

movement with the tools of social movement literature, and I think my view is limited. I used the tools I have. In fact, this is a book I once thought would not be written. I was afraid of it in terms of what it might do to ISKCON and the people I know...[but] I realised I needed closure on the book. Efforts to put it aside weren't working. I was going on leave and needed to not have to think more about it. I wanted some completion on it.

Perhaps the author has reached closure and does 'not have to think more about it', but his book remains, obliging readers to think deeply and consider the limitations of both scholarship and faith.

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The Founder of the Hare Krishnas as Seen by Devotees: A Cognitive Study of Religious Charisma. By Kimmo Ketola. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008. pp. xiii, 234. €125.00

What is it that makes a religious leader charismatic? Is there something special about the embodiment of charisma, or should we instead examine the people who find these leaders charismatic? Perhaps there is another alternative if we look at religious charisma representations as a pan-human phenomena, something that occurs naturally.

The 'naturalness of religion thesis' in the cognitive sciences affirms religion as a human institution, which some interpret as '*only... social, political, gendered, economic, biological, etc*', in other words, completely ordinary (Russell McCutcheon, *Critics Not Caretakers*. State University of New York Press, 2001, p. x; italics original). The 'etc.' could certainly include the cognitive aspect of religion because this aspect, Kimmo Ketola argues, 'suggests that the seemingly extraordinary cultural ideas and behaviors found in religion can be explained by entirely ordinary cognitive processes and mechanisms that the cognitive sciences have been able to elucidate' (p. 20). As he demonstrates in *The Founder of the Hare Krishnas as Seen by Devotees: A Cognitive Study of Religious Charisma*, the nascent cognitive science of religion is not involved with the current trend to deemphasize the belief aspect of religion. Instead, Ketola is inclined to analyze belief in discarnate

beings, spirits, and gods—or in this case, humans that seem to possess a mysterious essence as the basis of religious charisma—in examining why certain types of religious ideas recur while others do not. The author believes that comparing a variety of religious leaders will not help us to understand the nature of religious charisma, but looking at the beliefs of their followers will tell us much. To this end, he has developed an incisive portrait of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), sidestepping the countercultural explanation of Stillson Judah's *Hare Krishna and the Counterculture* (Wiley, 1974), because ISKCON's founder A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896–1977) contradicted the ideas and habits of the American countercultural generation. Likewise, the identity crisis resolution of Francine Jeanne Daner's *The American Children of Krishna: A Study of the Hare Krishna Movement* (Holt, Rinehart & Wiston, 1976) will not serve as an explanation of religious charisma. Ketola's book is a useful complement to Burke Rochford's monumental social interactionist ethnography *Hare Krishna Transformed* (New York University Press, 2007), which focuses on gender roles, family life, the participation of the ethnic Hindu community, and economics to explain the changing face of the Hare Krishna religion in America.

Like Larry Shinn's balanced portrait of ISKCON, *The Dark Lord: Cult Images and the Hare Krishnas in America* (The Westminster Press, 1987), which finds Prabhupada's teachings to have a consistent system of internal logic, *The Founder of the Hare Krishnas* takes a closer look at the psychology of ISKCON, because 'every system includes a tendency to foster belief in its legitimacy' (p. 26). This is a critical point of departure in the analysis of an Indian religion outside of India: 'For a Westerner, a charismatic Hindu guru is almost inevitably a prophet, who proclaims a radically different version of reality' (p. 29). A.N. Chatterjee has claimed that Prabhupada's 'fundamentally complete philosophical system' is the main attraction for Westerners (in Steven J. Rosen, *Vaisnavism*. Folk Books, 1993, p. 13) but Ketola is careful to separate attraction to the charming god from Prabhupada's charisma, drawing upon the personal-institutional religious charisma dichotomy of Max Weber in conjunction with Harvey Whitehouse's theory of doctrinal and imagistic modes of religiosity explained by five psychological and seven sociopolitical variables: transmissive frequency, level of arousal, principle memory system, ritual meaning, techniques of revelation; social cohesion, leadership, inclusivity/exclusivity, spread of teachings, scale, degree of uniformity, and organizational structure. The most important variable for the construction

of charisma is memory. The doctrinal, discursive mode of religiosity features semantic memory schemas and implicit scripts, which for ISKCON relies on scriptures and a systematic teaching delivered by Prabhupada, while the imagistic mode has episodic, or 'flashbulb' memory of intense experiences. Ketola shows how ISKCON has the doctrinal mode as its major theme and the imagistic mode as its minor theme. Although the doctrinal mode typically is not involved with mysticism, it can be, and the combination of ISKCON temple lectures, singing and dancing, elaborate altar worship, and sacred food produce ecstasy, although of a controlled nature. The tension between the two modes makes for a dynamic system: 'Prabhupada's theology formed a highly sophisticated and elaborate system of philosophical statements and yet the concept of God he advocated was as personal, intimate, and richly detailed as one could possibly hope for' (p. 206). Nevertheless, Ketola points to the fact that he restricts his observations 'to the more ordinary feelings and emotions, rather than special and exceptional ones' (p. 164). These ordinary feelings and emotions that Ketola analyzes in relation to the guru form the differential gulf between master and student as the basis for charisma, and explains the functional aspect of the organization. Ketola stops just short of claiming that the devotee's intellectual interest in the guru's formal school is due to the respect felt for the guru, and not the other way around. One might wonder if both explanations have validity.

This book should appeal to social scientists and scholars working in religious studies, and may be accessible to general readers who are willing to entertain a few technical terms. Beyond the requisite discussion of standard primary texts important for ISKCON such as Prabhupada's translations with commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhagavata Purana*, a scriptural account of the earthly career of Krishna, Ketola uses participant disclosures in the form of biographies of Prabhupada, diaries, and autobiographies written by disciples to argue that, for his Western disciples, Prabhupada's legitimacy was due to his personal qualities, not his tradition. The author contends that these unsolicited sources are excellent unobtrusive methods for obtaining 'naturally occurring data' concerning the cultural world of ISKCON including emic organization of categories and mental models (p. 13), while admitting their analytical usefulness as specific sites of power for ISKCON leaders after the founder's passing.

Ketola does not actually pursue issues of power among Prabhupada's disciples in his analysis of charisma, for he does not include any reflections by disciples who remained disciples but disagreed with the tendency to deify

their spiritual master, who, as even Ketola has reported, was often exasperated with his disciples' belief that he was omniscient, and stated firmly that his bodily effluvia, for example, should not be considered as holy relics when a disciple wanted to treat them as such. For ISKCON, the interplay of doctrine and ritual propriety is critical because their nexus is where Western devotees learn the proper respect for a guru in ceremonies that reflect South Asian hierarchical roles in the guru-disciple relationship. But Ketola perpetuates, in my view, a methodological problem that has plagued writing on ISKCON from the very beginning, for he quotes only 'senior devotees' and does not attempt to gather statements from the 'rank and file'. Further, he selectively concentrates on some senior devotees and ignores others, even disciples who have written hagiographies that he endorses as 'especially noteworthy' (p. 8). For instance, an early disciple, Howard Wheeler (Hayagriva Dasa), wrote, "Like a master weaver at the loom, the Swami weaves his discourse around Krishna. 'Krishna has His name, His associates, His pastimes, His transcendental body, and His abode. He's not something void or impersonal. No. He's a person.'" For us, this is the biggest news of all' (Howard Wheeler, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*. Palace Press, 1985, p. 11). The reader will notice two sources of Prabhupada's charisma in this quote from a senior disciple—a reference to Prabhupada's personal quality of mastery of discourse, and the discourse itself centered on a charismatic god—the biggest news of all.

Nevertheless, the book's focus on charisma in a specific new religious movement provides an excellent introduction to the alleged universal (and I must say, convincing) principles of the cognitive science of religion, particularly the chapter 'Ritual Frame And Its Vulnerability'. Originating in the work of social psychologist Erving Goffman, framing refers to pan-human cognitive structures, 'principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters (Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980, p. 6). For instance, vital to Ketola's thesis is that Prabhupada's charisma was constructed when his statements and behaviors violated previously existing frames in exhibitions of Goffmanian 'stunts' such as his self-control in situations that would have vexed others, or in 'tensions of frames' such as a purported childlike quality even though he was a septuagenarian, and personal habits and way of dressing from his Indian background (p. 138). Awed by Prabhupada, his disciples also embellished his agency, for instance, with tales of their spiritual master controlling their lives from afar.

Although the connection between Prabhupada's charisma and descriptions of the altar worship of the deity of Krishna is unclear—without an affirmation that Prabhupada derived some of his charisma from the worship of a charismatic god—the force of Ketola's explanations of cognitive frame violations in ISKCON, fortunately, transcends some of the details of his argument. The potential of this research for understanding not only charisma but also the transmission of culture in a new religious movement is far reaching. And, this is a must read for students of ritual, because Ketola has revealed some of the ordinary processes that come into play when an extraordinary teaching is exemplified by a prophet who managed to simultaneously establish a Geertzian 'aura of factuality' about 'a doctrinal religion that has managed to avert tedium' in its everyday rituals (p. 82). Obviously, then, Kimmo has good news for ISKCON. But I read *The Founder of the Hare Krishnas* as a cogent demonstration of the construction of religious charisma. Whether or not the charismatic individual is extraordinary, the processes by which he or she becomes to be understood as such are entirely ordinary.

This is a solidly researched and fascinating book. Minor reservations aside, this reviewer eagerly awaits further refinements by Kimmo Ketola to his philosophy of religious charisma, as well as to the cognitive science of religion.

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The Hare Krishna Movement: Forty Years of Chant and Change. Edited by Graham Dwyer and Richard J. Cole. London: I.B. Taurus, 2007. pp. x, 296. £37.00.

Popularly known in the West as the Hare Krishna Movement, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is now engaged in a 'search for self-identity,' argues Thomas J. Hopkins in his essay in *The Hare Krishna Movement: Forty Years of Chant and Change*. In this search for self-identity, 'at stake are ISKCON's fundamental values and basic commitments, the core identity or self-identity that must be understood and accepted by all of its members before the central mission can be properly carried out' (p. 186).

Forty Years of Chant and Change attempts to help ISKCON settle its identity. Some of the contributors to this book write as progressive ISKCON