experience through qualitative interviews with interlocutors in the months both before and after their pilgrimages. The Holy Land pilgrimage market has been growing steadily for the last fifty years, and Kaell sees the agency over spiritual development with which it equips pilgrims to be a crucial influence of the modern religious narrative.

To understand how pilgrims attempt to claim their right as autonomous individuals while still engaging in “a sense of mutual obligation” (205), Kaell explores the junction between the transcendent and the material while challenging traditional notions of communitas and untroubled expeditions. The pilgrims struggle to amend their moral model of the ‘Holy Land’ at every stage of their journey due to the reality of the landscape as a politically charged region. The material and the transcendent meet not in an immediate understanding, but in an uncomfortable re-evaluation of what it means to be an American Christian as they engage in commercial tourism to Israel and Palestine.

A common critique of commercially-organized pilgrimage is the supposed “Disneyization” (204) of sacred travel experiences, where corporations reduce something once profound to an expensive thematic vacation; an opinion, Kael adds, often voiced by the same parties in debates about American Christianity at large. When considering the religion/commerce association, Kaell identifies the motivating factors behind “mass market pilgrimage” (12): not in terms of flashing lights but of agency—the choices enabled by the security of an established commercial pilgrimage experience that grants pilgrims a sense of ownership over the experience. A refreshing change to the “Disneyization” discourse, Kaell looks beyond the immediate effects of the commercialization of religion to underline how those same economic developments have enabled the pilgrims to feel more connected with the spiritual choices they make.

Kaell sought to understand how modern American Christians attempt to make the divine tangible through pilgrimage, and her extensive fieldwork enabled a study which exposes readers to elements of the self in pilgrimage—agency, identification, and location—that now appear too often overlooked. Walking Where Jesus Walked fits neatly alongside the work of Anna Fedele into a recent but growing corpus of pilgrimage literature that takes a holistic approach to engaging with both pilgrimage consumers and pilgrimage organizers. Such studies elucidate experiences at the periphery of what is most often disclosed, yielding compelling results for those in the fields of modern American Christianity and pilgrimage studies.

Kaleigh McLelland
Department for the Study of Religion
University of Toronto


Craig Martin’s A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion is a welcome addition to the market of introductory textbooks in religious studies. Rather than rehashing the content-driven survey model, Martin provides his readers with the tools to examine how those elements of culture often classified as religious 1 “can be used to create, maintain, and contest social order” (189). Intended for undergraduates of all stripes—from non-majors fulfilling general requirements, to majors with their eyes on graduate school—

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1 Rather than repeating this rather complicated phrase, I use the words “religious” and “religion” throughout this review in this sense.
this book is a remarkably accessible foray into the critical study of religion.

The book is divided into eight chapters, which Martin in turn groups together into four sections. The first section (chapter 1) takes up issues of definition and method. After drawing attention to the complications surrounding attempts to define ‘religion’ by critiquing a few definitions ranging in sophistication, Martin opts to continue using the word—with the understanding that the category, in its colloquial usage, does not clearly and consistently distinguish one aspect of culture from others. He then outlines the principles of method underlying the remaining sections—namely, methodological atheism, the hermeneutics of suspicion, and functionalism. Adopting a naturalistic stance, Martin argues, allows for critical questions to be raised of religious phenomena, the answering of which in turn illuminates some of their often otherwise unnoticed functions in society.

Taking up the lion’s share of the book, the second and third sections (chapters 2-4 and chapters 5-7, respectively) concern matters of theory. To begin, Martin advances a theory of society informed by Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and scholars working within their lineages. Building on the insights of social constructionism, he explains how social worlds—those complex systems of classification, insider/outsider boundaries, assigned roles, norms of behavior, hierarchies, and so on—are produced and reproduced via human activity, socialization, and naturalization. Emphasized throughout are the pernicious effects of essentialism as related to the unequal distribution of power (e.g., repression and domination), but significant attention is also paid to the enabling features of assigned/acquired roles, group membership, institutions, etc. Following Bourdieu, Martin subsequently complicates common sense notions of agency, arguing that individuals must be seen as both the products and producers of their social worlds. Such a destabilization of the discrete, fully autonomous individual calls into question the conceptual plausibility that religion is a matter of either private experience or personal choice, thus clearing the ground for Martin to formulate a social theory of religion. For him, it is most useful to think of religious traditions as “cultural toolboxes” containing an assortment of mechanisms capable of getting things done in the world. Drawing on Berger and Lincoln, tools count as religious when their content and authority (with more weight placed on the latter) transcend the human. Among these tools and their uses, Martin focuses narrowly on legitimation and contestation, projection onto absent authority figures, selective reading of authoritative texts, and claims to authenticity. Through a series of instructive examples, Martin shows how human beings can and have put their religious tools to use for a wide range of ends—from conservation to innovation, from maintenance to contest, from inclusion to exclusion.

In the fourth section (chapter 8), Martin concludes his book with a close reading of Charles Sheldon’s In His Steps (1896). After providing a concise and useful summary, he employs the critical tools developed in the previous chapters to show how In His Steps reflects the social situation and values of its author and his “professional Christian audience” (187), challenges certain aspects of the status quo of the late nineteenth century (e.g., the prevalence of the production, sale, and consumption of alcohol), and yet ultimately reproduces systems of class domination (the wealthy over the workers)—all through a fictional representation of a

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2 He mentions by name Antonio Gramsci, Mary Douglas, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, Louis Althusser, Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, David Kertzer, Pierre Bourdieu, Marshall Sahlins, Bruce Lincoln, and Russell McCutcheon (xiii).
group of Protestants striving to live as they believed Jesus did.

*A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion* is an engaging and enjoyable book with significant pedagogical merits (depending on the type of course one is looking to teach, of course). Martin’s prose is approachable and unpretentious on the whole, and there is no lack of realistic, ordinary examples. One particularly notable instance of this strength is his explanation and use of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (71-91, esp. 73-84). There are two aspects of the book that could be construed as weak points. First, there are no broad surveys of any religious traditions. And second, Martin culls most of his examples from Christianity. As it happens, however, these features are intentional—*after all, it is impossible to include everything in one volume*. To borrow an expression Russell McCutcheon uses to describe his own introductory book, Martin’s book is meant to set the table—it is up to instructors to supply the spread. Furthermore, Martin notes that his training has rendered him most familiar with Christianity, and he “suspects[s] that many readers will similarly have at least a minimal prior familiarity with Christianity” (xiv). Having dismissed these potential criticisms, however, another arises—the examples from conservative/evangelical Christianity seem to outnumber those from more progressive/ecumenical forms. In the fifth chapter, for example, Martin uses evangelical Christianity to illustrate how religion can function to maintain social order, yet he does not provide many concrete examples of how Christian tools in particular can be used to challenge the status quo. This subtle imbalance, though not a damning problem by any means, has the potential to rub some readers the wrong way, possibly even obscure the point that the very same set of tools can be put to use for conflicting purposes. In the end, however, the strengths of Martin’s book far outweigh any weaknesses. With admirable clarity, Martin accomplishes what he set out to do—and that is to introduce readers not to religious traditions themselves, but to a critical mode of investigation that seeks to uncover their social functions. Highly recommended.

Adam T. Miller
University of Chicago


Anna Collar applies modern network theory to the archaeological examination of three religious movements within the Roman Empire. She begins with an explanation of network theory and a history of its use in archaeology. Network theory examines the mechanisms by which information, in this case religious innovation, spreads through connected nodes. Much of the explanation is devoted to the application of the theory to social networks, concerned largely with the role of opinion leaders and early adopters, and how effectively they transmit information through their connections and form new connections. Networks may be conceived in a variety of configurations of connectivity, such as small, tightly bound clusters of nodes, connected to other clusters by long-distance, “weak” connections, or as a series of overlapping clusters. Transmission of information depends primarily on the vulnerability of connected nodes to adoption of the new information, and the number of connections each node has. Analysis of a network may entail the identification a tipping point for setting off an information cascade, in which information suddenly suffuses the network. In such cases, the structure and connectivity of a network are a greater

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