

some of the older male participants in Bulgaria, and the place of religion in older women's stories.

Clearly, in an edited book of this nature, there is a variation of content and style, and a wealth of specific detail; but there is a consistent faithfulness to the narratives and personalities of the research participants which breathes life into the academic rigour of the writing. Certain themes weave in and out of the stories. The Bulgarian and Romanian material raises questions of what it means to be 'religious' in socialist and post-socialist countries, and the link between belief and religious/cultural identity; and the nature of religious belief and practice in contemporary secularised and post-Christian Britain is discussed.

The final part of the book reviews some of the major themes highlighted in earlier chapters: the importance of historical context, the significance of rituals in negotiating life transitions, the role of beliefs and values in later life, and the importance of a gendered focus. Perhaps not surprisingly given the complexity of the project, the book concludes with a recognition that there are no simple answers, and a return to the reflexivity of the research process, with a series of quotes from members of the team on the impact of the project on them at a personal level.

This book offers a valuable contribution to researchers in gerontology, the sociology of religion and to the wider social sciences more generally. Although it is not, and makes no claim to be, a work of theology, there is much in here that would also be of interest to clergy and church leaders who encounter the religious beliefs and practices of elderly members on a day-to-day basis. I found it a fascinating book, with a depth of scholarship and a genuine commitment to the research process and the stories of elderly people living out their lives, their faith and their values in the context of social change.

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doi:10.1017/S0144686X14000579

Julia Twigg, *Fashion and Age: Dress, the Body and Later Life*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London and New York, 2013, 184 pp., pbk £19.99, ISBN 13: 978 1 84788 695 8.

Is the nature of later life and our cultural understanding of it changing? Do fashion and dress play a role in this? Does the fashion industry reflect and shape contemporary ideas of 'moving younger' at older age? How do older people experience their age in relation to dress? Exploring questions about the ways in which fashion and age can and do intersect, Julia Twigg brings concerns about age, where youth usually reigns. While fashion studies, by focusing on the youthful and transgressive, have traditionally reproduced the norms of the fashion system, there is a lot to be learned from bringing age into the focus of this field. *Fashion and Age* shows how the investigation of clothing and age enhances our understanding of age as a 'master identity' that constitutes social difference. Twigg challenges

common assumptions about both new possibilities for ageing and dressing 'successfully' – which often means nothing more than youthfully – as well as about older consumers as 'frustrated shoppers'. Her analysis is sensitive to both, how cultural ideas and conventions regarding fashion and dress configure women's embodied identity, as well as to how such ideas and conventions are negotiated and resisted. This balanced account contributes to debates about gender and age, identity and the body, consumerist lifestyle, the reconstitution of ageing, and the politics of ageing.

Fashion magazines have, as Twigg observes, a hard time catering to older readers, while keeping up their positive image, which is inextricably linked to the ideals of beauty and youth. Drawing from interviews with fashion editors and journalists, Twigg shows how their strategies to negotiate these contradictory demands primarily rest on concepts like 'ageless style' and 'anti-ageing'. Fashion magazines represent and shape a positive cultural image of later life by offering their readers imaginative spaces to escape the lived reality of older age, and by providing advice about how older women can age youthfully. However, precisely by doing so, they also limit the possibility of growing older successfully quite literally to editing out the signs of age. An equally contradictory dynamic can be observed in how the fashion industry addresses older consumers. As for fashion editors, a central challenge for the fashion industry is to reconcile negative images of later life with the inherently youthful image of fashion. To meet the demands of older consumers, it needs to cater to their wish for attractive, successful and fashionable – that is youthful – styles. However, these styles do also have to be fit to the customer's older bodies, and to cultural assumptions about how they have to be dressed in appropriate ways. Fashion designers adjust cut and colours to do justice to bodily and cultural change. They have to balance the ideal of youthful styles with the physical reality of bodily ageing. While design directors assess the general trend of 'moving younger' in positive and celebratory terms, Twigg points us to the fact that the availability of youthful styles does not merely free older women from negative cultural conventions about age-appropriate looks, it also imposes new limitations.

Julia Twigg's account of the fashion system shows just how pervasive cultural norms about the age-appropriateness of dress are. This becomes especially clear where older women have thoroughly internalised such norms. Drawing on in-depth interviews with older women, Twigg finds that respondents often find it difficult to strike the balance between neither dressing 'too old' nor 'too young'. Yet, they do not explicitly challenge the limiting ageist assumptions about how their older bodies can (not) legitimately be displayed in certain styles, they seem to take them for granted. This is not to say, however, that there is no room for resistance. Twigg illustrates how such resistance, given the often contradictory demands posed by consumerist culture, is necessarily ambiguous. Older women's choice to opt out from the world of fashion can be interpreted as retreat, as much as it can be read as resistance to the imperative to adopt youthful looks and lifestyles. In contrast, older women's choice to adopt youthful and sexy looks can be interpreted as confirmation to dominant norms about

femininity, as much as it can be read as resistance against ageist ideas about the asexuality of older women's bodies. Twigg's assessment of women's biographical narratives about their ways to dress across the lifespan shows how there is as much continuity of style as there is change.

Twigg's work is positioned at the crossroads of cultural gerontology and fashion studies. Readers affiliated with each of these fields will find themselves drawn into her stunning argument about how fashion and age do indeed intersect. Her detailed account of the ways in which the design of clothes is age-coded makes it directly relevant to fashion designers. Women of any age, to whom fashion is dear, will find this book to be an exciting and illuminating read.

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doi:10.1017/S0144686X14000580

Philip Taylor (ed.), *Older Workers in an Ageing Society: Critical Topics in Research and Policy*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK, 2013, 288 pp., hbk £80.00, ISBN 13: 978 1 78254 009 0.

This edited collection critically discusses the labour market status of older workers together with how they are considered by employers and policy makers. Its aim is to contribute to wider public debate about perceptions of older workers and what it means to retire and grow old. Taking an international perspective, the book is organised into five parts, each with its own theme. The five themes are: public policy for an ageing workforce; investing in ageing human capital; redesigning workplaces for an ageing society; generations at the workplace; and managing labour supply in an ageing society.

Each chapter represents a mini case study of context and experience and, with varied writing styles and analytical approaches, each reads very differently from one another. Working from my own research interests, I was particularly engaged by three of the chapters. The first of these, by Masato Oka (Chapter 4), discusses the place of older workers in Japan, which is working towards assuring employment security by 2025 for all workers until the age of 65 in the form of a continuous employment scheme. In Japan, there is currently a 'gap' between the mandatory retirement age of 60 and the full pension age of 65, and the scheme is designed to provide 'bridging' employment between the two. Oka argues that the scheme, characterised by low pay, is in reality a publicly subsidised cheap labour system that has the potential to restrict access by younger workers to the labour market, with the attendant risk of intergenerational conflict.

The subject of lifelong learning in the work context is the topic of Chapter 6 by Harvey Sterns and Diane Spokus, featured in Part Two of the volume. Drawing on the context of the United States of America (USA), this chapter highlights both the demand for older workers and the cultural restriction on their employment arising from beliefs that older workers are less likely to learn and so adapt to changing work environments. The authors