

## 6

### Non-ordinary powers

#### Charisma, special affordances and the study of religion

Ann Taves

Max Weber's (1978) *Economy and Society* embeds religion, or, more precisely, *religious behaviour* in a sociology of social action, grounded in the subjective meaning that actors implicitly or explicitly attach to their behaviour. Although his approach is sometimes referred to as "interpretive sociology", Weber was equally concerned with interpretation and explanation (1978: 4–5). He began with action as understood from the point of view of the actor or actors, then sought to situate it within "an understandable sequence of motivation", taking into account a range of factors (e.g. biological, psychological, social, environmental), many of them outside of subjective awareness and largely devoid of conscious meaning. He then attempted to determine the relative weight of the various factors in relation to the action in question. He assumed that hypotheses regarding the weight that should be assigned to various causal factors required testing. In some cases, hypotheses could be tested by means of psychological experimentation, and in others through statistical analysis of large data sets. In still others, "there remains only the possibility of comparing the largest possible number of historical or contemporary processes which, while otherwise similar, differ in the one decisive point of their relation to the particular motive or factor the role of which is being investigated. This [Weber argued] was the fundamental task of comparative sociology" (*ibid.*: 9–10).

A cognitive science of religion inspired by Weber would suggest, first, that we should aim for a cognitive science of *religious behaviour*, that is, actions that subjects view as religious, rather than a cognitive science of religion. Second, it would encourage us to distinguish between narrower and broader meanings of "cognition" at play in the scientific study of religious behaviour. The narrower usage is roughly equivalent to conscious processes, whether at

the level of awareness or self-awareness (metacognition), while the broader usage is roughly equivalent to mental processes, unconscious as well as conscious. The subjective meanings that subjects attach to actions are cognitive in the narrower sense, such that subjective meaning either implicitly informs action at the level of awareness or explicitly informs it at the level of self-awareness (awareness of awareness). The motives that guide action, however, may be conscious or unconscious and, thus, cognitive in the broader sense. In addition, a sociological approach would remind us that cognition is always situated. Mental processes may be located primarily in the body (embodied cognition) or in the interaction between individuals and others and their environment (embedded or extended cognition). We can and in many cases must use different methods to study these many different aspects of cognition.

### The puzzle of charisma

In addition to highlighting the importance of *situating* a *multi-level* cognitive science of religious behavior, Weber's concept of charisma offers a broad framework for thinking about behaviors "motivated by religious or magical factors" (Weber 1978: 399). Weber uses the term "charisma" to connect a set of concepts that refer to "extraordinary powers", including both "maga" (the Iranian term from which our word "magic" is derived) and "mana" (the term upon which the British anthropologist R. R. Marett based his "preanimistic" theory of religion) (Weber 1978: 400; Kippenberg 2004: 50–54). Weber viewed spirits, souls and deities as abstractions derived from a magico-religious matrix of impersonal power. He viewed the belief in powerful unseen animates, such as spirits, demons and souls, as arising from "the notion that certain beings are concealed 'behind' and responsible for the activity of the charismatically endowed natural objects, artifacts, animals, or persons" (Weber 1978: 401).

In deriving unseen animates (or animism) from a pre-animistic magico-religious matrix, Weber placed himself in the company of thinkers, such as Marett (1914) and the French sociologists Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert ([1904] 1972), who rejected E. B. Tylor's ([1873] 1970) minimal definition of religion, as "the belief in spiritual beings", as not minimal enough. Along with the Dutch phenomenologist Gerardus Van der Leeuw ([1937] 1986), who provided an extended phenomenological description of the way conceptions of "power" have been elaborated across times and cultures, these thinkers agreed on several key points: (a) what we think of as religion and magic are derived from a religio-magical matrix of impersonal power; (b) the power or powers in question are not ordinary powers, but powers that people perceive as non-ordinary, extraordinary or special; and (c) this power can be attributed to anything animate and inanimate, natural and human-made.

Across a wide range of fields (sociology, anthropology and psychology) scholars have tended to shy away from the idea of a pre-animistic religio-magical matrix, not wanting, I suspect, to conflate religion and magic. Most sociologists and anthropologists who have elaborated Weber's discussion of charisma have focused their attention on charismatic agents, relegating the discussion of charismatic objects to the seemingly unrelated literature on "fetishes" and religious relics and amulets. Many scholars identified with the cognitive science of religion have adopted a Tylorian definition of religion as their starting point and concentrated on explaining the naturalness of beliefs in unseen (or, more technically, counterintuitive) agents. The remarkable overlap between cognitive theories that argue for the naturalness of popular religion (McCauley 2011; J. L. Barrett 2004b; Boyer 2001) and cognitive theories that argue for the naturalness of magic (Subbotsky 2010; Hood 2000; Bloom 2010) has gone largely unexplored. Sørensen's cognitive theory of magic, which places magic, understood as magical agency, within an action-oriented framework and argues that "magic plays a pivotal role in the development of all religious institutions and traditions" (2007: 3–4), nonetheless maintains a distinction between them. Rather than shy away from the idea of an underlying magico-religious matrix, I think we should embrace it. Following the lead of theorists such as Weber, who positioned "animism" within a larger framework of (pre-animistic) impersonal powers, we can locate contemporary research on the detection of agency and the attribution of non-ordinary powers to (unseen) animates within a larger field of powers (ordinary and non-ordinary) that people attribute to objects, artifacts, animals and persons.<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing that Weber viewed charisma, understood as extra-ordinary power, as something that people could attribute to anything, does not explain what the disparate powers that people consider "extra-ordinary" have in common apart from not being ordinary or everyday. The terms that have traditionally been used to unify the powers in question, such as magic, the sacred, the holy and the supernatural, are all theologically laden. So, too, is charisma, which Weber borrowed from the church historian Rudolf Sohm, who used it to refer to the "mysterious and polyform gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Turner 1993: 241–2). Absent a belief in the Holy Spirit, Weber provided no unifying or generalized definition of charisma as such, apart from "the belief of others in the extraordinary or supernatural powers of the charismatic figure". As sociologist Stephen Turner (2003: 8) insightfully observed, the fundamental question regarding charisma is whether "charisma [is], in the end, essentially a mystical notion with no explanatory value, or merely a residual category into which we place the inexplicable? Or if it is explicable, is it explicable in other terms – biology, culture or rationality?"

Here I want to suggest that cognitive approaches can add to our understanding of charisma and help to generate empirically testable hypotheses, but

that they will do so most effectively if we adopt an action-oriented approach to perception, such as ecological psychology, that is congruent with Weber's action oriented social theory. Although much of the discussion of charisma post-Weber has focused on the *sources* of charismatic power in established contexts, consideration of both animates and objects as potentially "charismatic" in the context of goal-directed action allows us to ask what the perceived non-ordinary powers enable people *to do*. If we position the tendency to over-attribute agency within the larger framework of detecting and evaluating the powers at play in a given field, we can view it not simply as a means of detecting threats but also as a means of identifying the resources at hand. This allows us to conceive of things to which persons attribute non-ordinary powers not only as potential threats or signs of danger, but also as potential *resources*, that is, means of overcoming danger, whether in the form of "magical" objects, "sacred" places or "supernatural" beings.

Charismatic things, viewed as potential resources in the context of goal-directed action, suggest that charisma involves more than the attribution of non-ordinary powers to agents or objects.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, it is obvious that an object or a person violates our expectations. We may even take the next step and infer that their unusual attributes suggest the presence of non-ordinary powers, but *if we do not have any particular need for those special powers or have other ways to gain access to them*, we typically do not consider the object or agent in question as charismatic. The key to charisma, I will argue, is the perception that the object or person in question possesses non-ordinary powers *that matter to us* and that *we believe* will enable us to do something we otherwise would not be able to do or that would enable something to happen that otherwise would not happen. These latter considerations are crucial because they create the *bonds* between people and the particular things to which they attribute non-ordinary powers. These bonds in turn cause people to follow the particular leaders and mobilize the particular objects that they view as possessing non-ordinary powers in the context of goal-directed action.

This broader conception of charisma allows us to consider the role of charismatic things in the generation of novel effects in a wide range of contexts. Although scholars associated with the cognitive science of religion (e.g. McCauley & Lawson 2002; Sørensen 2007; Whitehouse 2004) have devoted considerable attention to the way that non-ordinary powers function in the context of ritual action, that is, in contexts where claims are well established, they have not devoted much attention to the emergence of new beliefs and novel practices, which typically assert claims regarding non-ordinary powers that are highly contested. A focus on fields in flux where new things are emerging allows us to consider how people ascertain what powers are at play in a field, how they characterize them, and how they draw upon them in the context of goal-directed action. In analysing such processes, we should

anticipate that the nature of the effects will vary dramatically depending on the nature of the things to which non-ordinary powers are ascribed. People who are drawn to leaders they view as charismatic may help generate new religious or political movements. People who turn to unseen agents to assuage personal distress may adopt a new, more positive outlook on life. Patients who take fake pills and undergo sham procedures that their doctors characterize as beneficial may experience healing effects.

People do not typically attribute the same type of non-ordinary power to leaders, unseen agents, and placebos, however. Thus, this more integrated approach to charismatic things, whether persons, animates, artifacts or objects, requires us to distinguish between types of power and the capacities that inform them. We can distinguish between at least three different kinds: (a) *The capacity to act intentionally*, which presupposes an awareness of awareness, and, thus, the ability to give reasons for why one acts. Entities with the capacity to act intentionally do not always use it, however, and are responsible for many unintended actions for which they cannot give reasons; (b) *The capacity to act*, which presupposes at least some primitive level of awareness or animation, but not conscious intentionality; (c) *The capacity to produce an effect*, which does not require awareness or animation.

In considering the full range of things to which people may attribute non-ordinary powers, I want to suggest that non-ordinary *objects* may play a more generative role in the emergence of the special powers claimed by or attributed to humans than they do in more established situations. Testing this hypothesis would require a careful comparison of the role of charismatic objects in relation to established and emergent claims that is beyond the scope of this paper. Here I will simply use the example of Joseph Smith, who most likely used a seer stone both to find and translate the golden plates that were published as the *Book of Mormon*, as a case study to illustrate the importance of including objects in our analyses.<sup>3</sup>

In analysing the concept of charisma in this fuller sense, we need to ask two distinct questions: What makes powers extra-ordinary or special? And what allows things to produce an effect? The extra-ordinary powers discussed by Weber combine a notion of specialness (that which is non-ordinary or extra-ordinary) with at least a minimal conception agency (the capacity to produce an effect). It is the combination of the two, I will argue, that is the key to accounting for novelty. To do so, we have to understand special powers (a) as a subset of a more general capacity to produce an effect and (b) as set apart from ordinary powers by the capacity to produce an effect that (people believe) could not or would not be produced otherwise. Viewed in this way, we can locate non-ordinary powers within the context of an ecological psychology of affordances and, thus, within a larger framework of embedded (or situated) cognition.

## What makes powers special or extra-ordinary?

Is there anything that reliably distinguishes the special from the ordinary across times and cultures? Is specialness simply a matter of discourse or cultural convention or is there something inherent either *in that which is set apart* or *in the way it is apprehended* or some complex combination thereof that is stable across cultures (and perhaps time)? In earlier work, I have sought to identify marks and types of specialness (Taves 2009: 29–46; 2010: 179–80). Neither marks (behaviour) nor types (features, loci), however, fully specify what people *mean* when they refer to something as special or non-ordinary. Focusing on charisma, that is, on *powers* considered special or extra-ordinary, narrows the scope of our inquiry, allowing us to ask why people consider some powers special. Two reasons seem likely. Powers might seem special to people (a) because of their source or origin or (b) because of what they can do. Established claims rely more on source or origin for their legitimacy, while new claims, the source or origin of which typically disputed, rely more on what they can do.

If we inquire about Joseph Smith's seer stone, we discover the following. Willard Chase, a neighbour of the Smiths, reported that he discovered the stone in 1822, while he was digging a well with the help of Joseph and his brother Alvin. According to Chase, after digging down about twenty feet, "we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity." He brought it to the top of the well and, while they were examining it, "Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of the hat." The next day Smith came back and asked Chase if he could have the stone, "alleging that *he could see in it*" (cited in Van Waggoner & Walker 1982: 55, emphasis added). With Smith's discovery that "he could see in it", the stone went from being a singular stone (a special thing) to a thing with special powers, that is, with the power to reveal things or, more precisely, the power to enable Smith to see things he otherwise would not be able to see.<sup>4</sup> He subsequently used the seer stone to seek buried treasure, to locate the golden plates (a buried treasure of a sort), to translate the golden plates (while looking at the seer stone in his hat rather than at the plates) and to obtain some of the early revelations recorded in the Mormon *Doctrine and Covenants* (Van Waggoner & Walker 1982; Ashurst-McGee 2000).

Much of the discussion of Smith's seer stone then and now has focused not on what he claimed it allowed him to do, but on whether or not it actually allowed him to do what he claimed it did, and if it did, what kind of power was involved. Thus, the earliest references to the stone are those of witnesses who testified when Smith was charged with being "a disorderly person and an Imposter" in 1826. Brought to court by the heir of a man who had hired Smith to seek for treasure, many of the witnesses testified to his "pretended ... skill of telling where hidden treasures ... were by means of looking through a

certain stone". Others, however, including the man who had hired him, testified to their faith in Smith's skill, specifically his ability to "divine things by means of said Stone and Hat" (Vogel 2002: 248–56). Smith's father-in-law, Isaac Hale, later indicated that "the manner in which he pretended to read and interpret [the golden plates] was the same as when he looked for money-diggers, with a stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods" (Van Waggoner & Walker 1982: 52). More sympathetic observers testified to the same method, but attributed the translation not to pretense or "any power of man", but to "the gift and power of God" (*ibid.*: 51).

In attempting to specify the meaning of charisma, scholars have also tended to focus, albeit with more subtlety, on the source or origin of charismatic powers rather than on what the alleged powers allowed people to do. Sociologists Edward Shils (1965) and S. N. Eisenstadt (1968), for example, locate the origins of charisma in the human need for order and meaning. Shils argues that charisma is linked to what people view as central to their existence and the cosmos in which they live. The extraordinary is thus characterized by its centrality and its intensity (Shils 1965: 201). Shils focuses primarily on persons, groups and institutions, emphasizing the connection between charisma, power and the need for order (*ibid.*: 204). In complex societies, there are multiple loci of powerful authority and thus "competing conceptions about the ultimate locus of charisma" (*ibid.*: 212–13). S. N. Eisenstadt (1968) distinguishes between ordinary and charismatic activities based on the type of goal towards which activities are directed. "The non-charismatic or the ordinary activity seems to compromise those activities which are oriented to various discrete, segregated goals not connected together in some great pattern or 'grand design.'" Ordinary goals are instrumental and oriented to the natural or social environment. The charismatic, by way of contrast, is bound up with overarching goals, that is, with the "realm of meaning" that gives shape to the "great pattern or 'grand design'" (*ibid.*: xxxvi–xxxviii). Leaving aside the fact that neither Shils nor Eisenstadt attend specifically to charismatic objects, use of their definitions would require us to assess the extent to which Smith's treasure-seeking was central to his existence (Shils) or connected to a larger realm of meaning (Eisenstadt). If we, as scholars, impose such judgments on such highly contested claims, we lose our ability to analyse the controversies as they play themselves out on the ground.

Tambiah (1984: 321–34) attempted to further refine Weber's concept of charisma by distinguishing between different types of charismatic origins. Contrasting Buddhist and Christian understandings of charisma, he distinguished between charisma that is given as a gift (Christianity) and charisma that is acquired through effort (Buddhism), whether on the part of individuals (e.g. biblical prophets or Buddhist *arahants*) or institutions (e.g. apostolic

succession or the reincarnation of *boddbisatvas*). Although Tambiah's distinctions are rough, they can help us to identify the various ways in which different parties might think about the relationship between special and ordinary powers in debates within and between traditions. So for example we could also use Tambiah's distinction between charisma-as-gift and charisma-as-achieved to characterize the Christian distinction between imputed and infused righteousness, which separates the Lutheran and Reformed traditions from the Catholic and Orthodox. In the former grace is imputed (a gift) and the person is transformed only in the eyes of God; in the latter grace is infused in conjunction with effort (an achievement) and, as a result, the person's nature is actually transformed.

Nor do we need to limit these distinctions to debates within and between religious traditions. More generally, people could claim that special power is inherent (always present) in something, infused into (acquired or achieved by) something, or imputed to (ascribed to but never actually present in) something. The way that special power is acquired is linked to people's assumptions about the relationship between the special powers and the ordinary powers possessed by the thing in question. Expanding on Tambiah's typology, we can consider at least three different ways in which people might relate special and ordinary powers:

- Special powers may be viewed as entirely separate from the ordinary powers of the thing in question; if this is the case, then the thing can acquire special powers only if they are imputed to it by another, whether divine or human. In this case the thing itself is not really changed; it only seems like it is to those who imputed the special powers.
- Special powers may be viewed as compatible with the ordinary powers of the thing in question; if this is the case, then special powers may be infused into a thing through the efforts of the thing and something that seems other, for example, divine grace or unconscious intuition.
- Special powers may be viewed as latent in ordinary powers; if so, then environmental cues, from whatever source, may be sufficient to evoke the special powers latent in the thing.

These sorts of distinctions can help clarify the debates surrounding Smith's seer stone among followers, critics and scholars. Critics who referred to Smith's "pretended skill", whether in finding hidden treasures or interpreting the golden plates, implied that the stone had no power and, thus, that Smith had falsely imputed powers to the stone. Those who viewed him as authentically skilful, whether at finding or translating, viewed the stone as having power, though they didn't necessarily specify or agree about how it got there or its ultimate source. Some witnesses at the trial thought Smith

could “divine things” by means of the stone (Vogel 2002: 255). Later followers’ accounts of his use of the stone to translate the plates generally refer to translation as occurring “by the gift and power of God”, thus implying that God acted through the stone. Brigham Young’s daughter, Zina, who purchased two of Smith’s seer stones when “[her] father’s personal effects” were sold, referred to them as “very sacred articles ... that never should have been given up to the idle gaze”. She and her mother gave them to the President of the Church, requesting that, “at his demise, they [should] not [be] retained as they were before among ‘personal effects,’ but considered ever the legitimate property of God’s mouth-piece [the First President]” (Van Waggoner & Walker 1982: 66 n.53). In the eyes of Zina and her mother, the stones were sacred. They wanted them to be recognized as such, placed in the hands of President Woodruff, not as his personal property but as the property of the office that inherited Smith’s revelatory powers. Here the stones seem to have been infused with special power not only because God acted through them but also because of their connection to Smith as “God’s mouth-piece”.

Although the placement of the “sacred stones” in the hands of the Church’s highest authority positioned them at the “centre” in a manner in keeping with Shils’ conception of charisma, the variety of ways in which the power of the stone was and could be conceived highlights the difficulties entailed in specifying charisma in terms of either emic or etic views of its origins. While I have followed Tambiah’s lead and drawn out a variety of ways in which special powers can be conceptualized in relation to the ordinary powers assumed to reside in things, people bring their assumptions about what is possible to their assessments of claims involving special powers. Due to the range of religious and secular views that people can bring to bear on *each* of the ways of relating special and ordinary powers, the options do not fall along neatly religious and secular lines. Imputed specialness can just as well describe the powers attributed to an imposter, a placebo, and a faithful Lutheran. The diversity of potential patterns and combinations that emerge when we seek to characterize charisma in terms of origins thus suggests that we will learn more about what people think about special powers on the ground, if we can find a way to conceptualize specialness that leaves the question of origins open.

Stephen Turner (1993, 2003) offers an alternative that does so by conceptualizing charisma in terms of risk management, specifically as a property that people ascribe to those individuals who offer them the possibility of achieving goals, which otherwise would seem unachievable or too risky to pursue. If a person can reduce or overcome risk by imitating a leader, Turner predicts that the leader will *not* be viewed as charismatic. He predicts that the leader will be viewed as charismatic only in the subset of cases where risk can be decreased or overcome only “*through* the agency of the leader exercising authority” (1993: 247, original emphasis). The non-ordinary powers of the leader in his

conception thus *enable something to occur*, whether a possibility realized or a risk avoided, that people believe *would not or could not have occurred otherwise*. In locating charisma in what charisma enables, he leaves the question of origins open; we do not know if the power is inborn or learned, ascribed or inherent, this-worldly or otherworldly, connected to divine beings or not.

Turner uses two well-known entrepreneurs of the 1990s, Mike Milken and Frank Lorenzo, to illustrate. Both were “virtual devils” in the eyes of the general public, but “charismatic leaders” for those investors who accepted their vision and allowed them to invest their money. “The audacity of each of these men [Milken and Lorenzo] was remarkable and their very survival embodied the fact that their novel ideas about the risks of the [investment] strategies they followed were ‘true’” (Turner 1993: 251). This approach also works well in relation to Joseph Smith. There too perceptions differed sharply. Those who testified against him at his trial viewed him as an imposter who only pretended to see things by means of a stone and hat, while those who sought him out did so because they had faith in his ability to find things in this way that they believed they could not find otherwise. The same can be said in relation to the translation of the plates. In so far as those who believed in Smith and the reality of the plates could not themselves see anything in the stone and the hat (and at least one of his followers checked), they could either view Smith as an imposter or as one who had the power to see things by means of the seer stone that they themselves could not.

Apart from Tambiah, none of the scholars who discuss charisma devote much attention to charismatic objects. We can find discussions of objects to which people attribute non-ordinary powers, however, in relation to “fetishes” (Pietz 1985; Graeber 2005) and religious relics and amulets (P. J. Geary 1978; Brown 1981; Tambiah 1984; Germano & Trainor 2004). As with the sociological studies of charisma, here too scholars tend to explain the powers attributed to objects in terms of their origins, typically deriving the non-ordinary powers of objects from the non-ordinary powers of something else, rather than focusing on what charisma enables. Thus, William Pietz characterizes fetishes in terms of their ability to fix the power of a singular event in an object (Pietz 1985: 14), while Tambiah stresses the ability of an object (e.g. amulets, relics or statues) to cement the power of a singular person, such as a monk or other holy person, thus creating “focal points and vehicles of social exchanges” (Tambiah 1984: 339). In both cases, the power ascribed to the object is derived from something else that is special or charismatic, whether event or person. Tambiah also analyses the way that Buddhist monks ritually activate statues and images of the Buddha. In so far as persons with non-ordinary powers consecrate or activate the objects by transferring powers from themselves to the objects, the power is transferred from one charismatic thing to another and we learn little more about the nature of charisma itself.

A focus on the transfer or circulation of specialness works well in situations where people are in general agreement about what counts as special, even if they disagree over specific instances. It doesn't work as well in situations where something novel is being proposed. David Graeber (2005: 426), like Stephen Turner, leaves the question of origins open, focusing not on risk management but on creativity. Thus, Graeber critiques Pietz's characterization of the fetish, arguing that "Pietz considers every definition of fetishism, every aspect, other than the simplest and most common one: that 'fetishism' occurs when human beings end up bowing down before and worshipping that which they have themselves created." Drawing on West African sources, Graeber makes the case that "a fetish is a god under process of construction" (*ibid.*: 427). In doing so, he stresses something obscured by Tambiah's emphasis on the circulation of power from monks to objects, that is, the role of objects in "creating something new".

As with Turner's characterization of charismatic persons, Graeber highlights the power of "fetishes" to enable something to happen that otherwise would not, in this case, to generate something new. Initially, Graeber says, this new thing is "virtual, imaginary, and prospective". As such, "it ... could only come into real existence if everyone acted as if the fetish object actually did have subjective qualities." The fetish, for Graeber, thus exists "precisely at the point where conventional distinctions between 'magic' and 'religion' become meaningless, where charms become deities" (*ibid.*). This process, he suggests, is ongoing. "New ones [gods] would appear; older ones might slip into obscurity, or else be exposed as frauds or witchcraft and purged from the pantheon. There literally was no clear line between ordinary 'magic' and deities, but for that reason, the deities were a constant process of construction" (*ibid.*).

Graeber's open-ended formulation allows him to generalize his discussion, lifting it out of the realm of so-called primitive superstition and relocating it in the realm of the creative process more generally, where, as he notes, the ascription of powers to things with unclear origins abound. Thus, he writes:

[W]hen artists, musicians, poets, or authors describe their own experience of creativity, they almost invariably begin evoking just the sort of subject/object reversals which Marx saw as typical of fetishism: almost never do they see themselves as anything like an architect rationally calculating dimensions and imposing their will on the world. Instead one almost invariably hears how they feel they are vehicles for some kind of inspiration coming from outside, how they lose themselves, fragment themselves, leave portions of themselves in their products. (*ibid.*: 430)

Evoking a kind of double consciousness, he observes: “even when the [social] actors seem perfectly aware that they were constructing an illusion, they also seemed aware that the illusion was still required” (*ibid.*: 432).

Taken together the work of Turner and Graeber suggest that when people perceive a thing, whether person or object, as having special powers, that is, as charismatic (*à la* Weber) or magical (*à la* Sørensen), they perceive the thing as standing out because it manifests potential or possibilities *that they otherwise would not experience as present*. In some contexts, the sources of the power or potential may be immediately obvious to people; in others, its meaning and significance may need to be worked out over time, whether alone or in consultation with others. The negative connotations attached to terms, such as fetish, magic and superstition, in turn illuminate the inherently contested nature of claims regarding the special powers of objects and persons and the complexity of the interactions between people and charismatic things particularly in contexts where systems of value (sources of power) are in competition with one another and/or new claims are being asserted.

### What allows things to produce an effect?

If specialness at its most extra-ordinary denotes a singularity (i.e. something that it is believed would not occur otherwise), it suggests that the special powers attributed to things are a subset of the potential and possibilities that people perceive in things more generally. In environmental psychology, these general potentials and possibilities are referred to as “affordances”, that is, that which the environment “*offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes* either for good or ill” (Gibson 1986: 127, original emphasis).<sup>5</sup> As defined by J. J. Gibson and his students, affordances enable the goal-directed actions of animals in their environment. Animals perceive whether a behaviour is afforded based both on their abilities and on the specific features of the environment. Whether something is an affordance for a particular animal depends both on features of the environment and the animal. Affordances are, thus, always defined relationally, relative to the abilities of an individual, group or species. If, in the case of a person desiring to climb up a staircase, the riser is too high or the person’s legs are too short, the stairs will not afford climbing for that person. Staircases are usually designed with normally-abled adult humans in mind and, thus, afford climbing for most adult members of the species. Building on Gibson’s conception, Anthony Chemero (2003: 186–91; 2009: 135–61) defines an affordance in logical terms as “Perceives [animal, affords- $\phi$  (feature, ability)]”, where  $\phi$  is the behaviour that is afforded and “feature” refers to specific features of a situation in the environment and “ability” to the animal’s perception of its own abilities. He notes, however, that “[a]n animal typically perceives only the

affordance relation ... and not the constituent relata; that is, most of the time the structure of the perception of affordances will be this: Perceives [animal, affordance-of- $\phi$ ].”

Although the concept of affordances provides a crucial link between animals and environments and, thus, falls under the general heading of situated cognition (Robbins & Aydede 2009), there are a number of claims associated with the concept and with ecological psychology more generally that are not necessarily entailed by the concept and to which we need not subscribe in adopting it. The most controversial issue has to do with how perception couples the animal and the environment. Gibson and his followers have traditionally argued for direct coupling. This claim, understood as a form of “direct realism”, is premised on a particular understanding of perception grounded in the ability to scrutinize the “flowing stimulus array” that is derived from James and Dewey (Heft 2001). It stands in contrast to the representational view prevalent in the cognitive sciences more generally, in which it is assumed that perception is based on probabilistic cues (for an overview, see Goldstein 2009, s.v. “Ecological Approaches” and “Direct Perception”).

Ecologically oriented psychologists have offered different responses to these critiques (see e.g. Vicente 2003; Gallagher 2008; Chemeno 2009: 105–34). The key point, as Vicente (2003: 256) stresses, is that the concept of affordances does not necessarily entail either view and, indeed, that the animal and the environment may be coupled perceptually in more than one way depending on the circumstances and the amount of information available. In so far as the concept of affordances may be understood as coupling animal and environment in a variety of ways, it does not necessarily entail commitments to the more controversial claims advanced by some proponents of situated cognition, for example, the claim that cognition extends beyond the boundaries of the organism (Robbins & Aydede 2009; Adams & Aizawa 2008).

Gibson’s claims about direct realism are premised on an understanding of reality testing that he views as possible only in the context of unmediated perception. Mediated perception, such as pictures or spoken or written descriptions, are second-hand accounts of the flowing stimulus array provided by an original perceiver. Those who are offered the descriptions do not have the opportunity to scrutinize the flowing stimulus array for themselves, that is, the opportunity to test reality for themselves. In light of this, Gibson makes a sharp distinction between reality, on the one hand, and fictions, fantasies, dreams and hallucinations on the other, such that he ascribes “the awareness of imaginary entities and events ... to the operation of the perceptual system with a suspension of reality-testing” (Gibson 1986: 261–3). In so far as ~~the~~ affordances couple animals and environment in various ways, including in contexts where information is limited, this straightforward distinction between imagination and reality is too simple.

Gibson and his heirs have focused most of their attention on those situations that they thought most likely to provide evidence of direct perception. They have devoted little attention to more complex situations where information is often incomplete, perception inferred from probabilistic cues, and cues interpreted in light of cultural knowledge (i.e. mediated perception). Some researchers, however, have extended the concept to affordances that are socially, culturally and conventionally constructed, including objects that provide affordances only in the hands of competent users (Greeno 1998; Kirsh 2009: 293–4). Rather than attending primarily to affordances that would be widely perceived by members of a species, they focus on those that can only be perceived with more specialized training, competencies and/or abilities. Recalling Turner's distinction between leaders whose behaviour can be imitated and those charismatic individuals who can only be followed, we can distinguish between competencies that can be acquired and, thus, affordances that can be made directly available to others, and competencies that are limited to particular individuals or objects. Charismatic things are those that afford something (or are believed to afford something) only *by means of* the thing (person or object) in question.

Whether or to what extent the affordance is available through other means, for example, through other persons or objects or through the development of new abilities, is often a matter of dispute and lies at the heart of determining exactly how special something is. In these disputes, beliefs about what is possible often figure prominently in assessments of what is possible and, even where empirical evidence is available, it is often interpreted in light of beliefs that are hard to test empirically. This special type of affordance thus depends not only upon the existence or recognition of specialized competences but also on the belief that the specialized competencies or powers are more or less unique to the individual or object in question. If transferable, they can typically only be transferred by means of correspondingly specialized procedures. We can, thus, conceptualize charismatic things as a specialized type of affordance that enables a goal-directed action that *the animal believes* would not have been possible otherwise.

Viewing the attribution of special powers as an affordance premised on a belief in (relatively) non-transferable powers has several advantages. First, it allows us to locate Weber's sociological understanding of charisma in relation to an ecologically oriented psychology of goal-directed action that links the animal and the environment by means of affordances. A theory of affordances allows us to view cognitive processes dynamically, situating them not only in the body (as Sørensen [2007] did with magic) or in relation to social interactions (as Weber did with charisma) but also in the dynamic interaction between human animals and complex bio-sociocultural environments. The concept of affordances reminds us that goal-directed actions are

always initiated from a starting point and that the environment affords actions relative to actors, whether as individuals or collectivities. Viewed from an ecological or systems perspective, this means that we need to consider abilities (whether specific to individuals or species) and also features of the environment when seeking to understand the affordances that enable things to happen. This would suggest that we should not be too quick to dismiss the powers attributed to objects, such as the seer stone, as mere superstition but to consider the extent to which the interaction between the individual and the object enabled something new to occur.

Second, it alerts us that claims regarding *special* affordances involve both specialized competencies but also beliefs regarding how such competencies are or can be acquired that are most likely limited to human animals. We can express this in Chemero's logical terms as: "Perceives [animal, affords- $\phi$  (feature<sup>s</sup>, ability<sup>s</sup>)]", where  $\phi$  is the behaviour that is afforded and either the feature or the ability may be viewed as special. If the person simply perceives a special affordance relation without reflecting on its constituent relata, it would be in the form: Perceives [animal, affordance<sup>s</sup>-of- $\phi$ ]. This allows us to distinguish two types of debates over special powers: those that focus on whether or to what extent special powers should be ascribed to the thing in question and those that focus on locating the sources of the special powers, whether in special abilities of the animal or special features of the situation in the environment (including the postulated intervention of deities). In the language of affordances, Joseph Smith perceived the seer stone as affording him an ability to find buried treasure and translate the golden plates, which he would not have had otherwise. Followers of Smith perceived Smith as a prophet, that is, as one who had singular powers to access new revelation; Smith, thus, afforded his followers access to new revelation that they otherwise would not have had. In so far as others were not able to translate the plates using the stone and Smith could not translate without the stone, we can infer that for Smith and his follows the power to translate was afforded both by the special features of the stone (as seer stone) and by the special abilities of the individual (as prophet), both of which they viewed in an ultimate sense as manifestations of "the gift and power of God".

Third, it allows us to build upon a distinction between functional and conceptual meaning highlighted by Gibson and his heirs. In taking an action or goal-oriented approach to perception, Gibson (1986: 134) argued that "[w]hat we perceive when we look at objects are their affordances, not their qualities." Knowing what we can *do* with something, Gibson stressed, is not that same as knowing what it *is*: "If you know what can be done with a graspable detached object, what it can be used for, you can call it whatever you please." Perception of functional meaning (what we can do with something) is, thus, not the same as conceptual meaning (how we would classify something).

This is a crucial distinction for those of us who study religion (a conceptual category) and more specifically for those of us who seek to understand behaviours (goal-directed actions) that are sometimes deemed religious (Taves 2010). Thus, to return to the seer stone, everyone recognized what Smith claimed he could *do* with the stone (i.e. see things with it that others could not see, whether buried treasure or translated words). No one questioned that he claimed to see functional meaning in the stone. The disputes were over (a) whether he really could do these things (whether the functional meaning was really afforded) and (b) whether such doings should be conceptualized as magical, religious, deceptive or fraudulent.

### What are the payoffs of such an approach?

Conceptualizing things to which non-ordinary powers are ascribed as special affordances in the context of goal-directed action not only provides an effective theoretical bridge between the sciences and the humanities, it also challenges us to model complex, culture-laden affordances in ways that will allow us to better understand the interactions between cultural animals and their environment. Here I can only begin to sketch what such a model might need to include and indicate some of the lines of relevant experimental research. We can use Chemero's logical formulation, Perceives [animal, affords- $\phi$  (feature, ability)], to identify variables that may interact in relation to the affordance, if we carefully distinguish between the functional meaning attributed to an affordance and the conceptual debates regarding the significance and value of the alleged affordance. While the analysis of the conceptual debates forms the bread and butter of much humanities research, careful modelling of the functional meaning attributed to special affordances can help us to more fully understand the ways in which cultural processes can inform perception. Outlined from the more cognitively general to the more culturally specific, we can identify the following possibilities.

First, in terms of general perceptual processes, people may perceive the feature of the situation that affords behaviour  $\phi$  as ordinary or special. If they view it as special, that which makes it special may be recognizable by anyone (even if they assess its significance differently) or it may not. We may all agree that a given stone looks very unusual, even if we do not agree about whether that distinctiveness affords us anything. Research on what makes some things more perceptually salient than others suggests that, for human subjects, animates are more visually salient than non-animates (New *et al.* 2007) and feature singletons (i.e. objects that differ in colour and orientation from the remaining items in a display) are more salient than other objects (Yantis 2005). Most research in the cognitive science of religion has built on the human tendency to over attribute animacy that arises from our evolved

tendency to attribute salience to animates (Guthrie 1980; Barrett & Keil 1996; Boyer 2001; but also Epley *et al.* 2007). Less attention has been paid to object salience by scholars of religion (but see Hood & Bloom 2008; Hood 2009; Bloom 2010: 91–116).

Second, the perceiving subject may or may not have special abilities that may allow him or her to perceive things or respond in ways that others might not. Such abilities would include the ability to perceive sensory data more acutely (e.g. better visual or auditory acuity). Other abilities, involving intuition, imagination, focused attention (absorption) and/or forms of “extra-sensory perception” might be of particular relevance for understanding those with heightened abilities to see possibilities in situations that others do not. These abilities may be innate and/or the result of learning, practice and the development of expertise (Ericsson *et al.* 2006). Smith may have had unusual imaginative and/or intuitive abilities that progressed from receiving revelation through his seer stone to receiving it directly, which suggests that his abilities to receive what he perceived as revelation developed over time. There is some research on how differences in abilities might affect religious processes, including abilities that enable mediumship and channelling (Krippner 2008; Krippner & Friedman 2009) and that lead to more realistic experiences of praying to deities (Luhmann *et al.* 2010).

Third, the perceiving subjects’ perception of their abilities or the feature of the situation may be informed by *what others tell them or what they believe to be the case*, regardless of the objective situation (if such can be determined), and those perceptions may have a measurable effect on the behaviour that is afforded. Smith’s discovery and recovery of the plates may have depended not only on the ability to see afforded by his seer stone, but also on his father’s assurances that the angel who informed him about the plates was real and not a product of his imagination (Taves [forthcoming b](#)). Social psychological research on social cognition (Tesser & Schwarz 2001) and categorization and stereotype effects (Brown & Gaertner 2001) is relevant here, as is research on the effects of suggestion on highly hypnotizable subjects (Heap *et al.* 2004). There is recent research that demonstrates the measurable effects on behaviour of what people believe and what they are told with respect to religious healing (Schjoedt *et al.* 2011) and “superstitious” objects (Damisch *et al.* 2010).

A fuller model of special affordances would not only allow us to organize relevant experimental research, but also, building on this research, to manipulate variables experimentally under conditions in which causation can be known and controlled. This would have practical implications for those seeking to understand the role of cultural dynamics in enhancing or impeding processes of change. By adjusting affordances and perceptions of what is afforded in various ways, those interested in changing behaviour could test various options and measure outcomes.

## Notes

1. I view “non-ordinary powers” as one building-block among others. For the larger framework, see Taves ([in press](#)).
2. Ketola (2008) has offered a cognitive theory of charisma based on an examination of the way followers initially perceive a charismatic leader, arguing that perceptions of charisma are grounded in perceptions of the individual that elicit surprise, astonishment and admiration. Violated expectations, he argues (*ibid.*: 199), are “the key to the origins of charismatic ideas”. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that “the perception of charisma depends ultimately on the perceiver him- or herself; *something must be added to the observation by the observer in order to perceive the charisma*” (*ibid.*: 139, emphasis added). Ketola’s theory is unable to specify this added element because his cognitive approach to perception is too static, too mental and too individualistic (i.e. grounded in static mental representations). Although he sees value in action-oriented approaches, he views them as event oriented rather than cognitive (*ibid.*: 13–14).
3. Of the objects involved in the emergence of Mormonism (the seer stones, the golden plates, and the translating devices found with the golden plates) only the seer stones have survived. According to Mormon accounts, the angel who revealed the location of the golden plates and the “interpreters” he needed to translate them took both away, the interpreters while the plates were being translated, which led him to use his seer stone to translate instead, and the plates after the translation was completed. The seer stones are locked in a safe in the office of the First President of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints (Van Waggoner & Walker 1982: 58–9; Quinn 1998: 242–7; Ashurst-McGee 2000: 230–82, 325–6).
4. It may be helpful to clarify my own assumptions at this point, given the still highly contested nature of Smith’s claims. I seek to understand Smith as he understood himself and as others (believers and skeptics) understood him in his own time. Although I do not rule out fraud or imposture when it comes to either the discovery or the translation of the plates, I think it is very possible that the stone afforded “seeing” in much the same way that a placebo affords “healing”. In both cases, I would argue the object might enable the subject (Smith or a patient) to activate latent abilities (to visualize text or to heal themselves) that they cannot access consciously. B. Gardner (2011: 259–77) has recently speculated on a possible cognitive mechanism that might have informed Smith’s “translation” process. For a naturalistic account of how Smith might have come to view the golden plates as real, see Taves ([forthcoming a](#)).
5. Gibson notes (1986: 127): “The verb *to afford* is found in the dictionary, but the noun *affordance* is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does.” The concept of an affordance specifies an animal as the perceiver of the behaviours that its abilities and the environment taken together will afford. As such, an affordance couples the animal and the environment in the context of goal-directed action, which was precisely the context that interested Weber.

## References

- Adams, Frederick and Kenneth Aizawa, 2008. *The Bounds of Cognition*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ashurst-McGee, Mark. 2000. "A Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Junion as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet", MA Thesis, Utah State University.
- Barrett, Justin L., 2004. "The naturalness of religious concepts: An emerging cognitive science of religion", in: P. Antes, A. W. Geertz, and R. W. Warne (eds.), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 401-41.
- Barrett, Justin L. and Frank C. Keil, 1996. "Conceptualizing a Nonnatural Entity: Anthropomorphism in God Concepts", *Cognitive Psychology* 31: 219-247.
- Bloom, Paul, 2010. *How Pleasure Works: The New Science of Why We Like What We Like*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Boyer, Pascal, 2001. *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*, New York: Basic Books.
- Brown, Peter, 1981. *The Cult of the Saints*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, Rupert and Samuel L. Gaertner (eds.), 2001. *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Chemero, Anthony, 2003. "An outline of a theory of affordances", *Ecological psychology* 15: 181-195.
- Chemero, Anthony, 2009. *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Damisch, Lysann, Barbara Stoberock, and Thomas Mussweiler, 2010. "Keep your fingers crossed! How superstition improves performance", *Psychological Science* 21(7), 1014-1020.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel N., 1968. "Introduction", in: S. N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Epley, Nicholas, Adam Waytz, and John T. Cacioppo, 2007. "On Seeing Human: A Three-Factor Theory of Anthropomorphism", *Psychological Review* 114: 864-886.
- Ericsson, K. Anders, Neil Charness, Paul J. Feltovich, and Robert R. Hoffman (eds.), 2006. *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gallagher, Shaun, 2008. "Direct perception in the intersubjective context", *Consciousness and Cognition* 17: 535-543.

- Gardner, Brant A., 2011. *The Gift and the Power: Translating the Book of Mormon*, Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books.
- Geary, Patrick J., 1978. *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Catholic Middle Ages*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Germano, David and Kevin Trainor, 2004. *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gibson, James J., 1986. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Goldstein, E. Bruce, 2009. *Encyclopedia of Perception*, 2 vols, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Graeber, David. 2005. "Fetishism as social creativity: or, Fetishes are gods in the process of construction", *Anthropological Theory* 5: 407-438.
- Greeno, J. G. and Middle School Mathematics through Applications Project Group, 1998. "The Situativity of Knowing, Learning, and Research", *American Psychologist* 53: 5-26.
- Guthrie, Stuart, 1980. "A Cognitive Theory of Religion", *Current Anthropology* 21: 181-194.
- Heap, Michael, Richard J. Brown, and David A. Oakley (eds.), 2004. *The Highly Hypnotizable Person: Theoretical, Experimental, and Clinical Issues*, London: Routledge.
- Heft, Harry, 2001. *Ecological Psychology in Context: James Gibson, Roger Barker, and the Legacy of William James*, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hood, Bruce M., 2009. *Supersense: Why We Believe in the Unbelievable*, San Francisco: HarperOne.
- Hood, Bruce M. and Paul Bloom, 2008. "Children Prefer Certain Individuals over Perfect Duplicates", *Cognition* 106: 455-462.
- Ketola, Kimmo, 2008. *The Found of the Hare Krishnas as Seen by Devotees: A Cognitive Study of Religious Charisma*. Leiden: Brill.
- Kippenberg, Hans, 2004. "The Study of Religion in the Twentieth Century", in: Slavica Jakelić and Lori Pearson (eds.), *The Future of the Study of Religion: Proceedings of Congress 2000*, Leiden: Brill.
- Kirsh, David, 2009. "Problem Solving and Situated Cognition", in: Philip Robbins and Murat Aydele (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 264-306.

- Krippner, Stanley C., 2008. "Learning from the Spirits: Candomblé, Umbanda, and Karedecismo in Recife, Brazil", *Anthropology of Consciousness* 19: 1-32.
- Krippner, Stanley C. and Harris L. Friedman (eds.), 2009. *Mysterious Minds: The Neurobiology of Psychics, Mediums, and Other Extraordinary People*, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger / ABC Clío.
- Luhrmann, Tanya M., Howard Nusbaum, and Ronald Thisted, 2010. "The Absorption Hypothesis: Learning to Hear God in Evangelical Christianity", *American Anthropologist* 112: 6-78.
- McCauley, Robert N., 2011. *Why Religion is Natural and Science is Not*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- McCauley, Robert N. and E. Thomas Lawson, 2002. *Bringing Ritual to Mind: Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Marett, R. R., 1914. *The threshold of religion*, 3rd ed., London: Methuen.
- Mauss, Marcel, 1904/1972. *A General Theory of Magic*, New York: Norton.
- New, Joshua, Leda Cosmides, and John Tooby, 2007. "Category-specific attention for animals reflects ancestral priorities, not expertise", *PNAS* 104: 16658-16603.
- Pietz, William, 1985. "The Problem of the Fetish, I", *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 9: 5-17.
- Quinn, D. Michael. 1998. *Early Mormonism and the Magical World View*, Salt Lake City: Signature Books.
- Robbins, Philip and Murat Aydede, 2009. "A Short Primer on Situated Cognition", in: Philip Robbins and Murat Aydede (eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-10.
- Schjødt, Uffe, et al. 2011. "The Power of Charisma – Perceived Charisma Inhibits the Frontal Executive Network of Believers in Intercessory Prayer", *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 6/1: 119-127.
- Shils, Edward, 1965. "Charisma, Order and Status", *American Sociological Review* 30: 199-213.
- Sørensen, Jesper, 2007. *A Cognitive Theory of Magic*, Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Subbotsky, Eugene, 2010. *Magic and the Mind: Mechanisms, Functions, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behavior*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tambiah, Stanley, 1984. *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Taves, Ann, 2009. *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Taves, Ann, 2010. "No Field is an Island: Fostering Collaboration Between the Study of Religion and the Sciences", *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22: 170-188.
- Taves, Ann, 2013. "Building Blocks of Sacralities", in: Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal Park (eds.), *The Handbook of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Guilford Press, pp. 138-161.
- Taves, Ann, in press. "History and the Claims of Revelation: Joseph Smith and the Materialization of the Golden Plates", *Numen* 61/2-3.
- Taves, Ann, in preparation. *Revelatory Events: Extra-Ordinary Experiences and New Visionary Movements*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tesser, Abraham and Norbert Schwarz (eds.), 2001. *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intraindividual Processes*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Turner, Stephen, 1993. "Charisma and Obedience: A Risk Cognition Approach", *Leadership Quarterly* 4: 235-56.
- Turner, Stephen, 2003. "Charisma Reconsidered", *Journal of Classical Sociology* 3: 5-26.
- Tylor, E. B., 1873/1970. *Religion in Primitive Culture*, Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith.
- Van der Leeuw, Gerardus, 1937/1986. *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Van Waggoner, Richard and Steven Walker, 1982. "Joseph Smith: The Gift of Seeing", *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15: 48-68.
- Vicente, Kim J., 2003. "Beyond the Lens Model and Direct Perception: Toward a Broader Ecological Psychology", *Ecological Psychology* 15: 241-267.
- Vogel, Dan (ed.), 2002. *Early Mormon Documents*, vol. 4, Salt Lake City: Signature Books.
- Weber, Max, 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Whitehouse, Harvey, 2004. *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission*, Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Yantis, Steven, 2005. "How Visual Saliency Wins the Battle for Awareness", *Nature Neuroscience* 8: 975-77.