

products instead of the natural materials and plant sources that had been essential to the core traditions, and offered mail-order distribution of curios and merchandise of generic quality in lieu of local modes of community exchange. Also culpable in the shift to “snake oil” Hoodoo, argues Hazzard-Donald, was the professional medical establishment, which disrupted medicinal supply networks that had been controlled by African American midwives, root workers, and domestic treaters, thus undermining the efficacy of Hoodoo as an authoritative healing tradition (153). Notably absent in this analysis is the role that religion played in the diminishment of black belt Hoodoo. Did Christianity in any way contribute to its declension? Did alternative or competing theologies foster the emergence of imitative and hybridized forms of outsider Hoodoo? Hazzard-Donald decries the displacement of old Hoodoo as the marketeered Hoodoo industry superseded African American traditions with consumer-oriented, profit-driven styles in a pattern of “racially targeted, economic and cultural exploitation” such as that which prevailed under “colonialism and slavery” (180). The discussion falls short, however, in that she does not make fully clear why, in this specific period, contending forces brought about the demise of such an enduring and essential institution.

Hazzard-Donald views Hoodoo atavistically, lamenting its potential loss as a “national African American cultural product and spiritual tradition” (180). Insider claims to authenticity and proprietary knowledge may alienate some readers, but it is with a profound respect for Hoodoo as a living practice that Hazzard-Donald brings a kind of moral authority to her scholarship. In so doing she also distills many of the polarizing dynamics present in Hoodoo-Conjure communities today. The implications are great and the stakes are high for scholars, practitioners and others who seek to understand meaning in Hoodoo and African American religion, and to appreciate the value of tradition in the midst of change.

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The Charismatic Leadership Phenomenon in Radical and Militant Islam,
By Haroro J. Ingram. Ashgate, 2013. 252 pp. \$119.95 cloth.

This book belongs to the growing field of “national security studies,” “insurgency studies,” “counter-terrorism” and “terrorism prevention studies,” “conflict resolution studies,” etc. that has been quite successful (judging by a spate of recent publications and job openings in Western academia) in establishing its usefulness as an academic discipline. The author’s main goal is to examine what he describes as “the Transformative Charisma Phenomenon in Islamist Radicalism and Militancy” (4). To

avoid the constant repetition of this cumbersome phrase, the Author uses a rather unpronounceable abbreviation: “TCPIRM” throughout his 250-page study. The graph (Fig. I.1) in the “Introduction” alerts the reader to the theoretical nature of the study under review. The tripartite pyramid depicted here rests on a broad theoretical base (Part I) that supports (in the diminishing order) the contextual (Part II) and case study (Part III) segments of the monograph. After discussing various interpretations and types of charismatic leadership (beginning with Max Weber onwards), the author outlines the historical context that gave rise to the “Islamic toolkit” of “charismatic leaders (77), followed by the case studies of some major representatives of “TCPIRM”, namely, Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, ‘Abdullah ‘Azzam, Usama Ibn (bin) Ladin and Anwar al-‘Awlaqi (transliteration of their names is mine).

Whereas, as the author himself recognizes, “The field is flooded with literature devoted to examining of lives, emergence and role of charismatic leaders fronting radical and militant Islamist groups,” he explains the actuality of his study by his use of “charismatic leadership theory” in the belief that “charismatic leaders are vital to the emergence of radical and militant Islamist movements” (3–4). The author then discusses at length the strengths and weakness of various academic takes on charisma and its bearers, which, as he repeatedly acknowledges, rest on the premises established by its founder, Max Weber. Freud’s “psychoanalytic approach” to “the charismatic relationship” is duly recognized (14–15), but is abandoned in favor of the approaches “spawned” (sic!) by “Weber’s theory” (22). Enumerating and dissecting them occupies the author throughout Part I of the book. The author’s own approach seems to be irenic: “within the myriad of complex debates and opinions” (21) he finds many valuable ideas that he then integrates into his own “quinquipartite framework of charismatic leadership” (46 and 226). This framework emphasizes the interdependency and reciprocity of “leader-follower relationship (charisma)”; a widespread feeling of uncertainty and crisis that facilitates the emergence of charismatic leaders; the latter’s deliberate use of society’s *centers* (shared narratives of identity, religious belonging and history/mythology) to shape “the charismatic collective’s cognitive perception” and “in-group identity”; and various means of “routinizing charisma” (45–46). Once the author’s reliance on and commitment to “charismatic leadership theory” is fully ascertained, he, quite naturally (and perhaps unwittingly) begins to see present and past events through its prism. Thus, according to the author, “Figures such as Abraham and Moses in Judaism, Jesus and many of the Twelve Apostles in Christianity, and, of course, Muhammad in Islam, all generated charisma – at least in part – by building on the ideology and charismatic capital of predecessors” (44). Aside from the legitimate, but not critical question as to who Abraham’s “charismatic predecessors” might have been, this approach strikes me as highly

problematic in light of the largely legendary (mythologized) and constantly debated (constructed and reconstructed) legacy left by these “charismatic leaders” of old. By venturing into the fields of expertise that the author knows through popular second-hand accounts, he willy-nilly exposes himself to criticism, if not ridicule. In this regard, he exemplifies the army of experts on “terrorism/security/conflict resolution studies” who may be well versed in abstract theory, but whose superficial acquaintance with concrete academic fields and societies/cultures they use as their case studies vitiates their theory-driven ruminations.

This lack of a proper academic training comes to the fore as soon as the author sets out to elucidate “the Islamic toolkit” of the charismatic leaders (Part II) who are examined in Part III of the book. It is not only thoroughly secondary, but uses as proof texts quotations from popular narratives by the likes of Karen Armstrong, who herself based her “ecumenical” and “empathetic” presentations of “Islam for beginners” exclusively on secondary literature. With the author’s Arabic, as will be shown, probably non-existent, we have one dilettante’s account rehashed by another. Bits and pieces of information hastily plucked by the author from his reading list in Islamic history and Islamic studies hardly do justice to the “Islamist toolkit”. One can argue that it is not the author’s major task, but it is a real pain for a scholar of Islam and Islamic societies to read. Consider, for instance, the author’s rendering of the Islamic concept *ihsan* as “realization” without any explanation of what this hotly contested and value-laden concept means for different groups of Muslims. The same can be said by the author’s account of *jihad* that features quotations from a few randomly chosen studies of the phenomenon with a banal conclusion that interpretations of *jihad* are always contextual. A scholar of comparative religions will be puzzled to learn that “sacred” does not really imply “a religious connotation,” but is rather used by the author “to express the affect that ‘identity loading’ has upon the cognitive processes” of followers of a charismatic leader. An Arabist will not be luckier than his religious and Islamic studies colleagues trying to find any meaningful system in the author’s transliteration of Arabic names and words. When one of his sources cites an Arabic noun with the feminine ending conveyed by “h”, the author uses this spelling. If the source he uses cites a noun with the same ending but without “h”, the author, unwittingly, does exactly the same. Examples are legion: *sharia(h)* on p. 77; *ma’raka(h)* on p. 90; *jard kifaya(h)* on p. 196; *sura(h)* on p. 208 et passim; *janbiya(h)* on p. 208 and 212; *hijra(h)* on p. 217, and so on. The author fares no better with the ‘ayns and hamzas which he sees only if the translated sources he taps choose to mark them. Hence the name “al-Awlaki” which, unbeknown to the Author, has both the ‘ayn and the qaf and should thus be rendered “al-‘Awlaqi”; “al-Qaeda” which, per the author’s own chosen convention, should feature the “h” at the end and which also has the unmarked (and undetected)

'ayn in the middle; "Azzam", but "Miqdam Ibn Ma'd" (p. 157, n23) and "fard 'ayn" (p. 196 et passim), "Abu Saa'id" (p. 158), "*Al-'Amal*" and "*al-Taa'ah*" (p. 115), *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* (pp. 142–143; which should have been *al-Gamaah al-Islamiyyah* per the author's own convention). As a result, the author finds himself totally at the mercy of anonymous translators and writers "out there" in cyberspace. Some may be more-or-less competent, others less so. If they do not know that the name "Aba Jahl" does not exist and that it is nothing but "Abu Jahl" in the Arabic accusative, the author does not know this either. The same for the Arabic name "Yusuf al 'Uyayree" that is a strange hybrid of Arabic with an Anglicized ending that violates three of the Author's self-imposed transliteration conventions (p. 217; cf. "Salih Al-Leebee" on p. 158). And so on and so forth. How can one competently talk about someone's charisma without ever reading any of that person's speeches and statements in the original is beyond me. How can one trust often sloppy and incompetent translations of the statements, speeches and writings of the "heroes" of the author's case studies found on the Web? How reliable can one's analysis based on such faulty foundations be? Perhaps the "TCPIRM" is that magic word that opens closed doors without a key (i.e., the prerequisite language and cultural competence)? This reviewer is not ready to pass a final judgment on this moot issue.

What one finds in the book under review is a bunch of abstract ideas extrapolated by some theoretically-minded scholars from their study of some particular and historically- and socially-conditioned cases of alleged "charismatic individuals" at work. Our author takes their decontextualized findings and ruminations, re-shuffles them, then applies them to various Islamic/Islamist and jihadist movements that are a hot topic today. Because of the topic's "hotness" the author (and his publisher) is anxious to publicize his analyses as soon as they can without any concern for meticulous editorial work (see, e.g., such phrases as "a minutia of al-Awlaki's charismatic appeal" on p. 222 or the seriously incomplete, unhelpful and "pro-forma" index on pp. 251–252—sic!), not to mention the necessary training in the language, religion and culture of his "case studies." As a result, one ends up with a large body of thoroughly secondary, repetitious, over-theorized, and jargon-ridden musings about "the most militant strains of the TCPIRM" (p. 228) that evince no independent analysis nor insights based on a thorough investigation of available evidence. How can one, in good faith, expect that these musings should somehow enhance "counter-terrorism efforts" of certain concerned governments and stunt the growth of "the charismatic capital of militant Islamist figures" who masterfully exploit "the abyss between hope and reality, the blinding lights of modernity and its menacing shadows, a glorious past and a dilapidated present" (pp. 228–229)? Not being an expert on "counter-terrorism" and "national security"

studies, this reviewer leaves it to the author's colleagues to decide if his hope is indeed justified.

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The Polygamous Wives Writing Club: From the Diaries of Mormon Pioneer Women. By Paula Kelly Harline. Oxford University Press, 2014. 256 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

Paula Kelly Harline ends her book with an imagined scene of present-day Mormons meeting in their weekly worship services and seeing the spirits of “a few wise old polygamous wives, no longer bent from backbreaking work, no longer suffering from loneliness and heartache, seated on the podium in front surveying what they helped create, patiently waiting to tell their stories” (215). Harline gives these women eloquent voice. This is her purpose. Harline utilizes as primary sources the autobiographies and journals of twenty-nine Mormon women who married polygamously between 1847 and 1890 when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints advocated the practice of polygamy (technically, polygyny). Harline wants to know: What did these women really think about polygamy? How did they actually live this religious principle in the difficult circumstances of the frontier West?

Harline finds three main themes emerge from these diaries and journals. First, these women and their husbands “were trying to integrate polygamy [often unsuccessfully] into a culture that was overwhelmingly monogamous in practice and underlying attitude” (4). Second, these women were most interested in creating and sustaining relationships with their husbands and not their “sister wives.” Third, these women suffered great emotional and physical distress as a result of their lives in polygamy, especially in the 1880s during the federal government’s campaign against the practice. Harline effectively organizes the book into three parts around these themes, as she also moves the reader forward chronologically from the beginning to the end of the practice, providing along the way “Interludes” that explain the doctrinal importance of polygamy, as well as the history of its demise. While she presents the women as fallible human beings, Harline obviously has great sympathy for them and feels a personal connection with them (she notes that she is descended from polygamous unions on both sides of her family).

In each chapter, Harline focuses on two to three women in order to illuminate and complicate her themes. Harline deliberately opted to use the diaries and autobiographies of women who were not prominent in the church and not married to prominent men. She bucks the trend of previous scholarship on Mormon women. This scholarship has tended