been lost. For instance, in her acknowledgements she speaks of visiting the homes of her subjects' descendants and sitting at their kitchen tables working on source material. As most of us who work on history of the lived experience of religion know, this is often the only way to unearth the historical record; and it is a testimony to Lamontagne's tenacity and interpersonal skills that she has been able to achieve the trust necessary to gain access to what are often precious family heirlooms. This meticulousness is translated into the structure of the monograph itself. The main text is prefaced by a section on terminology which provides a useful glossary when reading the case studies and prevents the narrative of these women's lived experiences from becoming overwhelmed by explanations of beliefs, such as transubstantiation, or movements, such as modernism. Lamontagne is good at expressing the meaning of these ideas and terms in a simple manner without losing depth or importance. Similarly, in the introduction and first chapter, 'Catholicism and Lay Womanhood', the research is sited within the historical context and the historiography in a lucid style which provides a robust foundation for the case studies and again allows the reader to fully appreciate the significance of these women's lives and experiences within the Catholic Church. However, this monograph really comes to life in the case studies of the four women: Fletcher, Petre, Batten and Hall who each in their own way challenged traditional perceptions of Catholic womanhood and in doing so moved away from conventional gender roles. Through their stories, Lamontagne shows that 'Catholicism was, in many ways, much more accepting or tolerant of alternative interpretations of lay Catholic womanhood than commonly supposed' (p. 2). Lamontagne also shows that class was as important as gender to the experiences of these women, affecting how they asserted themselves within the institution.

Lamontagne tells us that 'these women are not meant to be representative of all Catholic women, but their stories demonstrate that in interactions between Catholic women and the Catholic hierarchy there was considerable space for negotiation' (p. 11). Throughout this excellent monograph, she proves this argument consistently and persuasively resulting in an exceptional contribution to the historiography of modern British Catholicism.

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Paul Richards and Perri 6, *Mary Douglas*, Berghahn: Oxford, 2023, pp.164, £107, ISBN: 978-1-80073-979-6

In 1995 *The Times Literary Supplement* drew up a list of the one hundred most influential books of the previous century. Mary Douglas (1921–2007) was one of only four women to be included. She had held

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Chairs at UCL, North Western and Princeton universities. Spending her whole post-school academic life in secular institutions of higher education or learning, she was awarded a Fellowship of the British Academy (1989) and a Damehood of the British Empire (2007). In 2001 Douglas was interviewed for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Original Minds* series alongside Umberto Eco, Amartya Sen, Susan Sontag and Noam Chomsky. The programme's opening descriptor for her was the word 'genius'. Her obituaries, nevertheless, wondered why she was not more recognised.

Paul Richards and Perri Six's new biography of an extraordinary female intellectual is welcome then for the effective way it delineates her empirical and theoretical work at the heart of anthropology, a discipline that she was passionate to affirm as more (social) science than art. Indeed, whereas Richard Fardon's earlier biography (1997) may be described as rounder in its purview—and slightly constrained by its preparation before the digitisation of so many publications and archives—Richards and Six should be congratulated for having produced a thoroughly intellectual biography. In doing so they also set out to re-balance the recognition that the full spread of Douglas's work deserves by drawing attention to brilliant innovations in her later work, especially *How Institutions Think* (1986), as well as the more widely read works of the first part of her career such as *Purity and Danger* (1966) and *Natural Symbols* (1970). Taking Douglas's whole personality seriously they nevertheless do not address the extent to which her work was fully shaped by—or shaped—her conceptions of Catholicism.

For the last three decades Richards and Six have researched West African conflict zones and the political anthropology of Western governmental institutions and political decision making respectively, and their reading of Douglas for their new book draws out her relevance for assessing human behaviours and thought styles in such contexts.

Notably, they explore through a hypothecated example how a Douglasian might read public policy decision-making in a pandemic. They are at pains to show how Douglas teases out social patterns, unwritten rules, habits of behaviour and codes of conduct that constrain, liberate and order human actions beyond what rational choice theorists might advance as economic interest; and profoundly more nuanced in insight than those entrenched in a view of the Enlightenment as a foundational shift to individual rationality at the expense of any kind of tradition. *Contra* such perspectives (and, for that matter, the work of dominant contemporary English sociologists of religion such as Grace Davie) for Douglas we are what we do together, and what we do is the definitive force in shaping what we think or 'believe'. This generates structurations which are akin to tradition which —albeit very dynamically — condition how we

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do things. To defeat 'radical extremism' then it would, for Douglas, be far better to get those involved in conflict to do things together—almost anything together that is positive in fact— than try and advance 'moderate' ideas or 'new beliefs' whether they be of nation, Islam or social grievance.

While the influence of Durkheim is acknowledged and Douglas's complex explorations of biblical texts, departments of state and economic risk carefully elucidated, for those familiar with Catholic intellectual traditions and history this important new book all the same opens a considerable number of questions.

Douglas's father was a colonial officer and so she was returned to England for her schooling. Here she met the Society of the Sacred Heart who, after the death of her mother, played an important part in both her upbringing and her intellectual development. Expelled from France, the Order still sustained many French speaking sisters who ran the Sacred Heart Convent School in Roehampton, now Woldingham School. Throughout her life Douglas would pay fulsome tribute to the 'sophistication' of these 'theologian' Sisters who she met there. While undertaking her later studies in Oxford, Douglas lived in the sisters' residence in Norham Gardens. From this time she had a 'feeling for hierarchy'.

A theological way to describe the consequences of such a formation is Timothy Larsen's claim in his *The Slain God* (2014) that Douglas remained 'fully a Christian and fully an anthropologist' all her life. The significance of Six and Richards' presentation of Douglas's work in its own right though begs the more important question as to what extent she had found a way to integrate Catholic precepts and ontologies into her work — or whether these were her own and unspoken version of hidden rules, habits and classifications that she advanced elsewhere and which she simply could not help, *pace* her own theorising, but carry into social analysis. Alternatively, was her relative lack of recognition due to a latent anti-Catholicism? Other eminent Catholic English social scientists of the same generation, such as the LSE's Terence Morris (1931–2013), had this experience while in his *Christianity, Development and modernity in Africa* (2015). SOAS's Paul Gifford makes caustic comments about Douglas in this regard. Similarly, the authors of the present study report clashes between Douglas and the sometime Director of the LSE, Anthony Giddens as well as her colleagues at UCL.

Both Fardon's biography and Six and Richards are close to silent on what she 'did' with Catholic intellectual collaborators and yet 'what they did together' might be at least be partially relevant for what she 'thought'. A very brief enquiry in modern records finds her befriending the late Regent of Blackfriars Hall, Oxford Cornelius Ernst OP, giving a lecture and attending seminars at Blackfriars and the Catholic

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Theological Association, speaking at the University of London Catholic chaplaincy, visiting the Master of the Dominican Order while on visits to Rome, and corresponding with Professor Eamon Duffy FBA on mutual interests. In a recently published *festschrift* (2023) for Abbot Geoffrey Scott OSB, Duffy in turn reports Douglas *Natural Symbols* as having a transformative effect on his historical method in *The Stripping of The Altars* (1992). In 2015, the Telegraph columnist Christopher Howse, who knew Douglas, wrote of her as a 'great Catholic' in *The Tablet* and from their conversations maintains that the core message of her *oeuvre* is that we are all 'meta-liturgists'. Meanwhile, at the outset she had chosen as her doctoral supervisor Edward Evans Pritchard, at that time a recent convert to Catholicism.

In summary, Paul Richards and Perri Six have written an important book. In a comparatively short space, it covers a huge amount of ground. Worthy of reading lists in anthropology, history, public policy studies, religion and economics it also implicitly makes the case for further research: as the archives of Orders, their schools and Catholic institutions become more readily accessible, and while many of those who knew Douglas endure to provide oral sources, a third biography that located Douglas as an influential British Catholic intellectual under-recognised both by her own discipline and by her religious confreres is now due.

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John Carter Wood, ed., *Christian Modernities in Britain and Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, Abingdon: Routledge, (2023), pp. 174, £ 96.00, ISBN: 9781032413945

The front cover of John Carter Wood's edited collection *Christian Modernities in Britain and Ireland in the Twentieth Century* is adorned with a line-drawing sketch of a cityscape. Urban landscapes have served as an enduring source of inspiration for modern artists - from the impressionistic views of Paris depicted by nineteenth century giants Monet and Pissarro to the abstract depictions of New York created by Mondrian in the mid-twentieth century. Historians and artists alike have explored the intersections of urban and religious life, with modernist artists like Marc Chagall fusing traditional religious imagery with city life ('Paris Through the Window', 1913; 'White Crucifixion', 1938; 'The Soul of the City', 1945). Meanwhile, the expansion of European cities in the nineteenth century, and the associated long-term processes of industrialisation, urbanisation, and mass migration, are familiar concepts to historians seeking to understand

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