicate our desire to produce a volume that reflects the diversity of anthropology as a genuinely global discipline' (pg. xii), the result is an implicit equalising between "global" and English-speaking. This tendency, particularly marked in the first edition, is somehow stemmed through the inclusion of new entries about "other" international traditions such as the Scandinavian (by Jonathan Spencer), the Japanese (by J.S. Eades) or the Latino-American (by Sian Lazar). Unfortunately, the ideas that arose in those countries or geographic areas are scarcely put in correlation with the ones produced by English-speaking scholarship outside the boundaries of the historio-graphic entries. Thus, although the existence of other anthropological traditions is acknowledged, the volume ends up portraying a "global" anthropology whose propulsive and creative motors is anglophone-centric, i.e. a position that is being increasingly challenged and a globality through juxtaposition that is just starting to experiment with new grounds of integration.

In sum, in spite this remark, the Encyclopaedia appears to be a good resource with many excellent contributions. It is a useful tool for students and scholars starting their research on new topics or wanting to know more about the discipline, its fields of research and different scholarly traditions that distinguish it.

MICHELE FILIPPO FONTEFRANCESCO
Durham University (United Kingdom)

Collins-Mayo, Sylvia and Pink Dandelion (eds.). 2011. *Religion and Youth (Theology and Religion in Interdisciplinary Perspective Series in Association with the BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group)*. Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate. 302 pp. Pb.: £16.19. ISBN: 9780754667681.

Affected by the worldwide processes of globalisation, lived worlds, including the religious aspect, have gone through drastic changes. Young people tend to absorb, produce and represent on-going socio-cultural transformations. *Religion and Youth* is an ambitious interdisciplinary publication that offers comprehensive information about the central aspects concerning the contemporary situation.

The volume covers twenty-seven articles by scholars from various academic fields (sociology, religion studies, educational studies, theology, anthropology, criminology, psychology, and Latin American studies). The contents are laid out in six thematic sections. Old and new methodological perspectives are introduced in parts: I (*Generations and their Legacy*) and VI (*Researching Youth Religion*). Through a macro-level survey of research, the articles give an idea of the large processes in few western countries in Part II (*The Big Picture: Surveys of Belief and Practice*). Some insights into micro-level individual religious experiences are also present in Part III (*Expression*). Moreover, the discussion of the most outstanding theoretical issues concerning the modern religious field, such as identity and faith transmission, are included in Parts IV (*Identity*) and V (*Transmission*).

Sylvia Collins-Mayo, one of the two editors, opens the discussion in the introductory text about the widely studied secularisation theme by asking the fundamental question: if young people are less religious than before or if some new substituting forms of spiritualities exist (p. 2). Looking for answers to this question Flory and Miller describe current youth religiosity as "expressive communalism", a contemporary form of spirituality that underlines simultaneously individual experience and search for sense of belonging (ch. 1, pp. 9–15). The article also points out another important factor: multiple influences of new digital media in religious worldviews among contemporary youth. Furthermore, Beckford summarises the central aspect considering digital media and religion in the volumes foreword: 'it can foster *bricolage* and the creation of do-it-yourself types of religion and spirituality that manage to combine intense subjectivity with emergent collective identities' (p. xxiii).

Traditionally, the sociology of religion has based its analysis on the generational or cohort group studies that are introduced and discussed in the volume from different perspectives by Flory and Miller; Collins-Mayo and Beaudoin; Voas; Lynch. Voas points out that the key concepts in sociological youth religion studies, such as generation and cohorts, are complex terms and not always applied in similar ways among scholars. He also reminds readers that emerging demographic alterations can also influence religious change in modern societies, in addition to variation among cohorts (pp. 26–27). Lynch continues even further and criticises the whole of traditional generation studies, suggesting that fragmented contemporary societies should be researched, not only horizontally by looking through the vast cohort groups, but also vertically, by giving more attention to gender, class, sexual orientation and migration phenomena (p. 37). As the quantitative

method has strong roots in sociology of religion, it gains one whole section in the volume (Part II). Other methodological approaches are also included in Part VI, about sensitivity in field research (Collins-Mayo and Rankin), different levels on participation (Abramson) and the gender perspective (Aune and Vincett). Interesting qualitative visual method is also introduced in the article by Dunlop & Richter.

Sometimes, the quantitative method is indeed the only way when the aim is to get a large sample of data. However, as the authors often admit, there exist some difficulties when interpreting and making conclusions through this type of research material. Frequently, the survey settings narrow the possibilities to observe cultural details, and can lead the research to a quite different conclusion compared to the situation where qualitative fieldwork would be included. As our contemporary societies are evermore multicultural, penetrated by global socio-political processes, the study of religion should definitely go, as much as possible, to the grass-root level and concentrate in defining the contextual settings, as it is in these changing local settings that contemporary religious and spiritual ideas emerge and are put into action.

The contents of this volume ably represent some parts of the Western world, with details from England, Wales, USA, Australia, Scandinavia and even from South Africa and Brazil. Still it largely lacks a "non-western" presence. However, Pirjo K. Virtanen's article delights the reader with its geographical focus on young Amazonian Indians in Brazil. Virtanen finds that shamanic practices are the most powerful instruments in creating and building social networks among local native youth. In many non-Western cultures, the impacts of Western politics, market forces and cultural influences are as apparent as they are in the West. Moreover, in many cases it is exactly through this kind of processes that people become more interested of their own ethnic or national origins. Hence, for emigrants in the West and for post-colonial country citizens back in their homelands, religious aspects seem to continue as an important factor in the construction of contemporary identities.

Concluding the journey with the scholars in *Religion and Youth,* Pink Dandelion affirms that in the West young people differ crucially from their parents in questions of religion and spirituality and consequently there exists a radical difference in the construction of religiosity compared to the earlier generations. Secularisation seems to exist primarily in relation to traditional religious institutions, and accessibility to digital technology has a profound influence in the processes of youth spirituality. Moreover, new forms of spirituality reflect neo-liberal consumerism and the search for new communities.

Because of the global inter-connections between and within cultures, it would be intriguing to look more extensively across the geographical and cultural borders, by means of understanding the dynamics between local cultural differences, globally recognisable religious-like ideas and globally spread influences in the religious phenomena.

ELEONORA RIVIELLO
University of Helsinki (Finland)