

Religion and the Public Sphere:

The Spatial Theory of Michel de Certeau and Religious Space

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ABSTRACT

The public and academic debate of the relationship of religion and secularity is ongoing. Religion continues as a matter of increasing interest as public expressions of religion challenge perceived social norms that are often expressed using dichotomies of private and public, reason and belief, sacred and secular. New methods for conceiving religion and its public presence are being proposed building on critiques of the incompatibility of religion and secularity. One specific area where this is taking place is the public sphere. The usual approach is to generalize the complex relation between religion and secularity, with religion understood primarily as a set of moral claims or as a socializing community while secularity is understood in the function and tacit background of the public sphere. On these grounds, particular instances where religion and secularity intersect, integrate or conflict can be simplistically categorized using categories like private and public or sacred and secular. These explanations do not adequately reflect the complexities of religious presence and practice. There is a gap in exploring the ways that religious meaning is practiced by ordinary citizens within a secular milieu. This thesis contributes to filling this by using Michel de Certeau's spatial theory as a means of seeing religion as a technique of everyday life, practiced within the physical, mental, and social arena's in which it is located. Rather than offering a different simplification of the relationship between religion and the public sphere, I complicate the relationship to open up what spaces of religion are overlooked by the usual approaches.

There are two central arguments to this thesis. First, it demonstrates that a spatial approach to religion can highlight religious practices as embodying particular ways of inhabiting the world. Towards this end, it reconsiders the relationship between religion and secularity. Second, the dissertation argues that de Certeau's spatial concepts of *lieu* and *espace* and strategy and tactics provide a clear theoretical framework for identifying varieties of religious phenomena in religious and ostensibly non-religious places.

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The Spatial Theory of Michel de Certeau and
Religious Spaces

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DECLARATIONS

[In absentia, sign, date, scan (preferably into .pdf), and e-mail; or post or fax]

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed  (Candidate)
Date 15 June 2021

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed  (Candidate)
Date 15 June 2021

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if approved, to be available for photocopying by the British Library and for Inter-Library Loan, for open access to the Electronic Theses Online Service (EthoS) linked to the British Library, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to:
Shimmer, my partner in all things
Wonderbug, my associate
Ladybug, the treasure at the end of my rainbow
Hoo, my warrior, and
Cracker-Jack, my prize at the bottom of the box.

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GLOSSARY

KEY TERMS OF THE SPATIAL THEORY

artefact of meaning: a production in which is embedded the order, myth, or story that frames the interaction between spatial subject(s) and the spatial object(s)

espace: an artefact of meaning; the effect produced by tactical operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function; *espace* is a practiced *lieu*

heterology: de Certeau's intellectual approach consisting in an attempt to discern and make room for forms of interruption (otherness or alterities), predicated on the philosophical discourse of the relation between Same and Other

lieu: an artefact of meaning; a strategically produced order of whatever kind in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence and stability; ruled by the law of the proper

myth: the tradition, narrative, or imaginary that informs and is represented in practice (otherwise referred to as story)

products: any thing (location, systems, symbols, language etc.) resulting from systems of production (policy, urban development, commerce, internet, the academy, institution, etc.)

religious space: the meaning of the term is threefold: space as a medium in which religion is located, spatiality as a method for examining religion, space as produced by religions, religious groups, and individuals

situational: the material or systemic aspects of space and practice

spatial analysis: a consideration of the relationship between physical, social, and cultural arenas, with special consideration to situational and substantial elements of embodied practice

strategy: a formal way of operating, constituting the practices that produce or reproduce a site, characterized by force-relationships, will, power, and order; produces a *lieu*

substantial: the metaphorical or experiential aspect of space and practice

tactic an informal way of operating, constituting the innumerable practices by which users reappropriate the places (*lieu*) of sociocultural production; produces an *espace*

un propre: a site where the elements taken into consideration are ordered, each situated in its own proper and distinct location, a location it defines

way of operating: a structure of practices, either strategy or tactic, which may be formal or informal, ordered or creative

Chapter One

1. Introduction

During the French Revolution in 1793 the Cathedral of Notre Dame was rededicated to the Cult of Reason, a doctrine intended to replace Christianity. The fundamental idea behind this strategic move was to show that religion was no longer the system of devotion or the central source of knowledge for people and society. This idea, though not the symbolic gesture, is widespread and commonplace as an implicit assumption of the modern age.¹ As early as 1977 American sociologist Daniel Bell was writing controversially about the 'return of the sacred', predicting a reawakening of the religious imagination despite secularization.² The idea of return, which first necessitates a departure, is questionable but the idea of an ongoing presence of religion is important. Since Bell's time public forms religion has taken have increasingly challenged the older liberal dichotomies of public and private, reason and belief, and secular and state. Presently we find various instances of a complex relationship between religion and society, often taking the form of intersection or overlap between religion and politics.³

¹ Gavin Flood, *The Importance of Religion: Meaning and Action in Our Strange World*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 130

² Daniel Bell, 'The Return of the Sacred? The Argument on the Future of Religion', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 28.4 (1977), pp. 419-449

³ We are currently in the midst of responding to Covid-19 pandemic. During this time state enforces restrictions on travel and social interaction have caused significant challenges for religious groups. Emma Green, 'Orthodox Jewish Women are Facing an Impossible Choice Right Now', *The Atlantic*, 19th April 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/04/orthodox-jews-mikvah-immersion-covid-19/610204/> (Last accessed 23rd November 2020). Green notes the problem of purity laws for menstruating women are required to isolate from their families for a time and then be immersed in a communal pool (*mikvah*) to ceremonially cleanse before re-entering communal life. Tanya Gupta and Minreet Kaur, 'Coronavirus: UK's Sikh Vaisakhi festivals cancelled amid pandemic', *BBC England*, 12th April, 2020. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-52219170> (Last accessed 23rd November 2020). Southall west London gurdwara general secretary Navraj Singh has said, 'No event in the Sikh calendar should endanger lives.' This is a significant concession, what shift in thinking is taking place when physical health is taken to outweigh the religious rhythms and practices that give meaning to life? Regarding the intersection or overlap of religion and politics I need only remind that many of the largest movements against public health restrictions in Canada have a religious tone. Pandemic aside, this intersection or overlap of religion and society or politics may be well pointed out by remembering the religious symbolism at the events of 6 January 2021 at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

A central aspect of this complex relationship is the question of the meaning and vitality of religion and its public expression.

Patrick Riordan articulates a key challenge when considering this complex relationship in terms of politics, he writes:

The challenge is to find a way of dealing conceptually with the relationship between religion and politics, which respects the autonomy of each pole. At the same time, an adequate theoretical conceptualization must be such that it can be compatible with and hospitable to both a fully fledged theological understanding of the nature of religion and an articulated philosophical account of the nature of politics.⁴

Riordan correctly identifies that what is required is a way to account for the full nature of religion as it intersects with politics. While Riordan is writing specifically of the relation of religion and politics, the same challenge applies to dealing with religion and society. What form will this account take? Riordan suggests the possibility of conceiving religion and politics as independent of one another. This might begin with a basic premise of religion as a particular narrative of human experience while politics, as Adrian Leftwich suggests, as the activities whereby people organize the resources of individual and social life.⁵ Maintaining this autonomy requires a means of locating religion and politics in different and particular systems, structures, and functions. Often this takes the form of simplifying the complex interrelation of religion and society through the application of dichotomies like private and public, sacred and secular. The weakness of this application is that it privileges one way of viewing the relation, a liberal philosophical way, in terms of visibility, power or even control. This position is rejected by any view that considers the social reality of religion as going beyond such categories.⁶

⁴ Patrick Riordan, S.J 'Five Ways of Relating Religion and Politics or Living in Two Worlds: Believer and Citizen' in Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 30-44 [30].

⁵ Adrian Leftwich, *What is politics? The activity and its study?* (Oxford: Polity, 2004).

⁶ For example, see Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (London: SCM Press, 2009)

Addressing the general social instead of a specifically political realm Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen write, ‘many of our dominant stories about religion and public life are myths that bear little relation to either our political life or our everyday experience.’⁷ The breakdown of the dominant story of the separate and autonomous nature religion and the public can be seen in portrayals of religion in the media.⁸ Lövheim and Linderman suggest that ‘in the Nordic countries, mass media’ such as news editorials ‘have become the prime sites where people in general encounter religion in daily life’.⁹ While this may go to show that expecting religion or at least its symbols to be absent from public discourse is unwarranted it gives no indication of whether such visibility is indicative of any vitality or influence of religion therein.¹⁰ What is required is an intervention that considers not only the presence of religion in the public but whether that presence indicates anything meaningful. This will require us to reconsider some of our most basic categories of research, analysis, and critique.¹¹

One step towards such an intervention goes under the title of the New Visibility of Religion. The premise of the New Visibility approach to religion is that the sociological categories that form functional and institutional examinations of religion are unable to properly account for the real presence of religion in society.¹² The authors propose the need for different means to account for religion, and its place and relationship in

⁷ Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, ‘Introduction: The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere’, in Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere: Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor and Cornel West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp.1-14 [1].

⁸ Andrew Crome, ‘“Wonderful”, “Hot”, “Good” Priests: Clergy on Contemporary British TV and the New Visibility of Religion Thesis’, *Religions* 11.38 (2020), pp. 1-15 [1].

⁹ Mia Lövheim and Alf Linderman, ‘Religion, media, and modernity: Editorials and religion in Swedish daily press.’ in Titus Hjelm (ed.), *Is God Back? Reconsidering the New Visibility of Religion*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2015), pp. 32-45 [32].

¹⁰ Crome, ‘Clergy on Contemporary British TV’, p. 12; Lövheim and Linderman, ‘Religion, media, and modernity’, p. 44-45.

¹¹ Mendieta and VanAntwerpen, ‘Introduction: The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere’, p.1

¹² Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, ‘Introduction’ in Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp.1-11 [3-5].

society, one that does not accept the liberal philosophical position.¹³ This thesis builds upon this and advances a spatial approach to religion. While I believe that the spatial approach is not bound by particular cultural or regional distinctions, I want to clarify at the outset that each of my sources is located within a North Atlantic setting and unless otherwise noted refers to that social and cultural setting. This same clarification applies to my work here.

To be clear the argument proposed here is that dichotomous categories such as private and public, belief and reason, or sacred and secular are insufficient to the purpose of locating religion and its relation to society. This also applies to descriptive terms that aim to identify religion with its creeds, symbols, institutions, and physical locations. Rather, religion comprises a complex variety of beliefs, locations, symbols, and social arrangements which are not unitary but take on meaning through the practices of individuals and groups. The categories noted above cannot adequately describe this meaning-making of religion since they are reductive or stress linearity and hierarchical views of religion and society. Specifically, the dichotomous terms presuppose a certain dynamic between religion and society privileging a particular modern social and epistemological structure the weakness of which is exposed by the spatial approach. I argue in this thesis that a spatial approach, particularly that of Michel de Certeau, can provide an appropriate structure for the study of religion that accounts for the complex visibility and hiddenness of religion without appealing to those problematic categories. This work is primarily conceptual arguing for a framework for the study of religion although I do endeavour to provide appropriate illustration where it would be helpful. Further, it is important to note that even as I advance a spatial theory for locating religion, I do not suppose this to simplify the relationship of religion to society but

¹³ Hoelzl and Ward, 'Introduction', pp. 3-5.

instead to complicate the question. A spatial approach drawn from the work of de Certeau furnishes a set of terms that can be used to describe and analyse, even predict, the simultaneous presence of several, and sometimes contradictory, religious phenomena that may exist at different levels of society. This argument results from how spatial theory, specifically its emphasis on embodied belief, goes beyond private and public, belief and reason as limits for religion and shows how a practice, site or thing may be both sacred and secular at the same time.

1.1. Argument structure

Chapter 2 explores how we understand religion and its relationship to the public space and public sphere. At the outset some guidance needs to be given on how I understand these terms. Since the subject of the thesis involves an understanding of religion, I want to avoid a specific definition instead preferring to let the spatial terms frame the view of religion. However, I do take a particular view of the public sphere and the public in general. I take the public sphere to be a social reality of the kind suggested by the interdisciplinary study of Neil Smith and Setha Low. Smith and Low have shown that despite ‘a multiplicity of divergent meanings’ for the public space and public sphere that both are articulations of social and political action.¹⁴ By the public space I mean the range of social locations offered by the street, park, media, the Internet, the shopping mall, etc. And the public sphere, more specifically, the ideas, media, institutions, and practices that go towards the generation of something that can be called the public, publics, or public opinion and is generally nested in historical frameworks concerning the function of the state, transformations of social relations, and a normative search for

¹⁴ Neil Smith and Setha Low, ‘The imperative of public space’ in Neil Smith and Setha Low (eds.), *The Politics of Public Space* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-16 [3], also, Setha Low, ‘Public Space and the Public Sphere: The Legacy of Neil Smith’, *Antipode* 49.S1 (2017), pp. 153-170 [155].

political and social effectiveness.¹⁵ Even though, the boundary lines between the two are blurred and blurring.¹⁶ They are each and together, as Philip Howell puts it, ‘a normative ideal of political action and a historical phenomenon’.¹⁷ The public sphere is a dynamic social field and not only an extension of politics, having a dual role: (1) a meeting place for citizens; and, (2) a channel for communication and interests towards civil society and the state.¹⁸ And insofar as secular liberal politics are touched or acted upon within this sphere it is both an open place and a closed place for religious belief and practice. Accepting the public sphere as one milieu in which religion moves as a social reality allows for a focussed investigation of, as Ammerman writes, ‘the seeming paradox of religions simultaneous presence and absence in the modern world’; what Beckford calls the ‘puzzling’ claims of public religion.¹⁹ The introduction to the public sphere in the following chapter sets up a contrast that emphasizes the idea that is central to the work, the need for a theoretical framework to identify religion as practice accounting for the complexity of its relationship with secularity and its structures like the modern public sphere.

This relationship is a subject that has engendered much academic discussion. Hent de Vries edited a 2006 collection, *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, covering a wide range of historical and contemporary debates, approaches, and examples.²⁰ The subject has also been addressed from the perspective of

¹⁵ Smith and Low, ‘The imperative of public space’, p. 3, 5

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 14

¹⁷ Philip Howell, ‘Public space and the public sphere: Political theory and the historical geography of modernity.’ *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11.3 (1993), pp. 303-322 [309].

¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, ‘Further Reflections on the Public Sphere’, in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 421-461 [441].

¹⁹ Nancy T. Ammerman, ‘Introduction: Observing Modern Religious Lives’, in Nancy T. Ammerman (ed.), *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 3-18 [4]; James A. Beckford, ‘The Return of Public Religion? A Critical Assessment of a Popular Claim’ in *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 23.2 (2010), pp. 121-136 [121].

²⁰ Hent de Vries (ed.), *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006).

Cosmopolitanism studies,²¹ within regional contexts,²² and in particular case studies.²³ Each of these explorations falls generally within two models: a model of separation and accommodation that emphasizes the place of religion as the private realm and the Rawlsian model of overlapping consensus that allows for a public presence of religion under certain conditions. These models are being challenged by new conversations that specifically consider the benefit of religion within the public and political spheres.²⁴ These new takes challenge the accepted definition of secularity as the tacit background of North Atlantic modern liberal societies and the accepted view of characterizing religions through what people believe, identifying particular religious groups through comparisons of their creed and doctrines.²⁵

To explore this, I engage Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor for important thematic developments. The choice of Habermas and Taylor is strategic, but in choosing them I set aside other treatments of the public sphere. There are political theologies with which I do not engage because they presuppose a proper location for religion. This is counter to the aim of a theoretical approach to locating religion. I exclude Hannah Arendt for a similar reason. Arendt's political concept was centred on an active citizenship that emphasizes civic engagement and collective deliberation, each of which take place in

²¹ Gerard Delanty (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012). See especially Bryan S. Turner 'The cosmopolitanism of the sacred' (Chapter 15) pp. 188-197, and Humeira Iqtidar 'Cosmopolitanism, religion and inter-civilizational dialogue' (Chapter 16) pp. 198-207.

²² See for examples, Silvio Ferrari and Sabrina Pastorelli, *Religion in Public Spaces: A European Perspective* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2012) and Marguerite Van Die (ed.), *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

²³ See for example, Solange Lefebvre and Lori G. Beaman (eds.), *Religion in the Public Sphere: Canadian Case Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

²⁴ James Walters and Esther Kersely (eds.), *Religion and the Public Sphere: New Conversations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018). Note, here and throughout unless otherwise stated politics and the political will refer to the particular laws, systems, processes, and institutions that form the North Atlantic nations expressions of modern liberalism (US, Canada), or new liberalism (UK).

²⁵ Donald S. Lopez Jr., 'Belief', in Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 21-35

the public space and sphere.²⁶ Her emphasis on the social construction of the public sphere and her notion of the common world as a shared social space describes a field in which the question could be asked: where do we find religion? However, Arendt delimits the common space implying that it is present only when citizens directly participate in the practices and activities of that space and its institutions.²⁷ The challenge to this is, as Benhabib writes, Arendt's view of participation in the common space 'seems to fly in the face of the realities of the modern world'.²⁸ As LaFay writes, 'confusing an existential Self for a political Self' and committing a particularly modern error that does not account for religion, its significance for individuals, and the various ways this significance may be visible.²⁹ Instead, to distinguish the potential of a spatial approach to religion I wish to contrast it with perspectives that note the particularity of religious practice and which are open to considering its benefit to society. This contrast and drawing connections between the spatial approach is the basis of my original argument. It also allows me to contribute to an ongoing discourse.³⁰

I chose to engage with Habermas and Taylor for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons is that both have given significant consideration to the particular problem of religion and the public sphere. This is closely connected to the fact that both Habermas

²⁶ Maurizio Passerin d'Entrevès, 'Hannah Arendt' *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arendt/#Aca>.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ Seyla Benhabib, 'The Embattled Public Sphere: Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas and Beyond', in *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, 90 (1997), pp. 1-24 [2].

²⁹ Marilyn LaFay, *Hannah Arendt and the Spectre of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 1.

³⁰ This includes, Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular politics*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014); Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, 'Civil Society and Social Theory' in *Thesis Eleven* 21, pp. 40-64; and, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); Nick Crossley and John M. Roberts (eds.), *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004); Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text* 25/26 (1990), p.56-80; and, 'Politics, Culture, and the Public Sphere: Toward a Postmodern Conception', in Linda Nicholson and Steven Seidman (eds.), *Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and, Inger Furseth (ed.), *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017).

and Taylor allow religion a positive role within society, although the shape of this role and its relation to other social structures differ. Moreover, it is Habermas who set the basic terms of the public sphere and its discourse.³¹ While his work on the public sphere was an early product, in the last two decades he has consistently returned to the idea of the public sphere and religion through his notion of postsecularity.³² Taylor's primary work has been the development of a philosophical anthropology. He is also a public scholar who once pursued political office and famously contributed to the Bouchard–Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation in Québec, Canada.³³ It is Taylor's recent work redefining secularity that has brought him into regular engagement with religion and the public sphere³⁴ as an outcome of his concept of social theory and religion.³⁵ Habermas and Taylor each approach the question conceptually, which lends itself to the sort of analysis I take. Finally, as will become apparent, their position regarding religion is different, which provides an opportunity to note the thematic differences that usually accompany the question.

Both Habermas and Taylor recognize that any view anticipating the decline in the presence and social influence of religion is not substantiated. In response, Habermas has proposed an interpretation of society as postsecular, locating religion within this social categorization. He emphasizes that the influence of religion in the public is limited by a

³¹ See Craig Calhoun, (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2011), Robert C. Holub, *Jürgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 40 and Crossley and Roberts, *After Habermas*, p. 1.

³² For example, de Vries includes a significant discussion between Habermas and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), *Political Theologies*, pp. 251-268.

³³ Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, 'Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation' *Commission de consultation sur les pratiques d'accommodement reliées différence culturelles* (Québec: Québec Government Printing Office, 2008).

³⁴ For example, the opening chapter of Walters and Kersley, *Religion and the Public Sphere*, is a dialogue between Charles Taylor and Craig Calhoun.

³⁵ Jennifer Guyver, 'Conceptions of God and Narratives of Modernity: A hermeneutical interpretation of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*' Thesis, Université of Montreal, accessed at Theses Canada Library and Archives Canada; and, Germán Mackenzie, *Interpreting Charles Taylor's Social Theory on Religion and Secularization* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017).

translation principle.³⁶ In contrast, Taylor, who describes himself as having lived astride ‘two-worlds’ (both those of French-English but also Modern-Religious) proposes a revisioning of secularism, which I refer to as a (new) secularity.³⁷ Taylor’s view provides for a public presence of religion. Instead of limiting that place through the need for common language and reason, Taylor suggests a common philosophy of citizenship as the founding principle to guide inclusion in the ever-growing diversity of society.³⁸ In their own way both of these thinkers step away from past discourse on the structures of religion and the public sphere and appeal to a higher-level structural social norm as the basis for seeing the space of religion in the various places of society.³⁹ There are positive aspects of each position, yet what is missing is a sufficient recognition of the significance of religion as a type of meaning-seeking and meaning-making practice.

My aim in the chapter is to consider the question of the space of religion in the public sphere and, in doing so, identify a gap in the discourse. I do not disregard any positive contribution of Habermas and Taylor to how we view public discourse; yet, I expect to show that some unhelpful limiting factors are applied to religion in order to advance particular visions for society. I have chosen to engage recent and, in some cases, shorter works by Habermas and Taylor that allow me to pursue the question. For Habermas, this includes his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, but other recent works,

³⁶ Habermas developed the idea of postmetaphysical thinking in *Postmetaphysical Thinking: Collected Essays* trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992), he writes, there is ‘no alternative to postmetaphysical thinking’, p. 29.

³⁷ Ruth Abbey, *Charles Taylor* (Teddington, England: Acumen, 2000), p. 7.

³⁸ This is a point Taylor makes in a dialogue with Craig Calhoun. ‘Charles Taylor and Craig Calhoun: The Future of Faith’ *Professor Charles Taylor, The Revd Dr James Walters and Professor Craig Calhoun in Discussion*, The London School of Economics and Political Science, LSE Faith Centre podcast. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/faithcentre/2015/12/03/charles-taylor-and-craig-calhoun-the-future-of-faith> (Last accessed 31 December 2020).

³⁹ Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere: Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor and Cornel West* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); and, Ulrike Spohn, ‘A Difference in Kind? Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor on Post-secularism’ *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms* 20.2, pp. 120-125.

and for Taylor, mostly *A Secular Age*. This thesis is not about the structure and function of the public sphere, nor is it argument of where and how religion can be present within it. Instead, I ask the diagnostic questions: Where is religion? What are religious spaces? and How can we identify the presence of religion in ostensibly non-religious places? Engaging Habermas and Taylor as exemplars of a current debate is a means to identify some common problems with how we understand religion and its public presence. This narrowed focus will allow me to avoid protracted handling of their deeper theoretical material and to make clear that the approaches to religion and the public sphere they represent miss the mark. I was aided in the analysis through secondary literature on Habermas and Taylor. I note, particularly for Habermas, commentary by Craig Calhoun and selected portions of *The Habermas Handbook*,⁴⁰ and for Taylor, Ruth Abbey and James K. A. Smith, as well as critical perspectives.⁴¹ From here I move on towards introducing the spatial approach to religion.

Chapter 3 is the first of four conceptual chapters and undertakes the introduction of the spatial theory for locating the presence of religion. This is accomplished through a reading of Kim Knott. Knott presumes that religion can be understood through analysing where and how religion is in contested relationship with non-religion. Using this as a premise Knott argues for an understanding of a spatial theory of religion that focusses on physical, mental, and social locations as spaces by which religion can be identified. She proposes a spatial theory as a method to locate ‘religions and their

⁴⁰ Particularly Calhoun’s ‘Introduction’ in, Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA. and London: The MIT Press, 1996 [1992]); Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *Habermas and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); also, Hauke Brunkhorst, Regina Kreide, and Cristina Lafont (eds.), *The Habermas Handbook* (New York: Columbia University Press).

⁴¹ Ian Fraser, ‘Charles Taylor, Mikhail Epstein, and ‘minimal religion’’, in *International Journal of the Philosophy of Religion*, 77 (2015), pp. 159-178; and, *Dialectics of the Self: Transcending Charles Taylor* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2007). Also, James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014); and, William Schweiker, ‘Grappling with Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*’, *The Journal of Religion*, 90.3 (2010), pp. 367-400.

practical, discursive and material entailments as co-constructed by religious actors in engagement with their traditions, social relations, and historical geographical, and political contexts ...'.⁴² This social constructivist idea of religion and society builds on the idea that religion is a particular kind of social narrative and practice. It is an effort at bringing together the substance of religion with the particularities of its social situation to provide a clear picture of religious phenomena and their relationship to societies non-religious structures. Over the course of this thesis, that definition of a spatial theory will be adapted and expanded.

Knott's spatial approach has developed out of two different but related conversations. human geography and socio-cultural theory. An important interdisciplinary volume was published by Derek Gregory (geographer) and John Urry (sociologist) in 1985.⁴³ Around the same time as Gregory and Urry, Edward Soja was beginning inquiries into space as a category of critical theory.⁴⁴ From this perspective, Hervieu-Léger characterizes 'three registers' for viewing religious territoriality, communalization, geopolitics, and symbolization.⁴⁵ These perspectives emphasize empirical study over an experiential notion of space. Crang and Thrift have suggested that thinking on the relationship of space and theory emerged through movements beyond geography and its engagement with the social sciences.⁴⁶ Prior to Gregory and Urry, Yi-Fu Tuan used the geographic idioms of space and place as phenomenological terms to analyse the

⁴² Kim Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion', *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 1 (2010), p. 29-43 [35].

⁴³ Derek Gregory and John Urry (eds.), *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985).

⁴⁴ Edward Soja, 'The Political Organization of Space' *Association of the American Geographers Resource Paper No. 8* (Washington: Commission on College Geography, 1971); *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989). The ideas Soja develops here went on to inform *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagine Places* (Cambridge, MA.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

⁴⁵ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, 'Space and Religion: New Approaches to Religious Spatiality in Modernity' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26.1, (2002), pp. 99-105 [99-100].

⁴⁶ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift 'Preface' in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. xi-xii.

perspective of experience.⁴⁷ Similarly, Heidegger connected the socio-cultural arena with the idea of place and belonging 1954.⁴⁸ Knott contends that this idea goes further back though, to a 1768 essay by Immanuel Kant;⁴⁹ and Edward S. Casey traces the philosophical history of a socio-cultural idea of space back to Aristotle and the making of ‘where’, one of his ten indispensable categories of every substance.⁵⁰ From there, Casey suggests, comes two millennia of thought on meaning connected to location.⁵¹ The empirical and experiential notions of spatiality were significantly drawn together in what has been noted as a noted spatial turn in the writing of influential continental thinkers; Knott highlights Benjamin, Foucault, Bourdieu, Lefebvre, and de Certeau.⁵² The result is that presently, as Knott writes, ‘ideas about space intersect with discussions on urbanisation, globalisation, identity, diaspora, commodification and consumption, and the nature of modernism and postmodernism.’⁵³ Meanwhile Tymienicka writes that space intersects with ideas of bodily life, telos, transcendence, imagination, and other phenomenological categories.⁵⁴ In varying ways, each of these intersect with understandings of religion. Knott’s *The Location of Religion* is her effort to bridge the empirical branch of spatiality with the phenomenological.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Yi-Fi Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ in D. F. Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 343-363.

⁴⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 16; citing Immanuel Kant, ‘Concerning the Ultimate Foundation of the Differentiation of Regions in Space’, *Kant: Selected Pre-Critical Writings and Correspondence with Beck*, trans. and intro. G.B Kerford and D.E Walford, (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), pp. 36-43.

⁵⁰ Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. ix.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. x.

⁵² Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]), p. 2.

⁵³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 2. For other summary material see, Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchen (eds.), *Key Thinkers on space and place* (Los Angeles, CA.: Sage, 2011). On the idea of the social construction of time and place see Brad West, ‘Cultural Social Theory’ in Anthony Elliot (ed.), *Routledge handbook of social and cultural theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 188-202 [195-197]. One application of space to the study of religion is Cecilia Feldman and Claudia Moser (eds.), *Locating the sacred: theoretical approaches to the emplacement of religion* (Oakville: Oxbow Books, 2014).

⁵⁴ Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.), *Phenomenology of Space and Time Book 1 and 2*, *Analecta Husserliana* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2014).

⁵⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 91-93.

Knott's spatial approach to religion situates religious belief and meaning within contemporary everyday locations. To do this, Knott accepts the idea that individual and group locations can be described as both substantial and situational. Substantial ideas draw on the phenomenological tradition and emphasize experience, aesthetics, the senses, and the sacred. The situational draws on Marxist and post-structural social theories that foreground religion and politics as expressions of systems, historical environments, and as representations. Specifically, Knott looks to apply Henri Lefebvre's social production model of space to religion as a socially produced and lived experience.⁵⁶ Knott's proposed spatial methodology is an attempt to examine the location of religion in the fabric of the secular, where both religion and secularity are substantial and situational phenomena, functioning within what she deems a 'Religious/Secular Field' of 'force–power relations'.⁵⁷ To locate religion within this field, Knott proposes categorical themes including the importance of the body as a source of space, and a series of spatial terms such as the constitution, experience, activity, and meaning of space.⁵⁸

The particular approach that Knott takes to spatial religion is one that she originates in order to examine religion in Western modernity.⁵⁹ Knott's *The Location of Religion* is both theoretical and empirical. The proposed model provides a clear method and language to identify the situations and locations where religious meaning takes place. In that, the application of Knott's empirical method is helpful, even as its conceptual frame is lacking. As I will show Knott's framing of the relationship between religion and secularity as contested misidentifies religious phenomena and ultimately limits the

⁵⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 2-3 and 35ff.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 124-129.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 1.

potential of her spatial view. To maintain the strengths of a spatial approach and yet overcome the limitations of Knott's theoretical framework, I turn to Michel de Certeau as the primary subject and source for the remaining three conceptual chapters. Therefore, it is important to note that I do not propose de Certeau in order to invalidate the efficacy of Knott's model, but to broaden its scope by complicating her framework, showing how it misses important avenues for research.

Michel de Certeau was born in Chambéry on 17th May 1925.⁶⁰ Educated at the Universities of Grenoble, Lyon, and Paris, he earned degrees in classics and philosophy. He earned a doctorate in religious science from the Sorbonne in 1960. Prior to this he joined the Jesuits (1950), with hopes of working as a missionary in China, and was ordained in 1956. Early in his time with the Jesuits, he was asked to research the origins and history of the order, becoming a specialist in early modern religious history and mysticism. He cofounded *Christus* and contributed significantly to *Études*, Jesuit journals devoted to spirituality and culture, respectively. As a student of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, he was a founding member of *École Freudienne de Paris*. In 1968, he published a collection of essays under the title *La prise de parole. Pour une nouvelle culture* [The Capture of Speech: Towards a new culture].⁶¹ Many commentators on de Certeau identify this as a pivotal point in his scholarship.⁶² Afterwards, he began writing

⁶⁰ Detailed summaries of Michel de Certeau can be found in the opening chapters of Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995); Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000); Luce Giard (ed.), *Le voyage mystique. Michel de Certeau*, (Paris: Recherches de Science Religieuse/Les Éditions du Cerf, 1988); Ben Highmore, *Michel de Certeau Analysing Culture*, (London: Continuum, 2006), and, Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

⁶¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech, and Other Political Writings*, trans. Tom Conley, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); originally published as, *La prise de parole. Pour une nouvelle culture* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1968). The translation in the text is my translation of the original title.

⁶² Given the breadth of study tied to the period of the 1960's and particularly to the global events during 1968, it is not surprising that de Certeau's response to that time is considered of significance in his work. Jeremy Ahearne marks the shift as a rupture, heralding de Certeau's move away from an orthodox religious affiliation; see Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995 [2007]) p. 2. Others suggest the importance of this aspect of de Certeau's scholarship is

on a broad range of topics, including projects in psychoanalysis, historiography, epistemology, semiotics, and the social sciences, while still researching religion and mysticism. Outside the academy, de Certeau participated with groups addressing questions of contemporary political practice and policy.⁶³ Over the course of his career, he held posts in Europe, the United States, and South America. He died on 9th January 1986.

In placing de Certeau's social and cultural writings, it is of note that he is not wholly unique in many aspects.⁶⁴ Peter Burke writes, 'de Certeau has come to be recognized as one of the most creative cultural theorists of the late twentieth century', though there are similarities to his contemporaries.⁶⁵ Knowing this gives some indication of the interlocutors and ideas within which he may be situated.⁶⁶ For example, Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu figure significantly in *The Practice of Everyday Life*; and de Certeau frequently refers to the idea of re-employment (*ré-emploi*) as a practice that allows for a multiplicity or depth of meaning to emerge within a text or practice. This idea resembles Claude Levi-Strauss's bricolage and also Paul Ricœur's appropriation. Similarly, de Certeau's familiarity with Jacques Lacan is evident as he explores and

connected to the process of publication and editorial interpretation of his works; see Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000) pp. 2-3, 11.

⁶³ Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 2, citing Luce Giard, 'Histoire d'une recherche' [History of research], second edition introduction in Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien: Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), pp. i-xxx; see also, Luce Giard, 'La passion de l'altérité' and 'Bibliographique' in Luce Giard (ed.), *Michel de Certeau* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1987), pp. 17-38, 245-53, and Luce Giard 'Mystique et politique, ou l'institution comme objet second', in Luce Giard, Hervé Martin, and Jacques Revel (eds.), *Histoire, mystique et politique. Michel de Certeau* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1991), pp. 9-45.

⁶⁴ Peter Burke, 'The Art of Re-Interpretation: Michel de Certeau' in *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* 100, December (2002), pp. 27-37 [28].

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

utilizes the ideas of speech and utterance, and he shows himself to be familiar with structuralism with the use of terms such as *repertoire* and *combinatoire*.⁶⁷

One reason for choosing de Certeau as my primary subject is that he was a contemporary of Henri Lefebvre, Knott's primary conceptual source. Another reason for doing so is that he is one of those important continental figures of the spatial turn in social and cultural studies. Reading de Certeau against the background of his Ignatian theological perspective offers his spatial and cultural concepts a religious and theological frame that aids in using his cultural concepts in analysing religion. This last point puts de Certeau in contrast with Knott, who reflexively identifies herself as a secular humanist situated within a liberal Quaker tradition.⁶⁸

The exploration of de Certeau is conducted over three chapters. In the next couple of pages, I give space to introductory issues related to my research de Certeau. There are challenges associated that had to be overcome regarding use of de Certeau. One challenge is that most of his work was originally written in French. Fortunately, the material related to his spatiality had been translated during his lifetime though I did have access to the original as well. Another challenge in studying de Certeau is that he is a multifaceted scholar with a varied academic interest who draws on and appeals to several disciplines.⁶⁹ The diversity of scholarship brings into question the possibility of

⁶⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 23; originally published as *L'invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire*, (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1980).

⁶⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 92.

⁶⁹ See Graham Ward (ed.) *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); and the intellectual biography by François Dosse. François Dosse, *Michel de Certeau. Le marcheur blessé* (Paris: Decouverte, 2002). Mike Crang writes, 'Michel de Certeau has lately become a small scale (sic) mantra in geographical writings.' Mike Crang, 'Relics, places, and unwritten geographies in the work of Michel de Certeau (1925-1986)' in Mike Crang Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.136-153 (136). Simon During writes of de Certeau's enduring impact on cultural studies; Simon During, *Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 29. Mark Poster writes of de Certeau's influence on postmodern theory; Mark Poster, *Cultural History*

dealing with it succinctly. Is it possible to draw together the breadth of his work into some useful whole? Or, in referring to the goal of this project – a religious spatiality – is it necessary to make such an attempt? Would it be possible to simply accept his spatiality as it is discussed by him and others and then make application to the question of the space of religion?⁷⁰ No. My position is that reading his spatial ideas in the broader context of his underlying philosophy of religion is of particular importance to the question of the space of religion. For reasons that will become clear below (Chapter 4), grappling with de Certeau's spatial theory requires taking a broader look at his scholarship, and owing to the diversity of his work, this broader look requires a critical analysis of his thought.

Jean Louis Schefer has written the work of de Certeau was left as the 'an open work', introducing several ideas which are left undeveloped.⁷¹ His scholarship is seemingly wandering in subject and method. The introduction of *The Certeau Reader* suggests, 'several Certeau scholars have characterized his *œuvre* as a continual movement or journeying from one place to another, from one academic discipline to another, crossing, recrossing and confusing disciplinary boundaries.'⁷² In spite of the diversity of his scholarship I agree with Inigo Bocken is arguing de Certeau saw his work as an integrated enterprise.⁷³ Unfortunately, not recognizing this, as Buchanan suggests, 'taunts readers of his work into making unwarranted reductions'.⁷⁴

and Postmodernity: Disciplinary Readings and Challenges (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Graham Ward evidences the application of de Certeau's theological thought; Graham Ward, 'Bodies: The Displaced Body of Jesus Christ' in John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (eds.), *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 163-181.

⁷⁰ Crang, 'Relics, places, and unwritten geographies' pp.136-153.

⁷¹ Jean Louis Schefer, *Libération* 11-12 January (1986), cited by Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 3.

⁷² Ward, *Reader*, p. 2.

⁷³ Inigo Bocken, 'Michel de Certeau: Introduction' *Oxford Bibliographies Online*. Available at: <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com>; Date added: 26 July, 2017 (Last accessed 2 February, 2019).

⁷⁴ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London; Sage Publications, 2000), p. 11.

I believe that any unwarranted reductions of the sort Buchanan references result from certain interpretive operations that could be remedied by recognizing de Certeau's ideas as stemming from a philosophy of religion. Some of the interpretive operations that I refer to are the outcome of accidents of translation and publication in English. Some result from the academic climate within which his work gained influence; social and cultural disciplines dominated by postmodernity and the secularization thesis. Some are connected to problems with the method of de Certeau's transmission. Ian Buchanan addresses this, arguing that the problem results from the manner and timeline of the publication of de Certeau into English and how this corresponds to moments in the English academy. Buchanan also highlights notations and redactions that accompany those translations but more so new editions. This 'updating' creates instances of an editorial 'one who knows' and preferred interpretation that Buchanan sees as 'over-determination'.⁷⁵ Inigo Bocken notes this has sometimes resulted in an unhelpful distinction between an English de Certeau, the scholar of cultural studies, and the European de Certeau, the historian and scholar of mysticism.⁷⁶ For example Bocken notes that de Certeau's studies of mysticism and religious history are less influential in the English academy than in continental Europe. How this distinction can impact readings of de Certeau is evident in Jeremy Ahearne's, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*. This sophisticated attempt to systematize de Certeau's theoretical enterprise and is an important general overview. Unfortunately, Ahearne's project is founded on a faulty premise, a division between the 'early' and 'late' de Certeau.

I have focussed on the work which Certeau published from 1970 onwards. This date marks what Certeau himself might have called a 'founding rupture' (*rupture instauratrice*). His work broke away

⁷⁵ Buchanan, *Cultural Theorist*, p. 4ff. The constraints of Giard's 'one who knows' makes rigid what de Certeau often intended as fluid. He allows for a distance between the practice or source, the writing (*écriture*) and meaning, not to the extent of postmodern subject as source, but rather to avoid any idealization of the text (Burke, 'The Art of Re-Interpretation', p. 28).

⁷⁶ Bocken, 'Michel de Certeau: Introduction', *Oxford Bibliographies Online*.

from the restricted networks in which it had circulated throughout the previous decade, and entered into a more 'common life'.⁷⁷

By fixing upon this particular period Ahearne leaves out the conceptual contributions a large portion of de Certeau's work and misses out on how his later work is a return and reapplication of this early material.⁷⁸ Similar sorts of interpretive steps are present in the work of Highmore and Wlad Godzich. Both take de Certeau as a postmodern philosopher with a special interest in epistemology.⁷⁹ In none of those three is de Certeau's religious and theological work given purchase within his social and cultural theory. In response I argue, with Burke, that it is necessary to read de Certeau 'in the ecclesiastical context in which his ideas developed'.⁸⁰ There have not been many general overviews of de Certeau and none in English that endeavour to unify the social and cultural with the religious and theological aspect of his work.⁸¹ Despite this, each is a useful resource as are the variety of approaches to de Certeau that centralize particular themes or disciplines within his work.⁸² There is one significant counter-example. Inigo Bocken and Eveline van Buijtenen understand de Certeau's as a historian of spirituality, arguing

⁷⁷ Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 5. In making this distinction Ahearne seems to think that de Certeau may be read as though his early work was not preparation for his later cultural critique. (Buchanan in *Cultural Theorist*, p. 11). Although, being fair to Ahearne he does concede, 'This is by no means to say that one should disregard the work which led up to this turning point. In many ways it prefigures the 'shattering' (*éclatement*) which was to follow, and I will frequently use it as a means of illuminating his later work ...'. (p.5) This use as illustration never critically engages de Certeau's theological work, nor his religious themes.

⁷⁸ I consider this a notable weakness for Ahearne. His book on de Certeau was published in 1995. This was the same year that Volume 1 of de Certeau's *The Mystic Fable* [Original, Michel de Certeau, *La fable mystique. Tome 1. XVIème – XVIIème siècle*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1982)] was published in English translation.

⁷⁹ Highmore, *Michel de Certeau*, p.xi; and, Wlad Godzich, 'Forward' in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp.vii-xxi [vii].

⁸⁰ Burke, 'The Art of Re-Interpretation', p. 27. (I added the text in parenthesis).

⁸¹ Bocken, 'Michel de Certeau: Introduction' *Oxford Bibliographies Online*.

⁸² One of these is *The Certeau Reader*. Therein, de Certeau is portrayed in his plurality aiming to show a central concern with what makes us believe in the stability of a symbolic order, what makes belief credible. (see, Ward, 'Introduction' *The Certeau Reader*, p. 6.) There is also a work in Dutch by Geldof and Laermans that centralizes psychoanalysis and a German volume that focusses on de Certeau as a historian and literature scholar. Koen Geldof and Rudi Laermans (eds.), *Sluipwegen van het denken: Michel de Certeau*, (Nijmegen, The Netherlands: SUN Uitgeverij, 1996); and, Marian Fuessel (ed.), *Michel de Certeau. Geschichte – Kulture – Religion* Konstanz (Germany: UVK-Verlag, 2007). For brief commentary on these see Inigo Bocken, 'Michel de Certeau: Introduction' *Oxford Bibliographies Online*.

that his Ignatian spirituality is a founding principle of his critical work.⁸³ They have the benefit of accessing posthumous works previous scholars did not.⁸⁴ In chapter 4 I develop this idea and while I make reference to Bocken and van Buijtenen I want to note that I arrived at this conclusion independently and only later included their material.

I draw from many of de Certeau's works. One of these is *L'étranger ou l'union dans la différence* from 1969. In this he uses Christian theology as a way of dealing with the appearance of the other or that which exceeds discourse. The central idea is that while there can be no unity between what is unknown and what is known (God and humankind, Other and the Same), a relationship that leads to knowledge is possible. This theme of the possibility is also present in de Certeau's textual methodology and hermeneutic. It operates behind his critique of historiography in *The Writing of History* (*L'écriture de l'histoire*, 1975). It is reflected in his theological investigation into modernity in *The Mystic Fable Vol. 1* (*La fable mystique*, 1982). It energizes the cultural studies of *Culture in the Plural* (*La culture au pluriel*, 1974) where de Certeau critiques the idea of a static culture, and in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (*L'invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire*, 1980) where he argues that culture is created through everyday practice. In each of these while the context and subject of the text is different; and, while it is true that an author cannot be read as a changeless being, it is possible, by grappling with de Certeau's hermeneutic and epistemic stance, to get a sense of his

⁸³ I have a draft copy of a single chapter in English provided by the author. Inigo Bocken, 'Spirituality as Criticism: Michel de Certeau and Ignatian Spirituality' unpublished English translation draft script; originally published as a chapter in Inigo Bocken and Eveline van Buijtenen, *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit. Inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau* (Heeswijk-Dinther, The Netherlands: Berne media, 2016).

⁸⁴ This primarily refers to volume 2 of *The Mystic Fable*. Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable. Volume 2: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); originally Michel de Certeau, *La fable mystique. Tome 2. XVIème – XVIIème siècle*, ed. Luce Giard (Paris: Gallimard, 2013)] In his bibliographical notation, Bocken notes that Luce Giard required nearly thirty years to finish the volume on the basis of one finished chapter, 'The Look: Nicholas of Cusa' and some written fragments and directives. The one finished chapter must be given precedence as a primary resource. The remainder is no more than a secondary source.

horizon. Concluding that his work is a philosophy of religion rooted in Ignatian spirituality concerned with identifying how meaning is actualized in the language and actions of the spaces people create.

This idea linking ways of believing and ways of being, is central to de Certeau's social and cultural theory and will allow me to consider the space of religion. Chapter 5 takes up the spatial categories of *lieu* and *espace* as the terms that de Certeau used to identify the interplay between systems of order (*lieu*) and the furtive and often hidden spaces of meaning that individuals create in and through these systems (*espace*). Making use of de Certeau's spatial themes begins with understanding how he set his idea of space apart from contemporaries Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Henri Lefebvre, blending together the same substantial and situational elements Knott utilizes. De Certeau is differentiated in his formulation of the spatial through his particular idea of the relation of *lieu* and *espace* and the terms strategy and tactics. Chapter 6 takes up an examination of these latter terms, showing how de Certeau conceives of strategies as a form of operational calculus whose aim is the production and reproduction of order. Against these practices de Certeau positions tactics. Tactics are often perceived to be a resistance or subversion of strategic order, but in this chapter, I argue that this is a misunderstanding of the terms. Rather, tactics are a form of practice, a creative operation that reappropriates the surrounding *lieu*, not to create an alternative order, but to give a different sense of being and meaning to the order.

It is in Chapter 7 the conceptual framework of spatiality is brought into the conversation with Habermas and Taylor, as well as Knott. That section of the thesis begins with a pair of examples discussing the location of religion. These examples both come from Canada. The first is the province of Québec Bill N° 21, which is a piece of legislation

aiming towards sustaining secularity in Québec's public services. The second example is a civil case that was brought to the Supreme Court of Canada, called *Northcrest Syndicat v. Amselem*, where a legal judgment was required to determine the nature of religious freedom and accommodation. The examples are not case studies. They only serve to show how a spatial approach to locating religion can allow for religious phenomena to be seen and considered. Afterwards, de Certeau's spatial theory is used to broaden and strengthen the spatial approach introduced by Knott. The chapter concludes that de Certeau's spatial analysis is an appropriate starting point and underestimated framework for study of religion, as it allows us to account for religious action and language in various religious and non-religious contexts. Acknowledging the creative capacity of religion is an important aspect of any discourse on the public place and power of religion. In this, I avoid defining religion particularly in order to frame a concept that will allow for religion to be located in everyday spaces in order to discern the nature and character of religion. The intention is not to focus exclusively on sites that identify as religious, nor to explain what is specifically religious about physical or social places; rather, it is to outline and demonstrate a conceptual approach to the study of religion that builds upon embodied belief in practices and their production of religious spaces. The resulting complexity shows how the dominant stories about religion and public life encapsulated in terms like private and public, sacred and secular, bear little relation to actual political life and our everyday experience.

The conclusion summarizes the research problem and the main argument while noting the main thesis conclusions. These conclusions allow me to state clearly the thesis' contribution to knowledge which is primarily conceptual. The framework is a way of conceiving the space of religion allowing for the simultaneous presence of religion and non-religion in their several and sometimes contradictory at other times collaborative or

even independent locations, trends, and representations. I make note of specific points in the secondary scholarship where my reading of de Certeau brings novelty. I expect these contributions to be in the areas of de Certeau scholarship, the spatial approach to religion, and the question of the space of religion in the public sphere. I end indicating potential directions for future research.

1.2. Standpoint

One final issue that I would like to address is that of standpoint. I write from the perspective of a hermeneutical-traditional philosophy. Consequently, I take the position that there is no neutral ground from which to view religion and its relationship to secularity, and therefore, its space in the public sphere. The idea has been made clear by Richard King, ‘The modern study of religion is not unaffected by the Christian heritage of Western culture and by the development of theology as an academic discipline in the West, nor is the apparently secular nature of religious studies a “position from nowhere.”’⁸⁵ I, therefore, aim to consider the standpoint of each of my sources.

Habermas is deeply influenced by his German upbringing at the time of World War II. He is often associated with critical social theory and known for his comprehensive vision of modern society and the possibility of individual freedom within it. Within this frame Habermas’ approach to religion has gone through three major phases:⁸⁶ the first encompasses his career to the early 1980s where he, influenced by Marxist theory, saw religion as an alienating reality and hoped for its disappearance. This could well be linked to his experience of complicity of many Christian leaders with Germany’s

⁸⁵ Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and the ‘Mystic East’* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 42.

⁸⁶ Philippe Portier, ‘Religion and Democracy in the Thought of Jürgen Habermas’ *Society* 48 (2011), pp. 426-432 [426].

National Socialist party. The second phase ranges from approximately 1985 to 2000, wherein he acknowledged the potential private place of religion. Lately, Habermas has suggested the need to accept a form of intellectual bracketing (Peter Berger's) termed methodological atheism, meaning that when doing philosophy and social analysis one should attempt to presume nothing of religion.⁸⁷ This then is indicative of the tone of the third phase in which Habermas has begun to allow religion a positive social role, especially towards refining social moral intuitions. This is all different from Taylor, whose personal Catholic religious has increasingly emerged over the course of his career. Notably, in *Sources of the Self*, Taylor aims to challenge the secular outlook to 'bring the air back again into the half-collapsed lungs of the spirit'; he is still more open in *A Catholic Modernity*, and his being a practising Catholic is strongly present in *A Secular Age*.⁸⁸ Presently Habermas and Taylor each approach the problem of religion and the public sphere from the perspective that there can be some positive space for religion therein. In taking these two as exemplars, it does mean that I frame the conversation from that perspective and give little significant voice to other positions.⁸⁹ This resonates with my view that religion as much as any meaningful way of being can make a positive contribution to society. That said, I believe it does not significantly weight the argument of the thesis, which is simply that the conversation regarding religion and the public sphere can benefit from an understanding of religion as a creative and social practice.

⁸⁷ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1969), p. 100. See for example Jürgen Habermas, 'Faith and Knowledge – An Opening', speech accepting the Peace Prize of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association. Frankfurt, 2001. Available at: <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-0111/msg00100.html> (Accessed 5 January 2021), also Jürgen Habermas, *Religion and Rationality* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), pp. 75-78, 160.

⁸⁸ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 520-521; and, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2007), p. 3, 10.

⁸⁹ There are various approaches to the discussion. Some that I have consulted include: Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, DC.: Ethics and Public Policy Centre, 1999); Jack Barbalat, Adam Possamai, and Bryan Turner, *Religion and the State: A Comparative Sociology* (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2011); Craig Calhoun, Mark Jurgensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and, Olivier Roy, *Is Europe Christian?* trans. Cynthia Schoch (London: Hurst & Company, 2019).

Like Taylor, Knott makes clear her personal standpoint while also noting the positions of those within the field of spatial theory that she uses. She notes Lefebvre in particular, from whom many of her ideas for spatiality emerge.⁹⁰ Lefebvre received Roman Catholic schooling but was then part of a generation of French intellectuals trained in secular humanism.⁹¹ Knott notes that Lefebvre was not outwardly religious but that his early education left in him a mark of mystical thought and interest in ‘artistic spontaneity’ that contributed to his vision of the potential of social space to create ‘moments’ of resistance or revolution.⁹² She suggests that reading Lefebvre gives the impression of one who is not without an optimism for the possibility of meaning but that he does not draw this from religion.⁹³ Knott aims for an openness to her own and others’ standpoints. With this in mind she notes that her training began in the phenomenological tradition of religious studies, although she writes that she struggled to understand its ideological underpinnings.⁹⁴ These early struggles contributed to a departure from that tradition towards a social scientific one that she calls a ‘strategic interpretive approach’.⁹⁵ The approach consists of intentionally setting aside the essential opposition of religion and secularity, understanding that they are historically interconnected and dialectically related, in order to situate religion and secularity in the same field. From here Knott aims to use the body of theory on spatiality to identify terms that allow her to explore this field. This does not mean that Knott aims for a type

⁹⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 89.

⁹¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 90; Knott cites Stuart Elden, ‘Introduction’ in *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004); Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); and, David Harvey, ‘Afterward’ in Henri Lefebvre *The Production of Space* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA.: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 425-431.

⁹² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 90 citing Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre*, pp. 117-120, 170-171.

⁹³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 90.

⁹⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 91. Knott refers the reader to her own reflections in Kim Knott, ‘Women Researching, Women Researched: Gender in the Empirical Study of Religion’, in Ursula King (ed.), *Religion and Gender* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995), pp. 199-218.

⁹⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 91.

of methodological atheism. Rather, she acknowledges her personal standpoint on religion and the secular, locating herself within a secular humanist tradition, religiously identifying as a liberal Quaker. Locating herself thus, Knott recognizes the potential that her position is weighted towards a secular intellectual tradition, and therefore it is possible that her analysis may imagine religion in secular terms.⁹⁶ The extent to which this is the case I discuss in Chapter 3, where Knott's spatial approach is analysed and critiqued.

As a reflexive exercise I want to make some personal remarks. I have been influenced by the philosophical hermeneutical tradition associated with Gadamer and Ricœur and the idea of tradition expressed by Alasdair MacIntyre.⁹⁷ There may be one or two brief references to these sources in the thesis, but I do not expand on the influence. As a Canadian, I spent my childhood in a Western society affected by a Christian heritage but also deeply impacted by modern secularity. My upbringing and early education were influenced by Protestantism. Presently I resonate with a dialogical approach to the study of religion.⁹⁸ As I have continued in my studies and through my personal interaction with individuals of various religious traditions I recognize that for regular practitioners religion is generally not a matter of theoretical, theological, or systemic importance, rather it is an imminently practical way of finding meaning in the everyday. Religious knowledge and practices are treasured for their practical application, local benefit, and social formation. I want to clarify some technical requirements for the present research. I studied French in my early education, but I am not bilingual. Since

⁹⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 91.

⁹⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, (London and New York: Continuum, 2004 [1975]); Paul Ricœur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, trans. John B. Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and, Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988) and, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990).

⁹⁸ Gavin Flood, *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999).

beginning my research I took an Academic French course with Oxford University. On these grounds I am able through the use of tools to read and understand French. And, my understanding and use of the German terms with the text were provided by my supervisor.

How do we understand religion and its relationship to the public sphere? Answering this requires a more thorough view of religion. One approach to this understanding of religion is a spatial approach that is rooted in sociological and empirical methodologies. These methods have the potential to limit understanding of religion to local contexts, and by their association with secularity, introduce their own delimitations of the view of religion. I expect a philosophical model of the spatial approach may overcome these limitations.

Chapter Two

2. The Public Sphere and Religion

My aim in this chapter is to consider the question of the space of religion in the public sphere to identify a gap in the way religion is conceived in the discourse. As a particular type of cultural location, the public sphere is rooted in a history and defined by key terms. The historical liberal public sphere emerged alongside developments in thinking on the public space of religion, referring to the categories of private and public, belief and reason, and sacred and secular. These terms have set the discourse. Transformations in social and cultural features have contributed to a need to refine the application of these terms. Two recent attempts to resolve the weakness of the liberal position can be traced to Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor. The intent of the chapter is not to offer a reconciliation of the various thoughts on the public sphere. Instead, the purpose is to argue that dominant perspective on religion is incomplete. A spatial approach to religion based upon the premise the new visibility of religion can more clearly examine religion in that context.¹

The particularities of the spatial analysis of religion will be detailed in the following chapter. Spatiality can be defined as ‘a term that refers to how space and social relations are made through each other; that is, how space is made through social relations, and how social relations are shaped by the space in which they occur.’² A spatial approach to religion aims to consider the physical, social, and cultural arenas in which religion is situated.³ These arenas may be thought of primarily as spaces of worship, but that does

¹ Michael Hoelzl, ‘The New Visibility of Religion and Its Impact on Populist Politics’, in *Religions* 11.6 (2020), 292 pp. 1-16 [11-12].

² Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (eds.), *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (Los Angeles, CA.: Sage, 2011), p. 499.

³ Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion* (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]), p. 1.

not acknowledge their resolute socialness or how religion ‘inhabits’ a place but can also ‘transform and create them’.⁴ The public sphere is one such place. The question to be asked is: Does the dominant notion of the public sphere adequately engage religion from a spatial perspective?

2.1. The context and categories for the discussion of religion in the public sphere

Luke Goode states that the ideas of Jürgen Habermas’ book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (original shortened title, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*) form the starting point of most contemporary conceptualizations of the public sphere.⁵ Habermas book is an analysis of the public sphere’s development in the European context. The German word *Öffentlichkeit* (public sphere) spatially implies a site where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated and the collective body engaged in this process. It is, as Negt and Kluge say, ‘a historical concept of extraordinary fluidity’.⁶ It is embodied in institutions and social sites, while also calling upon a general societal horizon of experience in which ‘everything that is actually or ostensibly relevant for all members of society is integrated’.⁷ The emergence of this social site paralleled the defining of categories used to discuss the perceived ‘horizon of experience’ of religion in liberal-democratic society. These categories continue to dominate the narrative of the public sphere and strict adherence to these mischaracterizes religion, its meaning-making capacity and its practice. This standard concept of the public sphere will be referred to as the liberal-democratic public sphere

⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 61.

⁵ Luke Goode, *Jürgen Habermas: Democracy and the Public Sphere*, (London: Pluto Press, 2005), p. 1; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger, with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989).

⁶ Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 1.

⁷ Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience.*, p. 2.

in order to distinguish it from the postsecular approach of Habermas and the (new) secular approach of Taylor.

2.1.1. The early categorization of the public sphere

The beginning of the public sphere can be framed as the effort to answer the question: Under what conditions and by what processes can public issues be engaged by private citizens? The question was shaped by Enlightenment-inspired attempts to institutionalize universalized values of liberty and equality. One presumption of the effort is that it is possible to construct social structures devoid of ideology. My present consideration will identify some main categories of this question and processes. These categories are the private/public distinction, the separation of the sacred from the secular, and the idea of universal rationality. Each category represented an aspect of formalizing the concepts and practices of democracy at the time of the formation of nation states. Each contributed to a sense of the function of the public sphere, establishing rational critical discourse as a means to create common will, as well as the structures of the public sphere. These are slippery terms still under negotiation, as we will see, indicating that these distinctions should not be taken as normative, but as a particular strategic order and narrative with important implications for how we understand religion. This is important to recall below when we encounter Michel de Certeau's and his narrative of religious spaces as a counter-discourse to that of modernity.

In John Locke are seen the essential considerations that laid the groundwork for the liberal-democratic public sphere. Wolterstorff characterizes the time as a period of 'cultural crisis induced by the widespread consensus that the European moral and religious tradition was fractured and that new "foundations" for knowledge and belief

had to be discovered' and applied to governance.⁸ Locke advocated for liberating the state from the influence of religious authority and distinguishing between belief and rationality, setting aside opinion to 'let reason be the guide'.⁹ Locke drew upon the medieval ecclesiastical construction of the *saeculum*, that which is common, and *religio*, that which is sacred, to support a separation of church and state.¹⁰ On this principle he advocated that the state, as a political structure, is a common social system that is different from religion, which is private. The state is to ensure the commonwealth of society for the pursuit of life, liberty, health, and private property; it should have no part in the institutions of religion, its practices, and the beliefs of citizens. Religion was removed from any authorizing and functional role for the state.

This separation of sacred and secular was prefigured by Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*.¹¹ Hobbes argued that the absolute power of the state should not be tied to theology or religion, but instead be justified by the consent of the governed, who agreed, to a social contract whereby they obey the state in all matters in exchange for a guarantee of peace and security. Hobbes' main concern regarding religion was that religious differences lead to controversy, unrest, and war. Therefore, Hobbes called for the removal of any social authority from religion, allowing for a limited public presence of religion only as a socializing force. This he justified by redefining religion and religious knowledge as only a moral or philosophical category. Locke overlaid Hobbes' distinctions onto his taxonomy, leading religion to be relegated to the private realm of opinion. This came to mean that, for the purposes of the state, religion did not matter so long as citizens

⁸ Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 3.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Gavin Flood, *The Importance of Religion: Meaning and Action in Our Strange World* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 191; see also Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2007), p. 54ff; and, José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

¹¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968)

carried out their obligations and self-interested actions within the framework of the law. This did not wholly eliminate the power of religion.¹² Recognizing this, Locke continued to uphold the importance of religious belief for the moral cohesion of a society. He affirmed that God can and sometimes does ‘enlighten men’s minds in apprehending certain truths, or excite them to good actions’.¹³ Since ‘traditions vary so much over the world and men’s opinions are so obviously opposed to one another and mutually destructive’, they are just not useful for a basis of politics.¹⁴ Therefore, while the state guarantees the commonwealth of the public, matters of belief are to be a politically inert socializing and private concern. Along with other deists, Locke was responsible for raising reason above religion and establishing it as the principal measure of knowledge. Consequently, even though religion could be a moral or social force, religious belief was to submit to the principle of rationality. Practically, only through the instrumental use of reason should rational religion affect the horizon of social and political experience.

Yet to be conceived was the political and volitional capacity of the public, which is a clear mark of the modern public sphere. This can be traced from Locke to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and then Immanuel Kant. Rousseau’s idea of the ‘natural man’ as the basis of ‘natural right’ elevated the principle of equality before the law and the consent of the governed, investing the interest of the people with a social and political volition.¹⁵ Coupling this with Kant’s understanding of Enlightenment as rational (empirical rationalism) autonomy further produced a change in the idea of the public. By the time

¹² Jeremy Waldron, *God, Locke and Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 22–43, 45–46, 101, 153–58, 195, 197.

¹³ John Locke, *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. IV, xix, 11.

¹⁴ Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature*. pp. 129-131.

¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Origin and Basis of Inequality*, trans. Franklin Philip (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 16.

of Kant, even as the earliest kernel of the modern public sphere had its form religion had been negatively defined as its antithesis. The public was its own social field with its own social horizon, an independent field of social practice bound to and determining the state. It was an open place for citizens, and a channel for the representation and communication of interests. It was also the social space in which ‘the conflicting private wills of rational people’ would ‘be brought into harmony.’¹⁶ By extension religion was negatively defined as its own institutional body independent from the state, conceived as a socializing force excluded from positions of social power, and at least inferred as irrational. These characterizations in many ways have continued as the basis of the view of religion and its relationship to society.¹⁷

There were essential social structural changes that facilitated the public sphere’s formation. This began, as Habermas notes, with the public spaces of the coffee houses and salons of Europe and the rise of the bourgeois class. It continued with the development of print media, shifting the structures of the public sphere, both in terms of production and consumption. This is an important and possibly overlooked consideration. As much as the public sphere is an ideal, it is one that is instantiated in various social systems and their structures and products. The numerous forms these structures take preclude any benefit from listing them. Noting three contemporary descriptions of the public sphere will depict these structural changes. Armando Salvatore suggests the public sphere can be viewed as a ‘third sphere’ alongside the economic market and the political system as key spaces of meaning.¹⁸ To this can be

¹⁶ Craig Calhoun, ‘Introduction’ in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA. and London, England: The MIT Press, 1996, original 1992), p. 18.

¹⁷ Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (London: SCM Press, 2009), pp. 37-76. Ward identifies that the ideals of liberal-democracy were unable to offer long-term stability to the state and as a result the twentieth century saw various crisis of democracy (pp. 43-44), which have resulted in various rejections of liberal-democratic ideals.

¹⁸ Armando Salvatore, *The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 3.

added Jürgen Habermas, who explains the public sphere as ‘a space of reasoned communicative exchanges’.¹⁹ But perhaps most clear is Charles Taylor’s helpful definition of the public sphere as

a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and also face-to-face encounters to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these.²⁰

The structure of the public sphere is spatial, facilitating means and forms of communication dedicated towards the purposes of communicative exchanges on matters of common interest.

This is the early context within which the terms and structure of the category of public cohered. It is this history Habermas lays out in his effort to revive the open and progressive potential of democratic culture and to counterbalance its neglect in the Marxist tradition.²¹ The openness of the public as part of early civil society has been challenged. Nancy Fraser questions the openness of the public, arguing that it should be seen as one social field among a plurality of counter-publics. These counter-publics, she writes, include ‘nationalist publics, popular peasant publics, elite women’s publics, and working class publics’.²² To this, Negt and Kluge include the proletarian public sphere.²³ Meanwhile, Michael Warner problematizes the whole notion of publics, arguing that they are largely imagined.²⁴ That is understood, as what Benedict Anderson calls ‘imagined communities’, as socially constructed by those within that community.²⁵ My point in showing this is to identify how the categories of liberal-democratic public

¹⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Malden and Cambridge: Polity, 2008), p. 12.

²⁰ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 185.

²¹ Calhoun, 'Introduction' in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 5

²² Nancy Fraser, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy’, *Social Text*, 25/26 (1990), p.56-80 [61].

²³ Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience.*, p. xliii.

²⁴ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2002), p. 8.

²⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, revised and extended (London; New York: Verso, 1991), pp. 6-7.

sphere is important to traditional and critical social theories specifically, and sociocultural studies in general, even if only for the purposes of providing a counter-narrative. Fraser suggests that this idea of the public sphere ‘is indispensable to critical social theory and to democratic political practice’.²⁶

2.1.2. Key categorical distinctions

The history of the liberal-democratic public sphere has served to locate the public sphere within a cultural impulse for autonomy and equality. The history also draws attention to certain and important categories that were applied to locating religion.

The private and public

Norberto Bobbio has called the private and public distinction one of the ‘grand dichotomies’ of Western thought.²⁷ These are spatial terms whose origin, as Bobbio observes, lie in the difference between private and public law in Justinian's *Corpus iuris civilis*.²⁸ But Bobbio shows the distinction is not simply formal but evaluative. There are times when public is viewed as having primacy over private and vice versa. Weintraub reconstructs four ways in which the distinction between private and public has been made in social analysis.²⁹ He identifies:

1. The liberal-economist model of public policy analysis as well as everyday legal and political debate. This formal private and public distinction indicates spheres of authority between state administration and the market economy.

²⁶ Fraser, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere’, p. 57.

²⁷ Norberto Bobbio, *Democracy and Dictatorship: The Nature and Limits of State Power*, trans. Peter Kennealy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 1-21.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 1

²⁹ Jeff Weintraub, ‘The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction’, in Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (eds.), *Public and Private in Thought and Practice* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 1-42 [7].

2. In the republican-virtue (classicist) model the public realm is informally a political community of citizenship. This is analytically distinct from *both* the market and the administrative state. In relation, the private refers to social life independent of the state.
3. There is also a public life as sociability model. Here the public realm is a sphere of fluid and polymorphous sociability. Its function is not to generate solidarity but to make difference agreeable. Here, the public sphere is a social location distinct from the public sphere as a mechanism of the *polis*. The *polis* creates the structure for the viability of social life. In this model the difference between public and private is both formal and ambiguous.
4. There is also a polyvocal idea of private and public. There is a tendency in some branches of feminist analyses to overlay the concepts on the family and the larger economic political order – with the market or state the paradigmatic public realm and domestic life is equated with private.

Weintraub clarifies the historical and theoretical complexity of the categories. He writes,

The public/private distinction, in short, is not unitary, but protean. It comprises, not a single paired opposition, but a complex family of them, neither mutually reducible nor wholly unrelated. These different usages do not simply point to different phenomena; often they rest on different underlying images of the social world, are driven by different concerns, generate different problematics, and raise very different issues.³⁰

The complexity was recognized by Arendt. In *The Human Condition* she notes that the emergence of the ‘social realm’ blurs the already ambiguous separation between activities related to the ‘common world and those related the maintenance of life.’³¹ In response, Arendt chose to focus on sorts of activity (labor, work, and action) instead of areas of activity.

³⁰ Weintraub, ‘The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction’, p. 2.

³¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 28.

The categories Weintraub indicates do not easily coincide with the liberal-democratic idea of the public sphere as a space of rationalizing politics or one of social and cultural formation. The categories offer little in the way of explanatory depth regarding the space of religion. For example, in-line with meaning one or three are we to understand the state or market as having authority to define appropriate religious practice? This is a particularly poignant question at a time when governments around the world enforce guidelines for religious practice, citing public health concerns. Casanova observes, like Arendt, that limits in the terminology stem from a difficulty in overlaying the realities of modern life with the dichotomy. Citing Hegel, he suggests that modern life is tripartite: family, civil society, and state.³² Indeed,

the novelty of modernity derives precisely from the emergence of an amorphously complex, yet autonomous sphere ‘civil society’ or ‘the social,’ which stands ‘between public and private’ proper, yet has expansionist tendencies aiming to penetrate both. The actual empirical boundaries between the three spheres, moreover, are highly porous and constantly shifting, thus creating interpenetrations between the three. Indeed, each of the three spheres may be said to have both private and public dimensions.³³

What Casanova does not reference is that the interpenetration is not only due to the instability of the boundaries but also due to the high penetrability of some practices. For instance, due to the high level of media saturation in most people's private lives government or corporate regulation can quickly move from facilitating fair means of public discourse to creating various means of persuasion. Such variability means that even as private and public can be useful terms for social analysis, they are fraught with problems.

One problem of particular significance in relation to religion is that ‘although each ... captures pervasive and powerful *tendencies*, they are tendencies rather than

³² Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, p. 42.

³³ Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, p. 42. Casanova references Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

accomplished outcomes'.³⁴ The terms are not adequate to capture the lived reality of modernity. For instance, when governments are called upon to intercede in matters of family through welfare services and child protection laws, where is the boundary between private and public? Similarly, the categories may fail to encapsulate religion as a lived experience. For many religious adherents any commitment to the state or public body is of less priority to participation in the religious community due to a hierarchical view of their ontological importance. Their approach to civil or public life will always be superseded by their sense of meaningful practice in their religious community. Any, approach to religion must account for the details of its lived nature, bound up in its beliefs and institutions but also in its language, symbols, and activities. A second problem noted by Casanova is the issue capitalized upon by Fraser as well as Negt and Kluge. The categories may merely symbolize and reinforce social divisions of class, gender, race, etc.³⁵ These two problems identify the ambiguity and contested nature to the terms that makes it possible to interrogate their application to religion.

Reason and belief

James Sweeney articulates the core notion of this dichotomy, 'The "truths" of religion are not couched in terms of scientific rationality, but of quite other paths of wisdom.' He continues, 'there is, in fact, a variety of modes of religious belief', in deep tension with post-Enlightenment notions of human autonomy.³⁶ At issue in this tension are the questions: What kind of religious belief counts as true knowledge? And what is the space of this belief in the public? I do not intend to attempt to resolve these questions. Neither do I aim to provide a specific interpretation of the relationship between

³⁴ Weintraub, 'Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction', p. 37 [original emphasis].

³⁵ Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, p. 43.

³⁶ James Sweeney, 'Revising Secularization Theory', in Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion*, (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 15-29 [25]

rationality and belief. The purpose here is to see in what ways distinguishing reason and belief represents the space of religion in the public sphere.

At the base of the dichotomy is a modern conviction that true knowledge results from empirical rationality resting on observation and logical inference. Anything beyond this, as some religious beliefs are, are considered unprovable or perhaps even unwarranted. The reification of Enlightenment reason as the process of knowledge formation in civil society and the state resulted in religious knowledge being reclassified as opinion. That is, it came to be thought that religious ‘belief’ was a private matter of conscience, ideals with no provable factuality. The idea being that religion can frame individual or communal values and support social cohesion but cannot contribute to public knowledge. Consequently, for religious ‘belief’ to have a public presence some mechanism would be required to reconcile any permeations of religious belief into sites of reason and political authority.³⁷

All this is illustrated in John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*.³⁸ Rawls advocates for the necessity of neutral objective reason unencumbered by prejudice. For Rawls, the principle of common good, or justice, can only be achieved through application of reason in public discourse; therefore, religion and other matters of conscience must function behind the ‘veil of ignorance’ and can only serve as private justifications for common goods.³⁹ Political theology and communitarianism critique this liberal reduction. The political theological critique counters the idea that a *polis* can

³⁷ This helps explain the development of such fields as religious apologetics and political theology, each of which are attempts to rationalize religious belief. It also explains the development of religious studies as an academic discipline.

³⁸ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA. and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), and John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

³⁹ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p.136ff

be stably founded on ideas of freedom, equality, and justice without appealing to a theological frame of reference. Communitarians argue that as all people are beings located in history, traditions, and communities, our ideas of justice and rationality will have been shaped by our traditions.⁴⁰ For my purposes what is important is that Rawls position and each of these responses accept to some degree that the major question of the public presence of religion has to do with the interplay between reasonable comprehensive doctrines, including religious ones, coexisting in a liberal pluralist polity. From a merely instrumental perspective there is value to this idea of mutual tolerance for religious and secular reasons. Religious ideas are welcome in the public realms of civil society under the condition that citizens of faith abide by reasonable norms of argument and standards of participation in public discourse.

Is this satisfactory for the self-understanding of a religiously committed citizen? The problem the model encounters is similar to that of the application of the private and public dichotomy. What is the boundary between reason and belief? The modern conception of the boundary situates belief as the often-unstated background to the way a person understands the world and reason is the mechanism by which these beliefs can be systematized, framed and expressed. This presumes that belief and reason are distinct from one another. Cognitive philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have successfully established a link between the two. Lakoff and Johnson identify how belief, the metaphors and concepts we base our reasoning upon, contributes to the shaping of thought process and our ability to perceive the world around us. This is what is referred to as embodied reason or embodied cognition, that our rationality is greatly influenced by our bodies in large part through an extensive system of metaphorical

⁴⁰ Alisdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); see also Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

thought that frequently emerges from our belief. Given this, we must question the very idea that reason and belief are things that we can discuss as distinct and attribute to particular social spheres; i.e reason is public and belief is private.

This is supported by recent studies in religion arguing that religion cannot be reduced to a system of beliefs or private justification of values. It is very obviously more than that. As Gavin Flood writes, ‘religions provide meaning in the face of a meaningless world’.⁴¹ Religions are not primarily abstract systems of belief communicated through reason discourse. They are a lived reality ‘experienced within subjectivity, within the body, within community, and in the messy cut and thrust of history and human life’.⁴² Religious knowledge cannot be wholly subjected to productive or instrumental rationality. It is a different sort of knowledge than either of these. ‘Religion gives us a sense of identity, a path to walk, and a place in the world from where to act. Religions are ways of life ...’.⁴³ The problem with a hierarchical distinction between rationality and belief is that it fails to account for how belief functions in the way people imagine, structure, and live their lives.⁴⁴ Consequently, answering the question of the space of religion in the public sphere requires an approach to religion that accounts for the embodied form of religious knowledge.

⁴¹ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 15.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Catharina Raudvere., *Islam: An Introduction* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), p. 163. In her work on Islam, Raudvere shows how it is that Islamic rituals are not just bodily movements. They embody belief and explain creedal concepts, setting down a pattern for life and thought for Muslims.

The sacred and the secular⁴⁵

Casanova identifies that prior to the formative period of the liberal public sphere, ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ were terms with different connotations than are meant today.⁴⁶ According to Casanova, pre-modern western European Christendom was structured through a double dualist system of classification. One system was the separation of ‘this world’ (the immanent and physical world) and ‘the other world’ (the transcendent and spiritual world). Meanwhile, ‘this world’ was further divided into the ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ spheres, primarily distinguished in terms of vocation and authority.⁴⁷ The role of the Christian church was to mediate between each of these divisions. In this system, the sacred indicated what of ‘this world’ represented ‘the other world’. As Emile Beneviste puts it, the sacred had a double aspect: positive – ‘what is charged with divine presence’ – and negative – ‘what is forbidden for me to contact’.⁴⁸ Charles Taylor has traced how the modern secularization narrative formed in the process whereby this dualist system was reformed along the lines of Enlightenment epistemology. While the separation between ‘this world’ and the ‘the other world’ remained, now ‘this world’ (secular) is a sphere explorable through empirical rationalism while ‘the other world’ (sacred) is a mystery.⁴⁹

Over this time the idea of the sacred as a mediating presence and representation between ‘this world’ and ‘the other world’ was set aside. ‘Sacred’ became a sociological

⁴⁵ For a general discussion of secularism, see Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun (eds.), *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). On the ‘sacred’ in religious studies see Veikko Anttonen, ‘Sacred’ in Willi Braun and Russel T. McCutcheon (eds.), *A Guide to the Study of Religion*, (London: Cassell, 2000), p. 271-282; Thomas A. Idinopulos and Edward A. Yonan (eds.), *The Sacred and its Scholars: Comparative Methodologies for the Study of Primary Religious Data*, (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1996). See also William E. Paden, *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); and W. S. F. Pickering, ‘Locating the Sacred: Durkheim, Otto and Some Contemporary Ideas’, *British Association for the Study of Religions Occasional Papers* 12 (1995).

⁴⁶ Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, pp. 11-39.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.15.

⁴⁸ Emile Beneviste, *Indo-European Language and Society* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 445 cited by Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 146ff. Taylor refers to this as ‘The Great Disembedding’

classification for belief, religious artefacts, and special experiences. The conceptual weight of term sacred was diminished. Taylor identifies this as the modern loss of a sense of transcendence as part of everyday life.⁵⁰ However, as Taylor shows in his critique of the narrative of secularization, the sacred was not wholly lost.⁵¹ For example, its ontological aspects were to be picked up by metaphysical contemplation. Its functional aspects were absorbed by Emile Durkheim and Max Weber into the social-scientific study of religion. Its sense of meaning-making and the structuring of experience and consciousness were taken up in psychoanalysis and phenomenology of religion. The sacred as an indicator of something-else or something-beyond and in the everyday of life has infused music, poetry, art, and so many other things. One outcome from this redefinition of the sacred is that it is no longer the binary term with secularity, being replaced by religion. Another is that it is no longer associated explicitly with religion, being applied to both religion and secularity.⁵² This separation of the sacred as an exclusive category of religion has contributed to a view of religion and its practices and institutions as, in the words of Danièle Hervieu-Léger, ‘the production, management, and distribution of the particular form of believing which draws its legitimacy from reference to a tradition’.⁵³

This functional interpretation of religion is often positioned against secularity in the spatial-structural classification of society. This simple distinction between religion and secularity in the public sphere is problematic. As Casanova notes, this sort of spatial-

⁵⁰ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 25-26.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, part V, pp. 539-779 [595].

⁵² Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); a similar position is explored by Veikko Anttonen, ‘Sacred Sites as Markers of Difference: Exploring Cognitive Foundations of Territoriality’, in Lotte Tarkka ed., *Dynamics of Tradition: Perspectives on Oral Poetry and Folk Belief* (Helsinki: Studia Fennica Folkloristica, Finnish Literary Society, 2003), pp. 291-305; and, ‘Rethinking the Sacred: The Notions of ‘Human Body’ and ‘Territory’ in Conceptualizing Religion’, in T.A. Idinopulos and E.A Yonan eds., *The Sacred and its Scholars: Comparative Methodologies for the Study of Primary Religious Data* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 36-64.

⁵³ Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p. 101.

structural and normative approach to religion overlooks individuals' lives in the social space, their actual beliefs and practices, and how these everyday experiences of social and individual religion create meaning and meaningful spaces in and through the spatial-structural spheres.⁵⁴ It also overlooks the observation that religions are ways of life, 'concerned with the formation of transcendent or sublime meanings that offer explanations of, and sometimes solutions to, suffering and death', that they 'mediate the human encounter with mystery', and that they answer, inform, and guide how believers see, act, and speak in the world.⁵⁵ Further, as will be shown below when we consider de Certeau's idea of the presence of religion in and through ostensibly non-religious places, it can only account for the presence of the sacred in both religion and non-religion after having first excised the sacred from religion and proposed a limited sense of the relationship between religion and non-religion as oppositional.

2.1.3. The need for a different approach

The strong separation between religion and the public is built upon categorical distinctions of private and public, rationality and belief, and religion and secularity. These distinctions are too limiting of religion. As the editors of *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* write,

Many of our dominant stories about religion and public life are myths that bear little relation to either our political life or our everyday experience. Religion is neither merely private, for instance, nor purely irrational. And the public sphere is neither a realm of straightforward rational deliberation nor a smooth space of unforced assent.⁵⁶

That these dominant stories were incorrect was less evident while societies in the North Atlantic world were relatively socially homogenous. When genuine difference attains cultural significance and visibility, as it has over the course of the last near half-century,

⁵⁴ Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, p. 15.

⁵⁵ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁶ Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 'Introduction: The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere', in Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 1.

the liberal dichotomies lose some the explanatory value they possessed.⁵⁷ As a consequence, a revision of the what can be expected and required of religious citizens must take place, and this will require a revisioning of how we locate the public place of religion.

2.2. Alternative ideas on the relationship

Two approaches of the public sphere that respond to this change are those of Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor. I have already mentioned Habermas' 1962 *Structural Transformation*. In that work Habermas traced the development of a central European bourgeois public sphere.⁵⁸ Craig Calhoun has argued it is one of his most influential in German and that the ideas therein have remained part of Habermas' social theory, prefiguring many of his later themes.⁵⁹ Habermas' present contributions to the conversation of the public sphere are framed within what he calls a postsecular and critical perspective.

Taylor's work is an interdisciplinary look at how we form and represent our understandings of ourselves and the world around us. Taylor, when engaging the discourse of the public sphere, imports this analysis into the discourse, applying the (new) secularism paradigm he developed in *A Secular Age*. Habermas and Taylor, while acknowledging the important function of the public sphere, are at odds regarding its structure and norms, and the place of religion therein. Taylor's represents a hermeneutic communitarianism that contrasts with Habermas' critical theory and pragmatism.

⁵⁷ Graham Ward argues that a crisis of liberal-democracy requires a significant revisioning of what can be expected and required of religions citizens. Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (London: SCM Press, 2009).

⁵⁸ Mendieta and VanAntwerpen, 'Introduction: The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere', p. 1.

⁵⁹ Calhoun, 'Preface' and 'Introduction', *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. vii, 5.

2.2.1. Habermas' postsecular public sphere⁶⁰

In order to consider the space of religion in Habermas' postsecular public sphere, there will be a brief exposition followed by a critical reflection on whether Habermas' formulation avoids the limited scope of the liberal categories. Three works will form the core material to be engaged. Two of these works have already been mentioned: *Structural Transformation* and the chapter 'Religion in the Public Sphere' from *Between Naturalism and Religion*. The last is the essay 'The Political: The Rational Meaning of a Questionable Inheritance of Political Theology'.⁶¹

Habermas' early book *Structural Transformation* has been referenced, though not properly introduced. It is the earliest and perhaps his clearest and most direct questioning of the principles and conditions by which private persons are conducted and engage with the public sphere. It argues for the idea of the importance the public sphere as an informal institution 'conceived above all as the sphere of private people [coming] together as a public'.⁶² Habermas outlines two necessary principles for this informal coming together, a protection of the spheres of everyday and domestic life from the power and action of the state and that coming together must take the form of reasoned discourse. As substantial as *Structural Transformation* is, Habermas makes no mention of religion, nor does he deal with social groups, identities and interests. As Calhoun writes, 'Habermas treats identities and interests as settled in the private world and then brought fully formed into the public sphere'.⁶³ This early work represents a starting point for Habermas thought on the public presence of religion, not a finished product

⁶⁰ I have seen 'postsecular' written both with and without a hyphen. I choose to go without the hyphen.

⁶¹ Jürgen Habermas, 'The Political', in Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 15-33. The essay is an elaboration of an abbreviated presentation Habermas contributed at a public event at the Great Hall of New York City's Cooper Union, 22nd October 2009. The event included Judith Butler, Charles Taylor, Cornel West and Habermas. The proceeds of the event resulted in the volume *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, which has been cited above (note 49).

⁶² Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 27.

⁶³ Calhoun, 'Introduction' in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 35.

and not even a present expression of his position. Yet, it is still a valuable resource as it is the initial location where Habermas sets down the language of his position.

The essay 'The Political' in *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* is a recent critique of the idea of the potential for normative sphere's of value, such as those expressed in political theologies, as source for political authority. He writes, 'according to this interpretation, politics as a means of democratic self-determination has become as impossible as it is superfluous.'⁶⁴ Therein, religion poses a threat to possibility of a functionally diverse and multi-cultural liberal-democracy.⁶⁵ Central to Habermas' argument is the idea that the state and its mechanisms should not be confused with society; similarly, that the secularization of the state cannot be confused with the secularization of society. Instead, the state can be structurally and functionally ideologically neutral even while society is a polyvocal and multicultural body. Thomas McCarthy situates in this idea 'a residue of the Kantian dichotomy of between the phenomenal and the noumenal ... in the form of a tension between situated reasoning and the transcendent situatedness required of his model of rational consensus'.⁶⁶ An outcome of this is Habermas' idea of the need for distinct forms of language, neutral and situated, and the possibility of situated reasoning and language to be translated into the neutral. Consequently, religion must be translated and translatable prior to its engagement with the state or its public institutions.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Habermas, 'The Political', p. 15.

⁶⁵ Political theology, he suggests, which guarantees the authority of the state with mythologically religious worldview also takes society as a totality, an essential category, unconcerned or unable to reconcile essential differences among citizens. See Habermas, 'The Political', pp. 17, 21, 24.

⁶⁶ Thomas McCarthy, 'Practical Discourse: On the relation of morality to politics', in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. 51-72.

⁶⁷ Habermas, 'The Political', p. 25.

Between Naturalism and Religion is a set of philosophical essays and not a historical and social analysis of an institution. His massive aim is an ordered reading of modernity's emergence, secular definition, and social importance. The naturalism Habermas critiques is scientific naturalism on which empirical rationality is the only way to validate understandings of the world and human life within it; while religion is a theoretical attempt to explicate existence as such, that is structured in historical institutions and expressed in creedal statements and moral or ethical codes. What lies between naturalism and religion is postmetaphysical thought that embraces 'the normative meaning' within modernity's rational potential but refrains 'from making ontological pronouncements on the constitution of being as such.'⁶⁸ A central feature of postmetaphysical thought is the potential for each secular and religion to aid in limiting the potential abuses of each, such as religions ability to resist secular reasons naturalistic reductions.⁶⁹ Even as Habermas expresses a positive social space for public religion he denies its essential facticity, seemingly taking as a given that a feature of modernity is the refutation of metaphysical knowledge. Of particular importance is the key essay 'Religion in the Public Sphere' which begins questioning religious traditions and communities gaining of 'hitherto unexpected political importance' in the last thirty years.⁷⁰ Habermas positions the constitutional separation of church and state and the restrictive space of religion against what he calls revisionist critics, both secular and religious. Against both, he proposes the need for a normative ideal of citizenship characterized by attitudes and practices which both secular awareness and modern religious consciousness may abide; a move Asad calls 'a strategy (for secular liberals)

⁶⁸ Jürgen Habermas, 'Introduction', pp. 1-8 [7]; and, 'Religion in the Public Sphere: Cognitive Presuppositions for the "Public Use of Reason" by Religious and Secular Citizens', pp. 114-148 [140], in *Between Naturalism and Religion*, trans. Ciaran Cronin, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008)

⁶⁹ Franklin I. Gamwell, 'Jürgen Habermas: Between naturalism and religion. Translated by Ciaran Cronin' in *International Journal of Philosophy of Religion* 70 (2011), pp. 179-183 [180]

⁷⁰ Habermas, 'Religion in the Public Sphere', *Between Naturalism and Religion* p. 114. The significance of the thirty-year period is reference to the 'epoch-making historical juncture of 1989-90' noted by Peter L. Berger, (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999).

of the confinement, and (for liberal Christians) of the defense of religion'.⁷¹ Warner describes this as follows:

As the subjects of publicity – its hearers, speakers, viewers, and doers – we have a different relation to ourselves, a different affect, from that which we have in other contexts. No matter what particularities of culture, race, and gender, or class we bring to bear on public discourse, the moment of apprehending something as public is one in which we imagine, if imperfectly, indifference to those particularities, to ourselves. We adopt the attitude of the public subject, marking to ourselves its nonidentity with ourselves.⁷²

This universal ideal can only take shape if this sort of non-identity is possible, a challenging idea. The role of the liberal state is to ensure the development of this philosophy and citizenship such that the liberal processes of will-formation can properly occur.

Each piece centres on the foundation of Habermas' commitment to liberal-democracy. Yet, they also represent a changing regard for the potential public space of religion. His early work presumed a progressive secularization but recently accepts that religions are not simply metaphysical truth claims but a source of meaning that nurtures the whole of an individual's and community's life.⁷³ Even so, as Hans Joas writes 'it is Habermas' basic attitude that although religion is "still" existing in our days, seen from the judgment seat of reason it is indeed a relic of the past'.⁷⁴ Habermas pragmatically concedes a public space of religion even as argues that the state and its public can be ideological neutral. Religion may not be simply private belief, but it still must find its place within a diverse society of toleration under a normative principle of citizenship.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 28.

⁷² Michael Warner, 'The Mass Public and the Mass Subject' in Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, pp. 377-401.

⁷³ Habermas, 'Religion and the Public Sphere', *Between Naturalism and Religion* p. 127.

⁷⁴ Hans Joas, 'Faith and Knowledge: Habermas' Alternative History of Philosophy', trans. Mirko Wittwar, *Theory, Culture, and Society* 37:7-8, pp. 47-52 [51].

⁷⁵ Jürgen Habermas, 'Notes on a Post-Secular Society', *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25.3 (2008), pp. 17-29 [19].

The private and public of the public sphere

The dichotomous private and public was noted as an insufficient category for the conceptualizing the reality of religious life in modernity. While Habermas accepts the terms, does his construction exhibit a similar limitation? *Structural Transformation* most clearly outlines Habermas’ early and continuing principles for distinguishing between the private and public. His formulation is essentially tripartite, providing for some overlap, and rather than built on a separation of spheres it is based on socio-political structures; the state, the market, and the lifeworld, within which is the public sphere.⁷⁶

Private Realm	Sphere of Public Authority	
Civil Society (realm of commodity exchange and public labor) Conjugal family’s internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)	Public Sphere in the political realm Public Sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press) (market of culture products) “Town”	State (realm of the “police”) Court (courtly-noble society)

Figure 2.1

Diagram of the relationship between private and public realms. (From Habermas, Structural Transformation, p.30)

Habermas argues that in the Middle Ages in Europe there was no private and public distinction as we understand it now.⁷⁷ This began to change during the Reformation with the simultaneous development of private and public areas of life. The ‘private’

⁷⁶ Nancy Fraser, ‘The Theory of the Public Sphere’, in Brunkhorst et al. *The Habermas Handbook* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 245-255 [246].

⁷⁷ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 7; see also Dena Goodman, ‘Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime’, in *History and Theory*, 31.1 (1992) p. 1-20 [2].

developed as an area of life excluded from the power of the state and the ‘public’ came to contrast the private.⁷⁸ The first area of private autonomy was the church. Religions’ legitimacy, ‘rooted, *independently of politics*, in notions of salvation and calamity (*Heil und Unheil*) and in corresponding practices of coping with redemptive and menacing forces’, was identified with the private area of life.⁷⁹ The public was initially constrained as an object of state power. This included mercantilist policy and economic individuals, but also early parliament and judicial bodies as they were wrested from aristocratic control.⁸⁰ This separation of state authority from the private authority of everyday and domestic life made the public sphere possible.⁸¹ The public sphere emerged within the public spaces created by the separation. Habermas proposes that ‘civil society came into existence as the corollary of a depersonalized state authority’ and was both connected to and separate from the private life of citizens.⁸² The growing civil society was ‘the abstract counterpart of public authority’, and developed ‘an awareness of itself as the latter’s opponent’.⁸³ In civil society the public sphere emerged as a critical sphere of private citizens responding to matters of public authority.⁸⁴

These three areas are shown in Figure 2.1. Indicated are the private realm, composed of private and public spheres, and the realm of public authority, also a public sphere. These two public’s Habermas terms the ‘authentic’ public sphere of the private realm and then

⁷⁸ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 11.

⁷⁹ Habermas, ‘The Political’, p. 17 [original emphasis]. Here Habermas uses the term religion in an extended sense including ‘myth and magic’ (see ‘The Political’, p. 29, note 4). In *Structural Transformation* this extended sense of religion does not seem Habermas’ intention. Despite the increased sense of the meaning of religion since writing *Structural Transformation*, Habermas still places religion squarely in the private area of life excepting its institutional and normative presence in society.

⁸⁰ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 12.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸² *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 26.

the 'inauthentic' public sphere of public authority.⁸⁵ Dena Goodman summarizes the relationship:

If criticism is the discourse of the critical zone where state and society meet, then the authentic public sphere is the ground that mediates between the private life of individuals as producers and reproducers, and their public roles as subjects and (later) citizens of the state: it is the public ground of 'society.'⁸⁶

On Habermas' construction, the authentic public sphere functions in a role as mediator or translator between the private life and any public presence. Habermas' construction of private, authentic public, and inauthentic public is more easily mapped onto the tripartite reality of modernity as family, civil society, and state.

Weintraub suggests that the 'roots' of all private/public distinctions are socio-historical as well as theoretical and ideological, and therefore conceptualize normative tendencies rather than realities.⁸⁷ This is recognizable in Habermas' construction as well. The divisions between the three areas reflect Habermas' construction of the location of authority and power in society; the individual retains power in the private realm (both the private and authentic public spheres), and the state holds authority in the public realm. The normative distinction reflects an ideal function of society. This ideal, however, does not reflect the common dynamic regarding religion, nor does it analyse the real practices of citizens in the public and address the spaces (material and immaterial) of meaning that these practices bring into being.

In Habermas' construction, religion is isolated in the private realm⁸⁸ and must go through a mediating process prior to any public presence. What this mediating presence is, is only ever specifically addressed by Habermas when he discusses reasoned discourse in the inauthentic public sphere. Otherwise, he offers no clue to what the

⁸⁵ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 30ff.

⁸⁶ Goodman, 'Public Sphere and Private Life', p. 6.

⁸⁷ Weintraub, 'Public and Private', p. 34.

⁸⁸ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, p. 52.

mechanism might be or where it is applied. In 2019 Anderton Park primary school in Birmingham was the site of protests by Muslim parents over the teaching of LGBT-inclusive content. This protest and its religious elements are obvious examples of the public presence of religion and the manner in which they can be instances of public power and even influence state authority. According to Habermas such a public presence should require some mediation of private life but what mechanism this is he does not explore. So, what Habermas envisions does not sufficiently enable us to locate the presence of religion in the public sphere. Gardiner writes:

Habermas fails to grasp adequately the significance of the embodied, situational and dialogical elements of everyday human life, mainly because his desire to supercede the constraints of a 'subject-centred reason' leads him to embrace an account of intersubjectivity that remains overly abstract and formalistic.⁸⁹

Despite a growing acknowledgment of the significance of religion for people, Habermas continues to adhere to a principle that does not accurately perceive the public presence of religion. Perhaps it is not this sort of public presence of religion that Habermas considers. If the public sphere is only a critical sphere counterpart of state authority, then for it to function would it not need to share the same neutral structure and language?

Reason, rationality, and belief in the public sphere

While Habermas distinguishes the private realm (private life and authentic public) from the public realm (inauthentic public) on the principle of authority and power, he also divides the private from the public on the principle of rationality. Does the principle of rationality provide a clearer schema for understanding the public presence of religion?

⁸⁹ Michael, E. Gardiner, 'Wild publics and grotesque symposiums: Habermas and Bakhtin on dialogue, everyday life and the public sphere.' in Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts (eds.), *After Habermas*, pp.28-48 [30].

Habermas' concept of rationality and belief in relation to the public sphere and religion are premised on his view of the relationship between naturalism and religion. This relationship Habermas views as discursive. He writes, in a significant shift from his early empirical-rational critique of religion, 'The problem of the political impact of the role of religion in civil society has not been solved by the secularization of political authority per se',⁹⁰ there must be reconciliation of the 'religious communities' ... vital role in civil society and the public sphere'.⁹¹ This discursive relationship is to be occasioned by two instrumental processes. This is where Habermas idea on the mediation of the private sphere takes focus. The first of these processes is deliberative politics, including the public expression of reasons (religious and non-religious) made viable for public means through a practice of translation. The second of these is the informal flow of public communication whereby religious communities can be a transformative force in the centre of a democratic civil society. These two processes need some further elaboration.

Habermas introduces the 'institutional translation proviso' for deliberative politics as a corrective to the 'Rawlsian proviso'.⁹² Rawls' proviso can be summarized:

Reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious or non-religious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, provided that in due course proper political reasons ... are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines introduced are said to support.⁹³

The translation proviso builds on the private and public distinction. Habermas argues that religious citizens may use their religious reasons in the authentic public sphere, so long as they recognize that as these reasons move to the 'sphere' of 'parliaments, courts, ministries, and administrations' those reasons will undergo a translation to secular

⁹⁰ Habermas, 'The Political', p. 23.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

⁹² Habermas, 'The Political', p. 25. These objections are explored in detail in Habermas, 'Religion in the Public Sphere', p. 129ff.

⁹³ John Rawls, 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited', *University of Chicago Law Review* 64, (Summer 1997), pp. 765-807 [783].

reasons.⁹⁴ He argues that this should not be seen as an exclusion of religious reason but instead as participation in the political process, since the mechanism for translation is part of the deliberative process of the public sphere.⁹⁵ Lesch, however, calls this a problem of ‘linguistification of the sacred’. Lesch's complaint seems to be that Habermas reduces to language and particular claims what is actually the embodied, situational and dialogical nature of religion. The problem is that this effectively misidentifies religion. Moreover, reducing comprehensive doctrines to a common language limits if not removing entirely their ability to transport people beyond their own interests, and there undermines the purpose of the public sphere, ‘solidarity’.⁹⁶

Habermas’ take on religion presumes that religious belief is a conditioned expression of knowledge naturally accessible through secular reason and language. To make this possible Habermas distinguishes between the propositions of faith and the performative act of believing.⁹⁷ So, although Habermas allows a space for religious belief in deliberative processes, there is still a secular hierarchical relation. Ungureanu and Monti show that this ‘appears to universalize a particular Western tradition’, raising problems not only for its relation to religion but also non-Western thought.⁹⁸ Even so, Habermas assents to the potential power of the sociability of religion. He writes, ‘religious traditions have a special power to articulate moral intuitions, especially with regard to vulnerable forms of communal life’.⁹⁹ The challenge of the translation proviso is, as Rhodin puts it, that ‘Habermas seems only to be able to propose prescriptive ideas,

⁹⁴ Habermas, ‘Religion in the Public Sphere’, p. 130.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Charles H. T. Lesch, ‘Democratic Solidarity in a Secular Age?’ Habermas and the ‘Linguistification of the Sacred’, *The Journal of Politics* 81.3 (2019), published online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/702948>, pp. 1-16 [1,15].

⁹⁷ Roe Fremstedel, ‘Critical Remarks on “Religion in the Public Sphere” - Habermas between Kant and Kierkegaard’, *Etikk i praksis. Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics* 3.1 (2009), pp. 27-47 [42].

⁹⁸ Camil Ungureanu and Paolo Monti, ‘Habermas on Religion and Democracy: Critical Perspectives’, *The European Legacy* 22.5 (2017), pp. 521-527 [522].

⁹⁹ Habermas, ‘Religion in the Public Sphere’, p. 131.

those that religious communities must adopt if they are to have societal equality with those that are secular'.¹⁰⁰

There is much to consider in Habermas' perspective of religion in the public sphere. Despite a changed perspective on religion, Habermas endeavours to maintain the premise of secular neutrality. While doing so, he maintains a secularized interpretation of the space of religion as belief and overlooks the complex mutuality of religion and secularity, especially regarding the public presence of the practice of religion.¹⁰¹ Firstly, this scheme does not explain the space of religion in the public sphere, so much as it raises questions. Consider the issue of whether conflicts between ideas grounded in competing religions or worldviews can be resolved by translation and appealing to secular language. Habermas relies upon the premise that the common language of the state is a neutral language. But it is often language that can be the focal point of some of the most pressing points of tension between religious citizens and non-religious society. Consider the conflicts regarding the understanding of free speech or hate speech in the case of publishing satirical cartoons, or of private ownership of a business in the case of store owners deciding whom they serve, or even how life is defined. A critique of the neutrality of secular language and rationality is central to a philosophy of hermeneutics, on this ground Taylor has shown that secular rationality and its language is not neutral.¹⁰² This also raises a point of tension for the idea of the public sphere in globalized dynamics.¹⁰³ Secondly, Habermas gives little consideration to fact that the relationship between the state and religion is not one of a neutral power accommodating

¹⁰⁰ Lars Rhodin, 'Habermas and Religious Communication: The Insufficiency of the Translation Proviso', *Religions* 8 (2017), pp. 218-232 [231]; also, Phil Enns, 'Habermas, reason, and the problem of religion: The role of religion in the public sphere', *The Heythrop Journal* XLVIII, (2007), pp. 878-894.

¹⁰¹ Darren R. Walhof, 'Habermas, same-sex marriage and the problem of religion in public life', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39.3 (2013), pp. 225-242 [225].

¹⁰² Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Chapter 4 'Modern Social Imaginaries', pp. 159-211.

¹⁰³ Kate Nash (ed.), *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), p. 3.

difference but one of force relations and power dynamics.¹⁰⁴ The implication of this is summarized by Ricœur, who describes the call for the translation of religion as ‘disguising the difference between the normative order of communicative action and bureaucratic conditioning’.¹⁰⁵ As Ricœur suggests, translation is not neutral; it is potentially coercive.

Religion and secularity: postsecularity

Most of Habermas’ early discussion of religion reflected an assumption of progressive secularization.¹⁰⁶ Strecker writes that key to his social philosophy is ‘his deeply held conviction that social evolution represents a history of progress’, at least in principle, because it is also the cause of many social ills.¹⁰⁷ While religion has maintained a public influence and relevance the certainty of the disappearance of religion is wavering. This is supported by the New Visibility thesis, which argues that, along with increased empirical secularization, there has also been an increase in the visibility of religious phenomena. Responding to this, Habermas has come to utilize the term ‘postsecular’ as a means of describing the present context. The postsecular is a change of consciousness; society must adjust to the continued presence of religion in a secularized environment.¹⁰⁸ This is not an unqualified acceptance of the presence of religion, however; it is a reassertion of the secular separation from religion, although under slightly different categories from the spatial-structural of the private and public and the distinction between rationality and belief.

¹⁰⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 22-23.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Ricœur, ‘Hermeneutics and Critique of Ideology’ in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, trans. John B. Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016 [1981]), pp. 23-60 [59].

¹⁰⁶ Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, ‘Editors Introduction’ in Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *Habermas and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 12-50 [21].

¹⁰⁷ David Strecker, ‘The Theory of Society’, in in Brunkhorst et al. *The Habermas Handbook* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 360-382 [360].

¹⁰⁸ Habermas, ‘Notes on a Post-Secular Society’, p. 20.

Casanova discusses the range of meanings of postsecularity as something beyond secularity. In ‘Exploring the Postsecular: Three Meanings of “The Secular” and Their Possible Transcendence’, Casanova contrasts ‘secular’ as the disenchantment of the temporal and laicization of the spiritual with ‘secularity’ as a self-contained immanent frame, to use Taylor’s term, of modern society with secularity as a stadial consciousness achieved through the naturalization of secularity.¹⁰⁹ Casanova describes the function of this last view of secularity

as a philosophy of history, and thus as ideology, ... to turn the particular Western Christian historical process of secularization into a universal teleological process of human developments from belief to unbelief, from primitive irrational or metaphysical religion to modern, rational, postmetaphysical, secular consciousness.¹¹⁰

It is in contrast to this understanding of secularity that Habermas positions postsecularity as a cognitive shift that Hjelm calls moving away from a normative premise of secularity to only affirming the empirical instantiation of one.¹¹¹ Therein Habermas proposes postsecularism as a reflexive questioning of secularity and moving towards replacing the secular stadial consciousness.

The public consciousness of a postsecular society, reflects, rather, a normative insight that has implications for political interactions between religious and nonreligious citizens. In the postsecular society, the conviction is gaining ground that the ‘modernization of public consciousness’ affects and reflexively transforms religious and secular mentalities, though not simultaneously.¹¹²

The postsecular consciousness will transform these mentalities in different ways as each aim to recognize the other as part of the same political community. Religious communities must ‘free their members from their embrace’ to accept this membership, while secular citizens must accommodate the differences of religious citizens.¹¹³ These demands seem tilted against religion. In the postsecular consciousness religious and

¹⁰⁹ José Casanova, ‘Exploring the Postsecular: Three Meanings of “the Secular” and Their Possible Transcendence’, in Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *Habermas and Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 52-91.

¹¹⁰ Casanova, ‘Exploring the Postsecular’, p. 61.

¹¹¹ Titus Hjelm, ‘Is God Back?’ in Titus Hjelm (ed.), *Is God Back? Reconsidering the New Visibility of Religion*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2015), pp. 1-16 [4].

¹¹² Jürgen Habermas, ‘Prepolitical Foundations of the Constitutional State?’ in *Between Naturalism and Religion*, trans. Ciaran Cronin, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), pp. 101-113 [111].

¹¹³ Habermas, ‘Notes on a Post-Secular Society’, pp. 22-23.

cultural identity maintained while equal and shared citizenship is advanced. Seemingly taking on some hermeneutical impulses Habermas urges that people needs to adopt a way of thinking about religion and secularity at a post-metaphysical level that engages difference through a complementary learning process instead of through a search for objectivity.¹¹⁴

What changes does this make to Habermas' idea of the space of religion in the public sphere? As Habermas aims to recognize the political importance of subjectivity, he retains the need for the public sphere as the public ground of society:

The competition between worldviews and religious doctrines that claim to explain human beings' position in the world as a whole cannot be resolved at the cognitive level. As soon as these cognitive dissonances penetrate the foundations of the normative regulation of the social interactions of citizens, the political community fragments into irreconcilable religious and ideological segments based on a precarious *modus vivendi*.¹¹⁵

As an answer, Habermas suggests the need for both religious and secular individuals to acquiesce to a common understanding of (postsecular) citizenship and participation in the public sphere.

Habermas elevates citizenship above adherence to comprehensive systems. He writes that 'citizens' must 'make the principles of the constitution their own not merely in an abstract sense but also in the concrete historical context', being both cognitive but also moral, 'when the principles of justice become woven into the more finely spun web of cultural values'.¹¹⁶ The postsecular consciousness involves a remaking of religious and secular attitudes towards the other, built upon a consciously embedded practice of citizenship. This ethic of citizenship is intended to alter the character of the public sphere from one of the submission of all beliefs to the rationality of secularity through discursive reason, to one of mutual imbrication of translation in a 'learning process'

¹¹⁴ Habermas, 'Religion in the Public Sphere', p. 119.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 135.

¹¹⁶ Habermas, 'Foundations of the Constitutional State?', p. 106.

within the ‘polyphonic complexity of the diverse public voices’.¹¹⁷ Herein, Habermas is appealing to liberal democratic values of justice built on Western ideas of freedom and equality, to a process of instrumental rationality, and a North Atlantic ethic of citizenship.

The adjustment to the character of the public sphere appears to make significant accommodations to religion and its power in society, as well as putting pressure on secular citizens to see their religious fellow citizens as equals. Braidotti writes that Habermas’ postsecular consciousness and translation imperative give a ‘privileged link between Christianity and secularism’, enforcing a ‘continuity between Christianity and secularism’ that gives no adequate consideration of citizenship and its relationship to any truly non-Western religious alterity.¹¹⁸ For example, Asad challenges whether such abstract ideals of citizenship properly situate religion, suggesting that at least for Muslims it acknowledges their presence while also making them absent.¹¹⁹ Islam is a transnational entity that is not wholly equated with a political structure and a Muslim is a member of Islam more than they are political citizen.¹²⁰ A religious individual adopting Habermas’ postsecular consciousness is required to subsume their religious identity within an ideal of citizenship that may run counter to that religious identity. Although this is shift from his previous acceptance of secularization it is not a substantial move towards providing a means for locating the public presence of religion.

¹¹⁷ Habermas, ‘Notes on Post-Secular Society’, p.28-29; see also Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); originally published as *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln* (Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1983).

¹¹⁸ Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden, ‘Introductory Notes’ in Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular politics*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Talal Asad, *Formations of Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity*, (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 169.

¹²⁰ This is supported by the Islamic notions of *dar al-Islam*, *dar al-‘Ahd*, and *dar al-Harb* each of which is a term describing political regions and their relationship to Islam as well as the responsibility of Muslim’s dwelling within these regions to Islam and to the nation within which they live.

While Habermas' postsecular framework gives greater freedom to religious reasons and moral expression, it does not account for the non-verbal discursive aspects of religious belief and practice and how these aspects of religion may find expression and influence in the public sphere. As Platt and Majdik argue, what needs to be considered public power and presence of religion emerging via the 'potential of [its] everyday social interaction' with broader society.¹²¹

2.2.2. Taylor's (new) secular and the public sphere

A step towards a consideration of the everyday social interaction of religion with society has been taken by Charles Taylor. Taylor has characterized his work as an attempt towards building a convincing philosophical anthropology.¹²² Calhoun suggests that the strength of Taylor is that he connects interdisciplinary social and political theory, philosophy, and sociology towards that end.¹²³ His interest in the public sphere is situated within these themes. In order to explore Taylor's perspective, the same categories will be applied in similar manner as they were to Habermas. For this, two works will be primarily used to form the core of the exposition and analysis: *A Secular Age* and his essay, 'Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism'. In the latter, Taylor takes direct issue with the idea of public reason as universally accessible and the ideological condition of modernity's spatial structures, which the former contextualizes in the narrative of the emergence of the conditions of belief in the secular age. While Habermas suggests the need for a central value of citizenship, Taylor advocates for a central philosophy of civility as the normative centre of a democratic society's

¹²¹ Carrie Anne Platt and Zoltan P. Majdik, 'The Place of Religion in Habermas' Transformed Public Sphere', *Argumentation and Advocacy* 49.2 (2012), pp. 138-141 [140]. Platt and Majdik cite, G. Thomas Goodnight, 'Predicaments of communication, argument, and power: Toward a critical theory of controversy', *Informal Logic* 23.2 (2003), pp. 119-138 [123].

¹²² Ulf Bohmann and Dario Monterro, 'History, Critique, Social Change and Democracy An Interview with Charles Taylor', in *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 21.1 (March 2014), pp. 3-15.

¹²³ Craig Calhoun, 'Morality, Identity, and Historical Explanation: Charles Taylor and Sources of the Self', *Sociological Theory* 9.2, (1991), pp. 232-263 [232].

organization. Given Taylor's recent attempt to redefine secularity in *A Secular Age*, I refer to his idea as a (new) secular or (new) secularism and his diagnosis of the present situation as the secular age; and I use the unqualified term 'secular' and its variants to refer to the general elements of secularization.

Ruth Abbey characterizes Taylor's political theorizations as a communitarian perspective marked by a civic humanist tradition and a 'troubled relationship with liberalism'.¹²⁴ In *A Secular Age*, Taylor argues for a novel definition of secularism. This secularism is defined by a central philosophy linked to what he has called the 'modern moral order'.¹²⁵ The shape of the 'modern moral order' is determined by a focus on the organization of society for the benefit of all people, rather than an obligation to eternal norms.¹²⁶ This order is both formed and informed by modern social imaginaries, a concept Taylor explores in full in *Modern Social Imaginaries*, which, he writes, are 'not a set of ideas' but instead 'what enables, through making sense of, the practice of society'.¹²⁷ These imaginaries are sources of authority independent from the state. On this basis, Taylor argues that secularity is an intellectual and political category that is itself a historical construction. As the dominant worldview of the present, secularity arranges the conditions of the discourse, setting the place within which all people are agents. It is the premise of secularism that God and religion are marginal to social life, being private, irrational, and ineffectual in the market, politics, the public sphere, and other locations of social meaning and order. Against what he refers to as secularity's immanentization, that human value and freedom are found within a naturalistic universe, Taylor argues that various social factors indicate the persistent presence of a

¹²⁴ Ruth Abbey, *Charles Taylor* (Teddington, England: Acumen, 2000), p. 101.

¹²⁵ See the first section of Chapter 4 'Modern Social Imaginaries' in Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 159-171.

¹²⁶ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 184ff.

¹²⁷ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 2.

desire for transcendence that manifests religion in different ways.¹²⁸ Secularity and religion are discursively and mutually though unequally present in society. The ‘Secular Age’ is for Taylor a way of describing the current situation of this plurality of ways of believing, and for proposing the vision of (new) secularism.

How this would apply to the public presence of religion is the focus of Taylor’s essay ‘Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism’.¹²⁹ Taylor claims, modern democratic societies are organized around a social order, including ideas of politics and the public sphere and their role in facilitating society. Increased diversity means that normative conceptions of that shared order are improbable; instead, societies are left in need of what Rawls calls an overlapping consensus.¹³⁰ ‘There can, in fact, be considerable differences in citizens’ conceptions ... provided that these conceptions lead to similar political judgments.’¹³¹ How and where this consensus is pursued is where Taylor departs from Habermas. Spohn argues their difference is a ‘fundamental philosophical divide on the issue of modernity’ and the possibility of ‘independent justification’ in reasoning and state neutrality.¹³² The significant difference is that Taylor proposes that religion can function in political discourse, as any philosophical position should not be treated as a ‘special case’.¹³³ The space of religion in the public sphere is not a question of limiting distinctions, but rather one of balancing the freedom of conscience with equality of respect so as not to needlessly limit religious

¹²⁸ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Chapter 6 ‘Providential Deism’ (pp. 221-269) and Chapter 7 ‘The Impersonal Order’ (pp. 270-295).

¹²⁹ Charles Taylor, ‘Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism’ in Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 34-59.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 48.

¹³¹ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, p. 387.

¹³² Ulrike Spohn, ‘A Difference in Kind? Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor on Post-secularism’, *The European Legacy: Towards New Paradigms* 20:2 (2015), pp. 120-135 [120-121].

¹³³ Taylor, ‘Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism’, p. 37ff.

freedoms.¹³⁴ Here Taylor recognizes that the public sphere is a space of contested ways of being and believing.

The secular age and the private and public

James K. A. Smith writes of the aim of Taylor's *A Secular Age*, 'Our goal in trying to understand our "secular age" is not a descriptive *what*, and even less a chronological *when*, but rather an analytic *how*.'¹³⁵ How did the secular age come to be? Taylor pursues the analytic 'how' by asking:

How did we move from a condition where, in Christendom, people lived naïvely within a theistic construal, to one in which we all shunt between two stances, in which everyone's construal shows up as such; and in which moreover, unbelief has become for many the major default option?¹³⁶

Taylor concludes that the exclusive humanism of the secular ages was made possible by changing conditions of belief:

For the first time in history a purely self-sufficient humanism came to be a widely available option. I mean by this a humanism accepting no final goals beyond human flourishing, nor any allegiance to anything else beyond this flourishing.¹³⁷

But, Taylor argues, these changed conditions did not wholly substitute the previous conditions. Exclusive humanism emerged as one option among many new or already existing ways of seeing and understanding humanity and the world. It is this distinction that Taylor uses to alter the epistemological question of the public sphere. The question is not what is knowledge, but instead what is believable.

Weintraub critiqued private and public distinctions, arguing that they accomplish little more than marking 'tendencies', not 'outcomes'.¹³⁸ This distinction provides a good way of marking a difference between Habermas and Taylor. Habermas' firm distinction

¹³⁴ Mendieta et al., 'Introduction', p. 7.

¹³⁵ James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) To Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), p. 18 [original emphasis].

¹³⁶ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 14.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 18.

¹³⁸ Weintraub, 'The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction', p. 2.

of private and public focused on a presumed set of outcomes from each, a functional difference between the private life and spheres of authority and rationality. Taylor, on the other hand, identifies this as a manifestation of one take of society, one which not all people accept and adhere to in the same degree. Taylor identifies the link between modernity and the private and public in the attitude towards unbelief in the pre-modern context. Taylor writes, ‘living in the enchanted, porous world of our ancestors was inherently living socially’.¹³⁹ Consensus was a primary social value, such that ‘turning heretic’ was ‘*not* just a personal matter’.¹⁴⁰ As Smith summarizes, there was no room – no conception – for these matters to be private. Disbelief had communal repercussions and as a result it was treated within the context of the public and even addressed by regional or even national powers.¹⁴¹ If disbelief was to be allowed then this social aspect of belief had to be removed, exactly what Taylor argues occurred through the development of the ‘buffered self’, which is ‘essentially the self which is aware of the possibility of disengagement’.¹⁴² Smith writes of the impact of the buffered self:

The buffering of the self from alien forces also carves out a space for a nascent privacy, and such privacy provides both protection and permission to disbelieve. Once individuals become the locus of meaning, the social atomism that results means that disbelief no longer has social consequences. ‘We’ are not a seamless cloth, a tight-knit social body; instead, ‘we’ are just a collection of individuals – like individual molecules in a social ‘gas.’ This diminishes the ripple effect of individual decisions and beliefs. You’re free to be a heretic – which means, eventually, that you’re free to be an atheist.¹⁴³

The strict dichotomy of private and public contributed to and resulted from the development of modern exclusive humanism and the centring of the individual as the locus of meaning.

¹³⁹ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 42.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ We could think of the social and political aspects of the great excommunications during the first four centuries of the Christian Church and the European religious wars. Comparative practices in Islam could be Muhammad’s rejection of Medina or the practices of *fatwā* and *takfīr*. Among Hindu’s such practices often take the form of expulsion or banishment from temple worship or expulsion from the caste.

¹⁴² Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁴³ Smith, *How (Not) To Be Secular*, p. 31.

The importance this has on the question of religion and the private and public sphere is highlighted in Taylor's position that the exclusive humanism of the modern moral order is only one way of believing in the secular age; since, as Schweiker urges, Taylor's view holds that changes of belief mean the only way we can explore the order in which we are set is through the variety of ethics developed within communities.¹⁴⁴ Society cannot be analysed as a whole; the distinction of private and public cannot be uniformly applied. For example, there are religious perspectives like that of the Hutterite Brethren, where the separation of private and public is ambiguous and a belief in a strong separation would be a rejection of belief.¹⁴⁵

If Taylor is accurate, this reinforces that Habermas' construction of private and public is insufficient. It only allows for a secular definition of religion. It also supports the idea that what has occurred is not a re-emergence of religion, but as the conditions of believing have continued to change, religion is becoming newly visible. Taylor intimates this in the closing chapters of *A Secular Age*, where he discusses the dilemmas that occur as people aspire towards wholeness 'directed against the hegemony of calculating reason and the "higher" demands of Platonist or Christian asceticism'. He suggests there are new aspirations to rescue the agency of the body as a source of meaning that transcends private and public and to rehabilitate human desire as a

¹⁴⁴ William Schweiker, 'The Good and Moral Identity: A Theological Response to Charles Taylor's Sources of the Self', *The Journal of Religion* 72.4 (1992), pp. 560-572 [564].

¹⁴⁵ An example is the Hutterite Brethren principle of *gelassenheit*, roughly translated as 'giving up' or 'giving in'. This is the individual surrender of themselves to God and the community. The image often used to express this that of the cluster of grapes crushed to make wine, the individuals are crushed to make the communal drink. Founded on appeals to New Testament book of Acts, in practice *gelassenheit* often takes the form the 'Community of Goods' in Hutterite society and members acceptance of their roles within the community. See Dora Maendel and Jesse Hofer, 'Hutterite History Overview', accessed at <http://www.hutterites.org/history/hutterite-history-overview>, last update unknown. (Last accessed 27th July 2020); also, Alvin A.J. Esau, *The Courts and the Colonies: The Litigation of Hutterite Church Disputes* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004). Some Hutterite colonies have been experiencing changes over the last decades as movements towards increased individualism are taking place. See, Bron B. Ingoldsby, 'The Hutterite Family in Transition', in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 32.3 (Summer 2001), pp. 377-392.

common source for meaning.¹⁴⁶ Unfortunately, while Taylor diagnoses the problem with the private and public distinction, he offers no particular way of conceiving of the new visibility of religion.

The secular age and belief and reason

Taylor's definition of secularism allows for a similar challenge of the separation between belief and reason. Taylor rejects the idea that secularism makes religion a special case. He does so by arguing that the modern fixation on religion has epistemological roots in the Enlightenment myth that non-religiously informed reason has a privileged efficacy over religiously informed reason.¹⁴⁷ This position, which is present in liberal ideas and in that of Habermas of the epistemic break between secular and religious legitimation, Taylor finds untenable.¹⁴⁸ Schweiker summarizes, Taylor holds that 'human identities are always tied to convictions about the meaning of reality'.¹⁴⁹ And, as Abbey notes, for Taylor these identities are rooted in rationalities and practices, illustrated in language.¹⁵⁰ In rejecting the epistemic myth of secularism, Taylor dismisses the possibility of the neutrality of public sphere and public discourse. Any modern structures of the state result from and contribute to the same process of changing conditions.

Taylor's position differs from Habermas' early conception of neutral reason functioning within the public sphere and from his later accession that religious thought may present itself in the public sphere, though requiring translation. Habermas articulate a difference between religious discourse and non-religious discourse. Religious discourse stems

¹⁴⁶ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 618.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor, 'Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism', p. 52.

¹⁴⁸ Habermas, 'The Political', p. 21, Taylor, 'Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism', pp. 49-50

¹⁴⁹ William Schweiker, 'Grappling with Charles Taylor's A Secular Age', *The Journal of Religion* 90.3 (2010), pp. 367-400.

¹⁵⁰ Abbey, *Charles Taylor*, p. 7.

from experience and membership in a community, where rational discourse does not have a similar condition. Taylor questions whether such a discrimination is possible. He argues that the sort of normative difference Habermas identifies could just as easily be premised on historical grounds, say between Kantians and postmodernists. There should be no reason to expect a coherence between the 'rational reasons' of the present day and the 'rational reasons' of two centuries ago. The point implies the question: Why should we suppose the need for a translation proviso between religion and non-religion, when we do not in other cases? Moreover, Taylor suggests that secular rationality does depend upon a similar experience, that is experience of exclusive humanism of the secular age. And while Taylor acknowledges that the secular age and its structures are the dominant form of belief, there is no reason why their rationality and belief should have preference over religious ways of thinking and believing. In rejecting the difference, Taylor rejects the need for the translation proviso.¹⁵¹

The change to the nature of the discourse in the public sphere is significant. The discourse, as Taylor identifies, cannot presume common language and pure rationality, nor should it end in the translation of religious belief. To operate in this way is a 'fetishization of the favoured institutional arrangements'.¹⁵² But Taylor does not attempt to elevate religious belief. Rather, he aims to historicize secular rationality and set it on the same plane to religious belief. This change has some important consequences for the aim of the public sphere. Taylor argues that the aim should not be an attempt to clarify timeless principles for the running of a state, which, he suggests, is impossible in a diverse society.¹⁵³ Instead, Taylor argues that the discourse of the public sphere should be directed towards identifying and advancing common goals for society and that

¹⁵¹ Mendieta and VanAntwerpen (eds.), 'Dialogue: Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor' in *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, pp. 60-69 [63].

¹⁵² Taylor, 'Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism', p. 41.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 35.

participants in the discourse should have no expectation of a single perspective shared by all the interlocutors.¹⁵⁴ He offers an alternative idea premised on this virtue of social commitment to a central social order instead of to instrumental reason. Expressing the difference between secular state and a neutral state and building on the values of the French revolution – liberty, equality, and fraternity – Taylor outlines how a social ethic guided by these values is supportable by religious as well as non-religious reasons without requiring the intervention of a ‘translation proviso’.¹⁵⁵ A central philosophy of civility comes into play when goals conflict and there needs to be a balancing between different positions. Every citizen must be prepared to make concessions, but these should not require any individual to be perceived as separated from the system because of their beliefs. Taylor suggests a values-based discourse as a substitute for a rational discourse.

There is only one place Taylor allows for neutrality in terms of language. This is akin to the political function of ‘principled distance’ outlined by Rajeev Bhargava,¹⁵⁶ and it is only to operate in the function of the secular state.¹⁵⁷ Bhargava suggests that ‘principled distance’ is poles apart from one-sided exclusion, mutual exclusion, and strict neutrality.¹⁵⁸ Accepting the distinction between religion and state at the level of ends and institutions, Bhargava argues that there is no need to ‘make a fetish’ of policy and

¹⁵⁴ There is a similarity here with Jeffrey Stout who describes the ‘secularization’ of political discourse: ‘What makes a form of discourse secularized, according to my account is not the tendency of the people participating in it to relinquish their religious beliefs or to refrain from employing them as reasons. The mark of secularizations, as I use the term, is rather the fact that participants in a given discursive practice are not in a position to take for granted that their interlocutors are making the same religious assumptions they are.’ It is unreasonable to expect a single perspective to be shared. See Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 97. Stout, however, suggest that what he calls the ‘new traditionalists’ (i.e. MacIntyre, Hauerwas, and Milbank) to ‘resent’ this situation (p. 99).

¹⁵⁵ Taylor, ‘Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism’, p. 35.

¹⁵⁶ Rajeev Bhargava, ‘What is Secularism For?’ in Rajeev Bhargava (ed.), *Secularism and Its Critics*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 486-552 [493-494, 520]; and ‘The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism’ in T. N. Srinivasan, (ed.), *The Future of Secularism*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 20-53.

¹⁵⁷ Taylor, ‘Why we need a radical redefinition of secularism’, p. 50.

¹⁵⁸ Bhargava, ‘The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism’, p. 29.

law.¹⁵⁹ Taylor argues that it should be possible for policy and law to avoid favouring one religion over the other, and also avoid favouring non-religion over religion. This takes the form of the careful use of language.

The sacred in the public sphere of the secular age

What is the space of the sacred in the public sphere of the secular age? Taylor's position regarding the sacred reflects both his own religious convictions but also his idea of the persistence of desire for transcendence. Taylor rejects normative application of the individual or social categories employed by Habermas and the liberal scheme. Similarly, he rejects the suggestion of religion as simply functional and institutional. This does not mean that Taylor advocates for a return to the dualist system of classification that Casanova highlighted in pre-modern religion. He accepts that as the sacred has been reified as something alongside and often overlapping religion, it cannot go back. Taylor argues that, in the tidal shift from the modern to the secular age, reification enabled the secular to forge its own 'festive' rendition of the sacred; 'moments of fusion in a common action/feeling, which both wrench us out of the everyday, and seem to put us in touch with something exceptional, beyond ourselves. Which is why some have seen these moments as among the new forms of religion in our world.'¹⁶⁰ The sacred is not wholly privatized; it is also not locked inside religious institution. Nor is it wholly phenomenological, but in an Augustinian sense it is deeply connected to a human sense of meaning.

¹⁵⁹ Rajeev Bhargava, 'Political Secularism: Why it is needed and why we need to learn from its distinctive Indian version' in K. S Rehberg (ed.), *Soziale Ungleichheit, kulturelle Unterschiede: Verhandlungen des 32. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in München. Teilbd. 1 und 2* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verl., 2006), pp. 361-377 [371] Accessed at SSOAR, <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-145282>.

¹⁶⁰ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 482-483.

The persistence of the sacred is one of the conclusions that Taylor arrives at in *A Secular Age*. Taylor uses a series of concepts that he argues characterizes the imagination of the secular age, in which the sacred is a present though often unseen part. The first of these is ‘fullness’. Taylor writes:

we all see our lives, and/or the space wherein we live our lives, as having a certain moral/spiritual shape. Somewhere, in some activity, or condition, lies a fullness, a richness; that is, in that place (activity or condition), life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worth while, more admirable, more what it should be.¹⁶¹

Fullness is an imprecise term. Schweiker critiques it as too imprecise and potentially leading back to the exclusive humanism Taylor wants to avoid.¹⁶² Defending his usage, Taylor says he chose the generic term for its variation of meaning in expressing how people ‘conceive the difference between just getting through life and really or deeply or fully or integrally living.’¹⁶³ It includes Taylor’s idea of the ‘Maximal Demand’, an answer to the question, ‘how to define our highest spiritual or moral aspirations for human beings, while showing a path to the transformation involved which doesn’t crush, mutilate or deny what is essential to our humanity?’¹⁶⁴ The contours of the pursuit of fullness take different forms, but the primary contrast is between religious transformation perspectives and non-religious immanentization. The transformation perspective supposes that human fullness is achieved through

a transformation of human beings which takes them beyond or outside of whatever is normally understood as human flourishing, even in a context of reasonable mutuality (that is, where we work for each other’s flourishing).¹⁶⁵

The crucial point in the transformation perspective is that it is facilitated through awareness and experience of transcendence. In contrast to this is immanentization, where fullness is sought within and via a self-sufficient, naturalistic universe, where any mention of going beyond the self is directed towards humanistic values. These two form strong positions but between the two are varying alternative positions. Taylor argues

¹⁶¹ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 5.

¹⁶² Schweiker, ‘Grappling with Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*’, p. 369.

¹⁶³ Charles Taylor, ‘Reply to Schweiker et al.’, *The Journal of Religion* 90.3 (2010), pp. 401-406 [401].

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 639-640.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 430.

that the transcendent, immanent, or alternate forms are each driven by the impulse for the sacred, ‘let everyone follow his/her own path of spiritual inspiration. Don’t be led off yours by the allegation that it doesn’t fit with some orthodoxy’.¹⁶⁶ In this, Taylor is endorsing some akin to Mikhail Epstein’s ‘minimal religion’.¹⁶⁷

It is worth noting that in this sacred, a sense of otherness endures. ‘This often springs from a profound dissatisfaction with a life encased entirely in the immanent order.’¹⁶⁸ This otherness, however, is not necessarily a drive towards the transcendent of traditional religion but towards a form of spirituality. Taylor takes this eruption of spiritual interest as the personal quest to ‘find one’s faith’; ‘to discover my route to wholeness and spiritual depth.’¹⁶⁹ However, as Fraser shows, Taylor’s equivalence between theistic (transcendent) and humanist (immanent) spirituality falsely equates their notions of fullness.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, even as the idea of an impulse for human fullness may give some indication that the rationalization of human life is an undue limitation it is an insufficient category for exploring the public presence of religion. While Taylor does not expressly link fullness to the public sphere Calhoun notes that, as fullness is basic for all people, it forms part of Taylor’s anthropology.¹⁷¹ This means it is presumed in his view of the public sphere indicating that the way in which Taylor emphasizes fullness is only possible when people are liberated from constraining social institutions. Mapping this search for fullness, including subjective and authentic spirituality, over Taylor’s previous rejection of the liberal dichotomies, it would be fair

¹⁶⁶ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 489.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 767-770; citing Mikhail Epstein, ‘Minimal Religion’ (1982), in Mikhail Epstein, Alexander Genis, and Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover, *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*, (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 163-171

¹⁶⁸ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 506.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 507.

¹⁷⁰ Ian Fraser, ‘Charles Taylor, Mikhail Epstein, and ‘minimal religion’’, in *International Journal of the Philosophy of Religion* 77 (2015), pp. 159-178 [177].

¹⁷¹ Craig Calhoun, ‘Secularism, citizenship, and the public sphere’ *Hedgehog Review* 10.3, (2008), pp. 7-21 [n.4].

to think that Taylor might expect the spirituality of the secular age to be powerfully present in the public sphere and other social constructed areas of public life. This is especially true if the common goals of civility are the framework that allows for the free pursuit and expression of that spirituality. Unfortunately, we find no indication of such a move by Taylor. Asad has criticized Taylor for the very issue encountered in Habermas. a privileging of Western notion of belief as the essence of religion and fullness.¹⁷² Sullivan agrees, argues that the privileged belief downplays the role of the body as well as undermining Taylor's history of the secular:

Taylor's focus on belief not only presents a methodological problem vis-à-vis the genealogy of secularity, but also leads to a distorted factual understanding of this genealogy by overemphasizing the importance of a historical break between belief and practice, reason and emotion, and mind and body in the intellectual history of Europe.¹⁷³

As much as Taylor's (new) secularity proposes the possibility of a space for religion in the public sphere his categories which privileging belief are insufficient to conceptualize mental space of religion in the public sphere alongside anything physical and social.

2.3. Conclusion

Through a reading of the liberal public sphere as well as the engagement with Habermas and Taylor, what has been shown is that the discourse of the public sphere lacks a consistent understanding of the spatial characteristics of religion and the public sphere. What are the contours of religion and the public sphere as a place defined by practices, productions, and meaning? Asking this question draws us into a consideration of what Soja says is 'the inherent spatiality of human life'.¹⁷⁴ Habermas draws attention to the

¹⁷² Talal Asad, 'Thinking about Religion, Belief, and Politics', in Robert A. Orsi (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 36-57 [37].

¹⁷³ Marek Sullivan, 'Cartesian Secularity: "Disengaged Reason", the Passions, and the Public Sphere Beyond Charles Taylor's A Secular Age', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* XX.XX (2019), pp. 1-35 [2].

¹⁷⁴ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagine Places*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 1.

public sphere as a social production among other spheres of human life and identifies that the public sphere should be characterized by particular practices of language and reason. Even in Taylor's response to Habermas, the consideration of religion is limited by a particular emphasis on religious belief, with religious practices and representations as side issues. What is missing is any argument for the presence or relevance of the body or an engagement with the sort of complexity that must be inferred by Taylor's view of that secularity.¹⁷⁵ In 1996 Soja, drawing on the spatial turn that will be referenced in the next chapter, was drawing attention to the idea that place, location, locality, environment, home, city, region, and other anthropological and geographic ideas are practically and politically important.¹⁷⁶ Even then he suggested that dealing with the intervention of electronic media in our daily routines, ideas of acting politically, problems with poverty, racism, sexuality, and environmental degradation brings awareness that we are spatial beings, 'active participants in the social construction ... and its social consequence'.¹⁷⁷

The space of religion in the public sphere should not only be addressed in terms of reasonable discourse and language, institutions and authority. It is for such a reason that other pioneers of secular studies like William Connolly, Talal Asad, and Saba Mahmood argue for some presence of the body in formulations of the secular or postsecularity.¹⁷⁸ If we accept that Taylor is correct and religion is not a special case, then that idea should apply also to questions of the inherent spatiality and social production of society, tradition, the body, and identity in the formation of meaning. We

¹⁷⁵ Peter Harrison, 'Narratives of Secularization', *Intellectual History Review* 27.1, (2017), pp. 1-6. Harrison notes a variety of approaches to secularity that attempt to provide a more clear plurality in the present context of secularism than either Habermas or Taylor provide.

¹⁷⁶ Soja, *Thirdspace*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ William E. Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist*, (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); and, Saba Mahmood, 'Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?' *Critical Inquiry* 35, (2009), pp. 836-862.

must ask, 'what actually counts as religion and who is doing the counting'.¹⁷⁹ It is towards answering this question that a spatial approach to religion belongs.

¹⁷⁹ Ward and Hoelzl, 'Introduction' in *New Visibility*, p. 3.

Chapter Three

3. Locating the Space of Religion

The question is whether a spatial approach can make discernible the social space of religion and its relationship to the public sphere. In this, space should not be seen as a backdrop against which to position religion. Instead, space and spatiality are ideas that can help us discuss the physical, social, cultural, political, and economic shape of religion. The spatial perspective, as a recent approach to religion, contributes to a way of accounting for religion, the differences of religious phenomena, our ability to see and locate them, and how to evaluate them. My aim in this chapter is to consider one such use of spatiality as a means of exploring the idea of religious space. The questions I intend to pursue are: What are the concepts of a spatial view of religion? And: what elements of spatial analysis are amenable to studying religion? On this latter question, what is desired is a way of approaching religion that does not reduce it to its creeds or symbols and includes the view of religion as a practice.

As with the previous chapter, one theme that is likely to be recurrent is how religion and secularity are understood and drawn into discursive interaction. In the previous chapter the public sphere was shown to be a social place formed by and emerging alongside secularity whose present consideration is influenced by how we understand our present context as either postsecular or (new) secular. Therefore, the question of the public presence of religion should rightly be viewed as part of the question of the relation between religion and non-religion. The language going forward will frame the discussion of the space of religion in the public sphere in terms of this relationship.

3.1. Opening up space for the study of religion¹

‘Space’ is an important concept for contemporary social and cultural theory.² The theoretical and empirical approaches to space are diverse. This may reflect an inherent pluralism in the structuration of social life. It may also mean that no sufficient general account of space has been offered. Simon Susen writes:

In fact, the possibility of a general theory of space appears to be contradicted by the abundance of interactional spheres that exist in differentiated social settings. Given the variety of both spatial theories and spatial realities, it may be impossible to develop an explanatory framework capable of capturing the multifaceted dimensions underlying the territorial organization of human societies.³

This could count against using spatial theory as a means of discussing religion. To this, Knott writes, ‘ideas about space underpin discussions of urbanisation, globalisation, identity, diaspora, commodification and consumption, and the nature of modernism and postmodernism – all of which are important in debating contemporary religion’.⁴ Against this, again referencing Susen, there may be no ‘conceptual framework capable of capturing the transcendental conditions underlying the spatial structuration of *any* society, regardless of its historical specificity’.⁵ Is it possible to articulate a framework for the study of religion that affirms that the construction of space is not independent of social conditions and at the same time sheds light on the fundamental properties of all shared social spaces?

Such a general theory is what Knott aims to construct in her book, *The Location of Religion*. Consequently, in exploring the possibility of a spatial approach to the question of the space of religion and non-religion, it is Knott’s material that will be central.⁶ *The*

¹ I have taken this directly from Knott.

² Simon Susen, ‘The place of space in social and cultural theory’, in Anthony Elliot (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Social and Cultural Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 333-357.

³ *ibid.*, p. 333.

⁴ Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion* (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]) pp. 1-2.

⁵ Susen, ‘The place of space’, p. 333 [original emphasis].

⁶ This will be supplemented by articles she wrote after the book’s publication in which she summarizes her own research journey towards developing her view of spatially contested religion and comments upon the methodology. Kim Knott, ‘Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion’, *Temenos* 41.2 (2005), pp. 153-184; also, ‘From locality to location and back again: A spatial journey in the study of

Location of Religion engages the relationship between religion and non-religion in a manner quite different from that of Habermas and Taylor. Those two begin with a philosophical perspective and then address particular social and cultural arenas. Knott intends to flip this approach. Her aim is to engage the arenas in which religion is situated and from this perspective characterize the relationship between religion and non-religion.⁷ This empirical approach is situated within what she terms the ‘Religious/Secular Field’; she defines this as the object of her research, to which she applies a critical reflexive approach and categorizing schema of spatial terms.⁸

3.1.1. Social and cultural theory resources of a spatial approach

The social and cultural literature on spatial theory is broad and narrowing down the development of the discourse is difficult. This results from the challenge of defining space as a critical category.⁹ For years, the concept of space was considered to be a marginal category in the social humanities.¹⁰ In 1991 Frank Lechner wrote, ‘Space has never been central to sociological thought’, and ‘it remains fair to say that the significance of space for the discipline at large has been peripheral’.¹¹ Susen notes that the founding sociological thinkers did not treat space as a critical category.¹² Nevertheless, space should be considered a central component to humanity and especially to social life. Human perception and action are spatially situated and function within and upon contingent conditions. Further, just as time is recognized as vital and

religion’, *Religion* 39 (2009), pp. 154-160, ‘Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research in Religion’, *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 1 (2010), pp. 29-43, and, ‘Theoretical and methodological resources for breaking open the secular and exploring the boundary between religion and non-religion’, *Historia Religionum* 2 (2010), pp. 115-133.

⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 1.

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 124-130.

⁹ For example, the term, ‘spatial’ generally refers to position, area, and dimension. In terms of Science and Mathematics, space is usually understood in terms of the dimension of height, depth, and width within which things exist and move. In Physics, space is now being viewed as an interval of time. In Geometry, it is a set of points.

¹⁰ Susen, ‘The place of space’, p. 334.

¹¹ Frank J. Lechner, ‘Simmel on social space’, in *Theory, Culture & Society* 8.3 (1991), pp. 195–201 [191].

¹² Susen, ‘The place of space’, p. 334.

fundamental to understanding social life as individuals and societies are embedded and emerge in temporal contexts, space is important as individuals and societies inhabit spaces.¹³ It is important, then, to define and categorize what exactly is meant by space and how it is organized and experienced as a social and cultural category.

Spatial theory is a social and cultural theory.¹⁴ Knott, in the article 'Religion, Space, and Place', traces spatial theories socio-cultural roots using the two categories: situational and substantial.¹⁵ I do not need to summarize the whole of Knott's effort, but it will help to note some important ideas. Situational conceptions of space are identified by an emphasis on materiality and physicality. An early example of this emphasis is that of George Simmel. Simmel posited five presuppositions for spatiality. Firstly, social spaces are shaped by relationships between inclusion and exclusion.¹⁶ This is closely linked to the second, that of space being constructible in terms of its ability to unify and separate in terms of boundaries or partitioning.¹⁷ His third principle of spatiality, is that it is characterized by fixity and changeability.¹⁸ Each of these three ideas are present in Susen's idea that 'social spaces have the power to constrain and alter human actions, just as human actions have the capacity to shape and transform social spaces'.¹⁹ The connection to human action implies the fourth presupposition, that social spaces are limited by and generated along principles of proximity and distance.²⁰ Finally, Simmel

¹³ Susen, 'The place of space', p. 334.

¹⁴ Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin (eds.), *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* (Los Angeles, CA.: Sage, 2011), p. xiv.

¹⁵ Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place: The Spatial Turn in Research in Religion', *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 1 (2010), pp. 29-43; see also, Lily Kong, 'Mapping 'new' geographies of religion: Politics and poetics in modernity.' *Progress in Human Geography* 25.2 (2001), pp. 211-233.

¹⁶ Simmel, 'The sociology of space', pp. 138-141; see also Lechner, 'Simmel on social space', p. 195; George Simmel, 'The sociology of space', in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (eds.), *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, trans. Mark Ritter and David Frisby, (London: Sage, 1997 [1903]), pp. 137-169.

¹⁷ Simmel, 'The sociology of space', pp. 141-146.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 146-151.

¹⁹ Susen, 'The place of space', p. 335.

²⁰ Simmel, 'The sociology of space', pp. 151-159.

ascribes to social spaces a relationship between sedentariness and mobility.²¹ The situational concept of space is particularly associated with real and imagined social associations of people's lives.²² This situational reading of space is generally explored empirically, measuring locations and social behaviour or patterns of culture and their attendant interactions with formal and informal social organizations. The situational view of space emphasizes how social structures from intimate relationships to large-scale social institutions function as the practical foundation for people's social lives. An ancient example would be how Jewish culture revolved around Temple life in Jerusalem prior to the Roman conquest of Judea and how that conquest impacted Jewish practice.

The substantial perspective of space focuses on how space is used as a way of referencing individual and social meaning and how this contributes to social, geographic, or psychological phenomena. An example of this is the notion of being part of the land as a tenet of traditional belief for Indigenous Canadians.²³ One of these early uses of spatial ideas in social and cultural theory was by Martin Heidegger in his essay 'Building Dwelling Thinking'.²⁴ Heidegger proposed the interrelation of world, thing, space, time, language, art, and experience with being. Crang and Thrift write of Heidegger that these 'boundaries are not the limits of the self but rather they create that sense of self'.²⁵ The substantial idea privileges spatiality as part of being, its

²¹ Simmel, 'The sociology of space', pp. 160-170 This final pairing is a direct reference to the location of a society, with reference to nomadic peoples.

²² Susen, 'The place of space', p. 334.

²³ Margo Greenwood and Nicole Marie Lindsay, 'A Commentary on land, health, and Indigenous knowledge(s)', *Global Health Promotion* 26.3 (2019), pp. 82-86

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, 'Building Dwelling Thinking', in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 343-363.

²⁵ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, 'Introduction' in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 9. Around the same time Gaston Bachelard wrote a piece conceiving space in its relation to human experience and sensibility in literature. See Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994); originally published as *La poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958). Along similar lines, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* argued for the primacy of perception, situating space as experience or sensation. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith,

interpretation, and understanding. In this vein, spatiality has been applied in various means and configurations with time and places at several scales: body, object, community, locality, and organization.²⁶

Since around the 1990s, other forays into critical spatial thought have produced several applications in various disciplines. Knott remarks that a group of critical geographers responding to the work of French theorists such as Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, and Michel de Certeau instituted a 'spatial turn' focussed on social and physical space, spatial practice and representation as indexes of power and the production of space.²⁷ Around the same time, cultural theorists were exploring cultural positioning, the politics of location, and marginality as a site of identity and resistance.²⁸ Since then, this spatial turn has had a wide-ranging impact in studies of religion merging with more traditional religious studies research taking space and place as locations framing studies of sacred space or pilgrimage.²⁹

(London and New York: Routledge, 2005) originally published as *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945).

²⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 1.

²⁷ Kim Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place', p. 29; see Edward Said, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989); and, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1996); also, David Harvey, 'From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity', in Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, George Robertson, and Lisa Tickner (eds.), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 3-19; Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Doreen Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', in Michael Keith and Steve Pile (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 141-161, 'Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place' in Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, George Robertson, and Lisa Tickner (eds.), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 59-69 and, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

²⁸ Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place', p. 29; see also, Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994); Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993); and, Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

²⁹ Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place', p. 30; see also, Surinder Mohan Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1959); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1978); Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York Columbia University Press, 1978); and, Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1933).

3.1.2. Space as an analytic tool for religion

How might a general theory of space benefit a study of religion? Accepting the premises of the social and cultural resources indicates that a notion of space can provide a means of categorizing the productions and experiences of religion, along with their connection to belief, identity, agency, and affectation. Lefebvre writes:

[H]umans as social beings are said to produce their own life, their own consciousness, their own world. There is nothing, in history or in society, which does not have to be achieved and produced. 'Nature' itself ... has been modified and therefore in a sense produced. Human beings have produced juridical, political, religious, artistic and philosophical forms. Thus production in the broad sense of the term embraces a multiplicity of works and a great diversity of forms ...³⁰

Humans are agents in the material and symbolic conditions of their own existence. Recognizing that we are productive raises the possibility of interrogating the activities that contribute to the construction of human existence.

In the article reviewing the social and cultural roots of spatiality, Knott draws connections between substantial and situational ideas of space and the study of religion.³¹ Knott indicates how the substantial tradition informs ideas of experience, aesthetics, the body and the senses, and the sacred. She notes two collections of essays that provide perspective on the approach and sense of space as an analytical category in the substantial tradition. The first, *Senses of Place*, begins with a phenomenological introduction that brings attention to the primacy of spatiality and their relationship to perception. Knowledge is made possible through embodiment, and this is not knowledge of a general sort but of the particularity of a site as an event.³² The second, *Experiences of Place*, identifies that space and place are underdeveloped concepts in religious studies, emphasizing that religious people act on and in imagined sites in

³⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 68.

³¹ Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place', p. 31.

³² Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), p. 8.

constructing worlds of meaning.³³ Research in the substantial tradition, Knott concludes, ‘illustrates a trend ... toward researching landscapes and spaces of experience, affect, belief, and theology’, which is in contrast with the majority of scholars in the situational tradition who favour social constructivist approaches.³⁴

The situational tradition centres on issues of social configuration, structures, productions, and power. The situational tradition has contributed to a material cultural trend in the study of religion that contrasts phenomenological approaches.³⁵ Knott attributes to this approach an emphasis on the production of social hierarchical instead of mythological or experiential levels of reality, and the human nature of symbolic labour.³⁶ In addition to focusing on production, another loci is contestation; that is, the idea of competing diverse discourses and practices. Among the areas where this form of contestation has been identified are landscapes, but also the home and public spaces.³⁷ The notion of religion and the contestation over public space, according to Knott, is usually framed in relation to the power of non-religious space in contrasted with the privatization of religion. Of central importance is the way that religion and non-religion are ideologically negotiated. Often, the question of the situational approach has been taken to focus on efforts to assert control over social space or how religion and non-religion may coexist within the social hierarchical structure.³⁸

³³ Mary Macdonald (ed.), *Experiences of Place* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003)

³⁴ Knott, ‘Religion, Space, and Place’, p. 33.

³⁵ For example, Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987). A similar development is discussed in David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (eds.), *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 35.

³⁷ For example, David L Carmichael, Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves, and Audhild Schanche (eds.), *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places* (London and New York Routledge, 1994); and, Judy Tobler, ‘Home Is Where the Heart Is?': Gendered Sacred Space in South Africa’, *Journal for the Study of Religion* 13.1/2 (2000), pp. 69-98.

³⁸ Knott, ‘Religion, Space and Place’, p. 35.

It is primarily as part of a situational approach that Kim Knott places herself, foregrounding the politics rather than the poetics of space:

[I]t sees religions and their practical, discursive, and material entailments as co-constructed by religious actors in engagement with their traditions, social relations, and historical, geographical, and political contexts, and as amenable to spatial interrogation.³⁹

Of her type of spatial interrogation, Knott writes:

They do not treat religious and secular phenomena per se; and certainly they do not help us to evaluate whether religion is actually re-emerging or secularism in crisis. They deal instead with concepts, discourses and representations.⁴⁰

Her aim is towards a spatial analysis as a means of understanding particular practices, beliefs, values, and organizations of religion; an attempt to move beyond a discourse of norms, and towards how belief and practices impact and arrange contestations in the everyday life of society.

From this review and categorization, Knott clarifies four critical ideas as central to a general approach to a spatial analysis for religion. Firstly, what is the object towards which a spatial analysis is directed? And, does it sufficiently account for religion and its phenomena? Knott presents her aim, to ‘offer a new perspective on the relationship between religion and the physical, social, and cultural arenas in which it is situated, and thus on the nature and presence of that which we in West call “religion”’.⁴¹ The crux of her analysis is that she sees the whole of the study of religion as one of the ‘relation’ between religion and non-religion. This will be explored below in the idea of the ‘Religious/Secular Field’.⁴² The strength of this approach is that the contrast between religion and secularity can make it possible to see religion in ostensibly non-religious places; it can also emphasize any differences between the two, allowing for a clearer view of both. Each of these contributes to the demand of seeing the new visibility of

³⁹ Knott, ‘Religion, Space and Place’, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Knott, ‘Theoretical and Methodological’, p. 3.

⁴¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 1.

⁴² *ibid.*, pp. 124-126.

religion. At the same time, situating the study of religion as one of difference and of relation raises questions about who is positioning them in that relationship, what measure is being used to determine what is different and how exactly religion itself is to be evaluated.

Knott writes: ““space”, “place” and “location” are concepts that have helped people to think about their social, cultural, and physical experience, their relationships to other people, things, and the cosmos’.⁴³ And yet, what is its uncontaminated essence? How can it be defined? Crang and Thrift comment:

Space is everywhere in modern thought. It is the flesh that flatters the bones of theory. It is an all-purpose nostrum to be applied whenever things look sticky. It is an invocation which suggests that the writer is right on without her having to give too much away. It is flexibility as explanation: a term ready and waiting in the wings to perform that song-and-dance one more time.⁴⁴

One of the problems implied by Crang and Thrift is that much of the ready use of the term is devoid of any clear articulation of its meaning. The multiple ways that space is referenced creates a challenge for its use as an analytical tool. This is the second important dimension.

Another theme, the third, to the usefulness of Knott’s spatiality as a method of study has to do with the relation of space to time. Thrift summarizes an element of his thinking on space as a ‘human interactional order’ that ‘each ... were informed by one simple principle, that it is neither time nor space that is central to the study of human interactional orders, but time-space’.⁴⁵ This is echoed in the human geography literature, per Massey.⁴⁶ This relation has a similar effect as the one we experience when six squares are combined to make a cube. We multiply dimensions. While the cube is a

⁴³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, ‘Introduction’ in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.

⁴⁵ Nigel Thrift, *Spatial Formations*, (London: Sage, 1996), p. 1.

⁴⁶ Doreen Massey, ‘Space-time, science and the relationship between physical and human geography’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 24 (1999), pp. 261–76.

tangible object to which we can experience with more acuity than an imagined two-dimensional square, the combination creates a multitude of further considerations, such as volume instead of area, but also a question of the distance created by the presence of the cube. What is inside? And, what is out? The manner in which Knott constitutes space needs to account for this dimensionality regarding the temporal aspect of socially produced spaces. Despite highlighting the importance of this relation Knott does not develop the temporal theme of space significantly, rather she embeds it as an aspect of the spatial experience she refers to as place. Is Knott's formation of the relationship of space to time able to provide an accounting of religious space showing how it is anchored in past, present, and future? Further, the space-time relation contributes to the experiential element of spatiality, therefore Knott's formulation must explain how a space can be accounted as a substantially religious location.

This is suggestive of the final critical element. Knott shows a preference for the situational take on spatiality instead of the substantial. By favouring the political over the poetic, Knott places greater emphasis on social systems, structures and hierarchies. The negative effect of this emphasis is the accompanying reduction of the importance of individual and social agency and creativity. In order to apply space as an analytic tool, Knott accepts its usefulness in describing aspects of our external reality and our presence within that reality in terms of material culture and contestation at a structural level. Is this social constructivist construal of religion sufficient as a means of articulating religion and religious spaces in society?

3.1.3. The Properties of Space - terms of Knott's spatial approach

Does Knott's concept for locating religion meet the four critical needs she outlines? Knott's frame of reference for exploring space draws heavily on Lefebvre, but includes

a wide reading from social geography, and social and cultural theory.⁴⁷ Through these she identifies space as situational and symbolic relying on describing the constitution of space, the role of body in its constitution, the properties of space and its nature in order to clarify categorical terms. As a means of surveying her spatiality, and in an effort to see if it adequately answers the critical comments above, these will be summarily introduced with analysis.

The constitution of space

The qualification of the substantial and the situational, with the corresponding emphasis on meaning and materiality, raises questions about the constitution of space. Space and spatiality are not limited to the physical or material. Neither should they be limited to the immaterial or metaphorical. What Knott suggests is that space or spaces, both physical and imagined, may be understood as constructions of meaning and significance.

Knott's position on the constitution of space echoes that of Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty sought to bridge material space and our experience of it or what he distinguished as 'geometrical' space, homogeneous and isotropic spatiality, from another 'human space' (anthropological), the spatiality people make.⁴⁸ While experience, Merleau-Ponty suggests, is different from material space it is not distinct. In fact, perception and experience may precede any differentiation of physical space but it expresses 'the same essential structure of our being as a being situated in relationship to a milieu', being situated by something indissociable from a 'direction of existence' and implanted in the landscape. For Merleau-Ponty, 'there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial

⁴⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 35-58.

⁴⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 28, 63.

experiences'.⁴⁹ This is because the geometric and the anthropological are bridged by a third notion:

As far as spatiality is concerned, and this alone interests us at the moment, one's own body is the third term, always tacitly understood, in the figure-background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space. One must therefore reject as an abstraction any analysis of bodily space which takes account only of figures and points, since these can neither be conceived nor be without horizons.⁵⁰

There is a value to this idea we can recognize when we apply it to a distinction of everyday life. We are able to isolate the material of space, objects such as pebbles, buildings, bodies and distinguish them from the experience or meaning of space, which is determined otherwise. But, while we can conceivably differentiate between the material or situational and the metaphorical or substantial of spaces, when we are considering people whose horizons are a fusion of material and experience space it would be a mistake to wholly dissociate the two.⁵¹

Knott anticipates some of the problems that can occur. When an experience is studied in a way in which there is no obvious relation a material base, Knott argues that this can create confusion about what is meant by the spaces to which they refer, resulting in two problems.⁵² The failure to identify, account for, or adequately interrogate the material base for such a space may result in knowledge which seems 'extra-ideological'.⁵³ An example of this sort of shortcoming is Habermas and Taylor, as has been seen, they

⁴⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 324ff.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

⁵¹ Knott recognizes this material-metaphorical relationship in the Hindu religious tradition of Vaishnavism in the form of *Braja*, the land of *Krishna*. *Braja* is an actual geographical location comprised of forests, rivers, and the city of Vrindavan. As such, it has a geological and also a social history. Yet, by its association with the childhood mythology of Krishna, Braja is also an imagined space alive to the spirit and mind of devotees (Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 13). The material location of Braja is bound. The metaphorical Braja, the spiritual space where liberation can be achieved, may be carried in both spirit and mind regardless of the location of the body. It is carried through the remembrances and rituals of devotees (Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 13 and n.7, 9). For more on *Braja* and the worship of *Krishna* Knott refers to: David L. Haberman, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests: An Encounter with Krishna* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); David R. Kinsley, *The Sword and the Flute* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); and, Malory Nye, *Multiculturalism and Minority Religions in Britain: Krishna Consciousness, Religious Freedom, and the Politics of Location* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), pp. 51-66).

⁵² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 14.

⁵³ Knott, *The Location of Religion.*, p. 14; and, Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 6.

speak of the space of religion in the public sphere but do not show how to bridge the gap between their theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one, between the mental and social, between the realm of the ideas and the brute reality of the places of people who must deal with practical things. The second problem is an inability to account for the practices and the role of the subject in the creation of the space, and therefore a lack in understanding the nature of the space itself. This is the problem that occurs when religion is reduced to a system of belief or a subjective experience. The space of religion on this reduction gives no adequate accounting of the material aspects of religion, its physicality, its actions, rituals, or locations. On the flip side, if the material is given to central a consideration there is a problem of over-identifying a space with its physical elements, which can result in its own problems. For example, if a space becomes simply a matter of figures and points where any human element is eliminated. This is problem of an over-identification of society with its structures and representations, overlooking the individual creativity of persons. An example is when an event is predetermined to be religious simply because of the presence of religious symbolism. Such could be the case with the annual feast of St. John the Baptist in Québec, Canada where the religious symbolism is an indication of protest against religion.⁵⁴

Continued questions about these potential problems suggests that spatiality remains a contested idea and should not be used naively.⁵⁵ But this does not preclude any benefit

⁵⁴ Geneviève Zubrzycki, *Beheading the saint: nationalism, religion, and secularism in Quebec*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016).

⁵⁵ Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', p. 14. In this debate alongside Lefebvre, Knott makes special mention of, Peter Jackson, 'Rematerializing Social and Cultural Geography', *Social and Cultural Geography* 1.1 (2000), pp. 9-14; Matthew B. Kearnes, 'Geographies that Matter – The Rhetorical Deployment of Physicality', *Social and Cultural Geography* 4.2 (2003), pp. 139-152; and various contributors to Michael Keith and Steve Pile, (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1993) including Keith and Pile, p.1, Doreen Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', pp. 141-161 [141], and, Neil Smith and Cindi Katz, 'Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics', pp. 66-81, [68].

for spatial analysis as an insight into social and cultural phenomena. Rather, as this thesis suggests, it should be taken as a needed contribution. That said, the key to any confidence in the spatial approach will depend on the ability to establish a link between the material *being-there* of place and the *operations* which produce the metaphorical space. It is this link that allows us to conceive of space.

On this point, Knott offers two conceptual frames, both of which are important. The first is the connection made by theorists such as Lefebvre and Foucault who join socially constructed spaces with power and ideology and then suggest the manner in which these spaces are manifest in the material and structural elements of society (the sort of critical theory view exemplified by Habermas on the public sphere). The second, and for Knott seeming the more important, is the importance of the body as a connecting link between matter and metaphor, as shown by cognitive philosophers like George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.⁵⁶

Lakoff and Johnson suggest that the body is the point of contact between the phenomenological and the material. It no longer makes sense to accept a separation of subjective experience from reality.⁵⁷ The editors of *Commun(ica)ting Bodies* put it this way, bodies are ‘a particularly suitable medium to communicate meaning, to establish community and thus to contribute to the creation of a particular worldview and a horizon of meaning’ but at the same time, ‘bodies are not docile building blocks.’⁵⁸ This provides the link for locating religion in an interrogation of the connection between

⁵⁶ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980); and, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, (New York: Basic Books, 1999)

⁵⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 15; also, Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, pp. 408-409. This principle is the premise of the book, Alexander Darius Ornella, Stefanie Knauss, and Anna-Katharina Höpflinger (eds.), *Commun(ica)ting Bodies: Body as a Medium in Religious Symbol Systems*, (Verlagsgesellschaft, Germany: Nomos/Bloomsbury, 2015)

⁵⁸ Ornella, Knauss, and Höpfinger, *Commun(ica)ting Bodies*, pp. 14-15

material and metaphorical. Knott argues that to explore spaces and spatial practices requires

Clarity of meaning and use, awareness of their contested nature, acknowledgement when using them of the active role of space and its relationship to power and ideology, and understanding of the conditions of material as mental and metaphorical spaces, and an ability to connect the two realms through the body all emerge as important considerations for the employment of spatial terminology and for a spatial analysis.⁵⁹

Beyond an acknowledgement of the material and metaphorical, the material and immaterial elements of spatiality, the body and thus practices are a central element to a spatial approach.

The body and its foundation to space

Edward S. Casey argues for attention on the situational ‘as the first of all things’ added to the perception to place is the foundation of knowledge.⁶⁰ This knowledge is only possible, Casey suggests, as a result of embodiment which bridges our physical lives with our horizon of meaning. Following this, Knott tries to centralize the body as a means to bridge ‘the gap between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one, between mental and social, between the space of the philosophers and the space of the people who deal with material things’.⁶¹ The emphasis on the body is for Knott a central step, she positions the axis of the spatial approach: ‘understanding the social as well as conceptual space then we must *both* start with the body (its material properties and social formation and location), *and* follow the body’s course through its many representations’.⁶² The body is formative for conceptual development, social relations, and the imagination of both in relation to space, and as a result is fundamental

⁵⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 15.

⁶⁰ Edward S. Casey, ‘How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena’, in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp.13-52 [16, 18, 36-37].

⁶¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 4.

⁶² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 19; also, Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 194, ‘The body serves as point of departure and as destination.’

for any theorizing of social and cultural spatial manifestations, such as with religion and the sacred.

Knott proposes the importance of the body for a spatial methodology arguing that the body is the point of contact between local and spatial practices and large-scale organizations of power.⁶³ She firstly sees bodies as allowing us to experience and conceptualize our environment (objects, persons, places, even regions and institutions), and through this to identify the differences between them.⁶⁴ Here Knott's reliance on Lefebvre and Foucault is clear. 'The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body', writes Lefebvre, faulting the Western world for 'the body's metamorphosis into abstractions, into signs of non-body'.⁶⁵ Similarly, Foucault writes that the body is, 'the place where the most minute and local social practices are linked up with the large scale organisation of power'.⁶⁶ No doubt having in mind the politicization of the body, Knott writes, 'the body is at times the place where a cultural order plays itself out'.⁶⁷ Consequently, the body is more than the sum of its parts and processes; it is a bridge between the substantial and the situational, where social discipline is marked and plays itself out.

Knott advances the claim that the body 'determines' the possibility of experience, which prefigures the structures of knowledge.⁶⁸ At the same time, she emphasizes its social formation and location in a manner similar to Bryan Turner:

⁶³ Knott, 'Religion, Space, and Place', p. 36.

⁶⁴ Knott, 'Spatial Theory and Method', p. 157.

⁶⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 405.

⁶⁶ Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983), p. xxvi.

⁶⁷ Knott, 'Spatial Theory and Method', p. 158.

⁶⁸ Knott, 'Spatial Theory and Method', p. 158. Knott references Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power and Spirit Possession*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 67. See also, Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 17ff, and her discussion of the sexed body

One can adopt a foundationalist approach to the human body which avoids simplistic materialism and also allows us to understand how culture and social practices elaborate and construct the human body through endless relations based on social reciprocity.⁶⁹

If we accept this, an understanding of social and conceptual space, therefore, requires considering the body.⁷⁰ On this principle, Knott frames her spatial theory with a focus on small-scale bodily representations (e.g. a case study of the left hand) from which she aims to explore larger-scale social structures. Here is where the strength of Knott's approach is most evident, her empirical methodology provides a thick description of the small scale that if aligned with a well-constructed conceptual framework could furnish a strong spatial approach to religion. Unfortunately, as we will see below, her conceptual framework poorly defines religion and its relationship with non-religion. Consequently she risks reading onto the small scale predetermined differences, which interferes with her aim of articulating a general spatial approach to locating religion.⁷¹

For the purpose of the broader argument on the public sphere, such a view of the centrality of the body to spatiality seems to make sense. The bourgeois public sphere as a place of free and open discourse was, in its formative period, really only free and open to European men of status. Taylor's narrative of the changing structure of the public sphere is written alongside the story of the evolving view of the body on issues of race, gender, and sexuality as such developments challenged the original liberal private and public distinctions. It is very important in terms of a spatial approach to religion that embodiment be recognized as a, if not the, source of spatial perception and conception, as well as an outcome of social and cultural practices. Social and physical boundaries

organising concepts of space, location, form, size, direction, etc. Knott cites Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

⁶⁹ Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1996), p. 26.

⁷⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 19; also, Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 194.

⁷¹ This is in fact what occurs. Knott's multidimensional empirical categorization of space embeds elements of difference and otherness, or discontinuity, between the belief, practices, and spaces of meaning. This is especially true of the 'religious/secular field' she constructs as her object of research, see below section 'The religious/secular field'.

and the practices that define them are central to construction of community. And community, as George Revill argues, is ‘important to personal ontological security because it is about defining and ordering relationships between me and you, us and them’.⁷² Then, if religion is, as Derrida writes, ‘inseparable from the social nexus, from the political, the familial, ethnic, communitarian nexus, from the nation and from the people’, the significance of the body for the location of religion and analysis of its relation to the public sphere is necessary.⁷³

The nature of space

The question of the constitution of space opened up an interrogation of the material and metaphorical of space, and from that it was argued that the body is foundational to both the production and the experience of spatiality. Something which has not been answered is whether we can narrow down the nature of space more precisely or is it sufficient to attempt to balance between space as an experience and space as structural. The difficulty of narrowing down the nature of space is recognized by Yi-Fi Tuan in *Space and Place*. Aiming to categorize space, he writes of the ambiguity of experience as a category:

experience is a cover-all term for the various modes through which a person knows and constructs a reality. These modes range from the more direct and passive senses of smell, taste, and touch, to active visual perception and the indirect mode of symbolization.⁷⁴

But against this he concludes, ‘blindness to experience is in fact a common human condition’; that:

we rarely attend to what we know. We attend to what we know about; we are aware of a certain kind of reality because it is the kind that we can easily show and tell ... thus with tired phrases our personal and subtle experiences are misrepresented time and again.⁷⁵

⁷² George Revill, ‘Reading Rosehill: Community, Identity, and Inner-city Derby’, in Michael Keith and Steve Pile (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 115-138 [127].

⁷³ Jacques Derrida, ‘Faith and Knowledge’ in Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (eds.), *Religion* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 1-78 [4].

⁷⁴ Tuan, *Space and Place*, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Tuan, *Space and Place*, p. 201.

For this reason, social analysis often avers experience trying to produce a field in which space can be closed in and indexed within constraints sufficient to say something meaningful.⁷⁶

This is the approach of Knott, she attempts to ‘decode’ space by ‘considering its various dimensions, properties, and aspects’ referring to the ‘relational and dynamic nature of space’.⁷⁷ Even as Knott centralizes the body as the source of space, she appeals to a closed spatial field while striving to maintain its openness to explaining individual experience. She does this by situating the openness of experience as a function of a closed relational dynamic. She writes, the closed dimension of space ‘is not something other than or further to the physical, mental and social dimensions that constitute it’.⁷⁸

And, quoting Lefebvre:

Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena, be they raw materials or the most finished of products, be they businesses or ‘culture’. Rather, it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it.⁷⁹

The open experience is that aspect of space that comes into being when its location is socially produced and reproduced by human action and interaction over time.⁸⁰ For Knott, the closed aspect of space is space proper, while the open lived produced and reproduced is what she refers to as place. “‘Place’ has been reconceptualized as “‘progressive’” ... and brought out of hiding ... as an open event rather than an entity.’⁸¹ Place, for Knott, is produced through spatial practices. It is the experience of space and is recognizable as space is constrained into something measurable.

⁷⁶ Crang and Thrift, ‘Introduction’ in *Thinking Space.*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 158, and 20ff.

⁷⁸ Knott, ‘Spatial Theory and Method’, p. 160.

⁷⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 410-411; also, Knott, ‘Spatial Theory and Method’, p. 160, and, *The Location of Religion*, p. 22.

⁸⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 243-44; also, Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 17, 33, 79

⁸¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 31.

It is towards a means of constraining space proper that Knott builds a set of conceptual categories. The well-known essay on space and politics by Doreen Massey (1944–2016) is the platform upon which Knott places her consideration of the nature of space. In Massey's piece, she outlines what she takes to be the properties of spatiality. This outline is central to Knott's foundation, so I will quote it in full:⁸²

The spatial is socially constituted. 'Space' is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the network of relations at every scale from local to global. What makes a particular view of these social relations specifically spatial is their simultaneity. It is a simultaneity, also, which has extension and configuration. But simultaneity is absolutely not stasis. Seeing space as a moment in the intersection of configured social relations (rather than an absolute dimension) means that it cannot be seen as static. There is no choice between flow (time) and a flat surface of instantaneous relations (space). Space is not a 'flat' surface in that sense because the social relations which create it are themselves dynamic by their very nature ... It is not the 'slice through time' which should be the thought but the simultaneous coexistence of social relations that cannot be conceptualized as other than dynamic. Moreover, and again as a result of the fact that it is conceptualized as created out of social relations, space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, or solidarity and co-operation.⁸³

My first comment here is that the language is particularly dense and difficult to follow. In order to make further analysis, I will first try and explain what is here. We can note what Massey and Knott after her take as the important dimensions of space. These are configuration, simultaneity, extension, the dynamism of space and, most of all, it is social and relational; and in both cases shaped through power and symbolism. This latter aspect, the relational and social nature of space, Knott takes as her starting point in exploring the properties outlined by Massey. What is needed, Knott writes, is 'to analyse the connections between particular sets of social relations and their spatial embodiment'; these social relations being actual and imagined relations between people, people and things, people and places, people and symbols.⁸⁴ Therefore for Knott, the starting point of identifying the nature of space is what she understands as the relations and dynamics of social power and its symbolisms. She draws this not only from Massey

⁸² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 20.

⁸³ Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', pp. 155-56.

⁸⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 21.

but also Lefebvre and Foucault.⁸⁵ Then, Knott defines the actual properties of space in light of this starting point.⁸⁶

Configuration is the manner in which a particular space or collection of spaces is comprised of the materials and resources, people and ideas of the sociocultural arena. It is the sum of the things, activities, ideas, processes, and relations brought together. Space is the summation of these disparate and usually easily separated parts.⁸⁷ Simultaneity describes how the configuration can simultaneously envelop and contains various spaces, existing alongside and in relation to others. This simultaneity is what makes social relations possible. This is significant for identifying religion or a cultural space when we recognize interconnection of events, ideas and the relations of the people, objects, and places connected to these.⁸⁸ Knott's case study is an appropriate example. Knott studies the spatial configuration of the Left-hand as a cultural location, examining what she terms its physical, mental and social representations suggesting a value-laden dualism of the body that opposes Left-hand to Right-hand in a hierarchy that conceives of Left as inferior or evil in comparison to Right as preeminent and righteous. Taking this as the spatial field she explores and contrasts the simultaneously religious and non-religious practices and representations of Left-handedness noting points of contact as contesting ideals within this dynamic. For example, a religious perspective takes the Left-hand as representing God's judgment of unrighteousness conduct, while a non-religious take may use the Left-hand to represent opposition to discrimination or liberation from religious oppression.⁸⁹ A religious space is, as Knott

⁸⁵ Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces (Des espace autres)', *Diacritics* 16.1, (1986), pp. 22-27 [22-23]; also, Knott, 'Spatial Theory and Method', p. 161, Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 37, and, Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', pp. 155-56.

⁸⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 19-29.

⁸⁷ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 410-11.

⁸⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 23.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 151-155, 155-163, 163-169

writes, ‘overlapping, co-existent, in parallel with other spaces, and because they are internally in tension, being made up of multiple contested, real, and imagined sites and relations’.⁹⁰

An element of both configuration and simultaneity in Knott’s construction is the manner in which they connect the present to the past. This is one part of a space-time relation Knott terms extension. One example of this is the way that a city or even a home may contain indications of phases of building or life. Monuments and style of construction embed the past within the present, just as a family’s wall-markings showing the height of their children over time may do the same. Physical markings, however, are not the limit of such synchronicity. Ritual practices such as the reciting a creed, swinging the *thurible* (censer for incense) in Christian services or the observance of *Raka’ah* (cycles of ceremonial prayer) during *salah* (the obligatory prayer) among Muslims re-enact the past in the present. This inscription of the past is to be imagined and experienced even though it is only the present that is experienced.⁹¹ As Knott writes, ‘space is not restricted to the shimmering simultaneity of the relations that constitute it’, but ‘borne out of the movement or flow of people, things, ideas *through* spaces’.⁹² This leads to the second aspect of extension, the flow of the present into the future. But, for Knott, extension is only about connecting past-present-future but is also an infinite number of connections reaching laterally to the present wider world. Space is not limited by its configuration in the present; it has impacts and influences on a scale infinitely larger than its particular manifestation.⁹³ Knott attributes this lateral extension to what she

⁹⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 23, see also chapter 4 on Globalization and chapter 8 on postcolonialism; see also, Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 86-87, and Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, p. 23.

⁹¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 24 [original emphasis]; citing Massey, ‘Politics and Space/Time’, p. 155.

⁹² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 24.

⁹³ *ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

terms the compression of space-time by which she seems to mean how improved technology has made the world seem smaller and how globalization has increase the interrelation of geographically disparate points: for instance how Japanese supermarkets depend on Italy for tomatoes.⁹⁴ Acknowledging that such ideas of extension are not uniform, Knott decides that she is unable to adequately assess extension only making one exception. This is the extension of power, which Knott understands as uniformly measurable based on factors such as gender and ethnicity.⁹⁵

Power is, for Knott, a primary quality of spatiality. She writes, ‘on the one hand, it is the social constitution of space that opens it up to the pursuit and exercise of power’; while, on the other hand, ‘it is the capacity of space to be shot through with ideology that makes it power-full’.⁹⁶ Quoting Keith and Pile, she writes that all spaces are political because they are ‘the (covert) medium and (disguised) expression’ of relations of power.⁹⁷ Even though she continues by writing that space is full of power, it is clear that Knott’s intention is, drawing from Lefebvre and Foucault, more fully that space be understood as a manifestation of power, its configuration and simultaneity the result of power, and its extension an act of power.⁹⁸ She writes that spaces as expressions of order are ‘central to the operations of knowledge and power’.⁹⁹ This connection between power and space is a function of the relation of ideology and knowledge to power. For Lefebvre, space is utilized to exercise power, to obscure or suppress (even

⁹⁴ François-Xavier Branthôme, ‘Japan among the worlds top three markets’, *Tomato News*, available online: http://www.tomatonews.com/en/japan-among-the-worlds-top-three-markets_2_1188.html, accessed 2 June 2021.

⁹⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 25.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 25-26; see Michael Keith and Steve Pile, ‘Introduction, Part 2: The Place of Politics’ in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 22-40 (38).

⁹⁸ Michel Foucault, ‘The Eye of Power: Conversation with J.-P.Barou and M. Perrot.’ in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-77*, by Michel Foucault (Hemel Hempstead, Herts.: Harvester Press, 1980); and, Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism* (London: Allison & Busby, 1976) originally published as *La survie du capitalisme: La production de rapports de production* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1973), pp. 86-7.

⁹⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 27.

destroy) others, to include and exclude, to serve or to resist a dominant order.¹⁰⁰ For example, Lefebvre uses religion to illustrate, asking, ‘what would remain of a religious ideology – the Judeo-Christian one, say – if it were not based on places and their names ... The Christian ideology ... has created the spaces which guarantee that it endures’.¹⁰¹

These properties of space are utilized by Knott to organize the substantial of space in a way amenable to her social constructivism. These terms function as cues for Knott’s means of conceptualizing space such that it can be overlaid with religion: ‘I shall use these [and other] spatial attributes to analyse the location and relationship of the “religious”, the “secular”, and the “post-secular”.’¹⁰² So, what is space for Knott? Space, for Knott, is ultimately material, though decidedly symbolic and constructed through reified power structures. Her position resonates with a description by Frederic Jameson,

[T]his latest mutation in space – postmodern hyperspace – has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world.¹⁰³

Or, using the imagery of cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove (1948–2008), space is a landscape.¹⁰⁴ But this landscape’s two-fold nature, physical and symbolic, is ultimately social and structural. She writes, ‘whatever one’s view of space, whether Cartesian

¹⁰⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp.10-1, 285-287, 308-311, Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 26-7.

¹⁰¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 44.

¹⁰² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 130. The second part of *The Location of Religion* is a case study of the Left-Hand, questioning the physical, social, and mental space of the left hand (chapter 6), the location of religion in what she calls ‘contemporary left hands’ (chapter 7), the spatial properties and the field of religious and secular (chapter 8), and questions of transformation, the left hand and the sacred (chapter 9). *The Location of Religion*, p. 133-228; for another case study see Kim Knott and Myfanwy Franks, ‘Secular values and the location of religion: a spatial analysis of an English medical centre’ in *Health and Place* 13.1 (2007), pp. 224-237.

¹⁰³ Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 44.

¹⁰⁴ See Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, (London: Croom Helm, 1984); also, Stephen Daniels and Denis E. Cosgrove (eds.), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

geometric or postmodern globalised, it is relational: the relation between points on a grid, between different places (or parts of space), or between people'.¹⁰⁵

Place and spatiality

Prior to concluding this section on the general terms of Knott's spatial approach for definitional reasons and to help distinguish Knott from de Certeau, I want to return to her understanding of place. This indicates one particular contrast with de Certeau for whom place (*lieu*) and space (*espace*) are significant technical terms. For Knott, location is the term for any particular site within space(s). She asks the question: What is the location of religion? And it is with situational analysis of language, practice, physical objects, and social structures that she explores, identifies, and qualifies that location allowing her to hierarchically and politically position that location in power-based relations to non-religion.¹⁰⁶

Knott understands place to be lived space. She argues that places are set within the context of the wider space(s) of social relations. Place is the 'nexus' where 'conceived, lived, and perceived' space meet and where there is 'structured coherence'. If space may be understood as situational and symbolic representation, then place is the lived moment, 'where daily life practices are embedded'.¹⁰⁷ Place and space, for Knott (and she ascribes the same to Merrifield and Massey), are different aspects of the same unity.

Knott's descriptions, at times semantically dense and in some cases overly technical, highlight important characteristics of spatiality. It is situational and structural in the critical sense, but also phenomenologically substantial and experiential. She has aimed

¹⁰⁵ Knott, 'Spatial Theory and Method', p. 159.

¹⁰⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 32-33; also, Merrifield, 'Place and Space', pp. 517, 525, and, Lefebvre, 'Chapter 1, The Plan of the Present Work', in *The Production of Space*, pp. 1-67.

to articulate a notion of space that allows for both these two components to inform her methodology. Her framework for how the situational and substantial come together is something that has yet to be considered. Knott uses Lefebvre's Spatial Triad to 'open up to scrutiny the spaces occupied and employed by religion' in order to apply her general terms (constitution, body, et al.) and to organize the method she applies for her case study.¹⁰⁸ Knott dedicates a whole chapter to outlining Lefebvre's triad. In so far as it is the plan of this thesis to articulate de Certeau's spatial analysis and apply his methodology towards the question of the space of religion in the public sphere, I will not expound greatly on Knott's methodology or Lefebvre's triad in too great a detail. Rather, the following section will be used as a means of showing how Knott applies her general terms to the location of religion. This is important to show the possible value of a spatial approach for making religious space visible in the discourse of the public sphere. It will be suggested below and clearly argued in Chapter 7 that while Knott's empirical methodology contributes positively towards the purpose of making religious visible, her conceptual articulation of space unintentionally constrains any understanding of religious spaces.

3.1.4. The Aspects of Social Space - Lefebvre's Spatial Triad¹⁰⁹

In her second chapter, Knott frames her properties of space within Henri Lefebvre's Spatial Triad. Whereas the properties work as the particular analytical categories that Knott aims to use, the Triad describes the aspects of social spatial in which the analytical categories function. Rather than critically analysing Lefebvre's triad, Knott simply adopts the three domains. The Triad serves Knott as a taxonomy; the aspects are 1) representation of space; 2) spaces of representations; and 3) spatial practice. I am

¹⁰⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ I allow for a specific section to Lefebvre because of the singular prominence he holds in Knott's formulation. Lefebvre figures again as an interlocutor of de Certeau in chapter 5.

making room in the thesis for a brief summary of Lefebvre's Triad for two reasons. I want to do justice to describing Knott's position as she lays it out. She dedicates a whole chapter to Lefebvre. But this also helps to make my argument that Knott's spatial approach needs a stronger and simpler framework. In these next few pages, you will recognize the same ideas Knott outlined in her general terms. In fact, there is a redundancy that Knott does not justify. While she separates the properties from the aspects of social space she later acquiesces that in her case study the distinction is not so important, as she does not follow a systematic application but uses all these categories as memory aids.¹¹⁰

Representation of space defines conceived space or conceptualized space as the precursor of experience. 'It comprises those dominant, theoretical, often technical representations of lived space that are conceived and constructed by planners, architects, engineers, and scientists of all kinds.'¹¹¹ These spaces are embedded with ideology and knowledge, manifest in power structures: 'at once removed from that which is lived ... nevertheless public, influential, authoritarian, and invasive in its mastery over the body and everyday spaces'.¹¹² Borrowing heavily from disciplines like geography, history, architecture, or art, representations of space are understood as conceptual images of space and the ideas behind its use. A straightforward example would be the findings resulting from analysis of census material to define how a government defines a person, family, household, etc. These findings frame the way that authorities conceive of individuals and groups, ultimately impacting aspects of these individuals lives. Religion in representations of space can be similarly viewed. In the Middle Ages in Europe, mental and social space was dominated by Roman Catholicism. This was represented by

¹¹⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 130

¹¹¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 36; also, Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 38.

¹¹² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p 36.

the organization of populations into religious jurisdictions under the authority of religious offices who measured, recorded, and directed each persons' birth, marriage, death, and even their eternity. The ongoing significance of such representations can be seen in the fact that symbols of that order, such as buildings, are still significant to the regional and national imagination even in the midst of empirical secularization.¹¹³

Spaces of representation indicate 'space as lived through its associated images and symbols'.¹¹⁴ This is lived space where experienced space is given presence and meaning by imagination and informed cultural constructs. 'What makes this lived space different ... is the intervention of culture, not as ideology (conceived space), but through the imagination as tradition and symbol.'¹¹⁵ Lived space is 'the vital arena of struggle towards individual and communal realization'.¹¹⁶ An instance might clarify the distinction. Knott relates an example from Lefebvre: such medieval spaces as the village church, graveyard, and belfry are, to some degree, interpretations or symbols of a cosmological representation; physical spaces given meaning through imagination.¹¹⁷ Similarly, Renaissance architects, engineers, and artists conceived, designed, built, and presented their works as microcosms of the cosmos and humanity's place within it, its history, and ideological underpinnings. Alternately, we could think of memorial sites such as the one erected to George Floyd in America or of Banksy's underground art installations that turn urban sites into places of social and political commentary. The distinction here is that spaces of representation describe thoughts, actions, or places that break against existing structures within a local community. With the shift of the secular age, spaces of representation have, for religion, great significance as a space through

¹¹³ Chris Park, *Sacred Worlds: An Introduction to Geography and Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 211.

¹¹⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 39.

¹¹⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 37 (text in parenthesis added).

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 38.

¹¹⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 37; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 45.

which ‘to live imaginatively in opposition to the normal order’.¹¹⁸ Knott situates within spaces of representation the sacred as a socially constructed experience, which she sees as working unconsciously with embodied notions of space and consciously with whatever cultural products are available to it. Therein, the sacred is part of the meaning-making activity giving significance to natural and social boundaries or to their overcoming.¹¹⁹ In my native Canada, in the northern portions of our Western provinces it is common to see Open Chapel-Wayside shrines placed along such boundaries.

Finally, spatial practice is the functional component of Lefebvre’s spatiality, denoting the way space is used. Spatial practice explains the uses of space, both systemic and individual, ‘the activities of production and reproduction, and generates spatial competence and performance’.¹²⁰ There is nothing inherently religious or secular about spatial practice, according to Knott: ‘religious meaning or purpose may be attributed to it; it may acquire a sense of sacrality from being enacted in a religiously meaningful space, or may be transformed by ritual process’.¹²¹ Spatial practices constitute articulations of social spatiality. The important distinction for Knott, that of these practices having no inherent meaning, is intended to overcome a problem she perceives in ‘the over-identification of symbols in the public domain as religious, and hence the possible reification of religion as a sign of difference’.¹²² Spatial practices are important for the study of religion in that they produces lived space.¹²³ That is, religion ‘in its

¹¹⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 53; Melissa Raphael, *Theology and Embodiment: The Post-Patriarchal Reconstruction of Female Sacrality* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp. 241-245.

¹¹⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 53ff.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 39.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 53.

¹²² *ibid.*, p. 41.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 42.

physical presence, social orderings, and cultural forms, is a consequence of spatial practice' and the attribution of meaning its sociability provides.¹²⁴

The importance of Lefebvre's spaces of representation, representations of space, and spatial practice are, according to Knott, twofold. Firstly, they provide applicable categories which encapsulate the conceptual themes of the general terms. Secondly, they bring value to religious study through their ability to illuminate the various aspects of religious life. 'These are dialectically connected, mutually occurring aspects of social space ... to show how ... spaces were perceived, conceived, and lived. This conceptualisation ... [seeks] to hold the openness or dynamic activity of space whilst closing it for the purpose of ordering and structuring its meaning.'¹²⁵

3.2. The limits of Knott's spatially contested religion

Knott raises several important questions for a spatial approach to examining religion in Western modernity and the public sphere. Perhaps most significantly is that she identifies the centrality of the body and practices for religion and the sacred, which contrasts with the linguistification of religion and the imprecision of Taylor and Habermas. Other significant themes are that spaces are socially produced and that they are relationally and dynamically connected to other spaces.

Earlier I mentioned there were four critical requirements for Knott to prove the effectiveness of her spatial approach to locating religion. This included clearly defining the object of research, the nature of space, the relation of space to time, and then explaining how her spatial view accounts for religion. Any limits to Knott's definition of religion would imply limits to her spatial methodology.

¹²⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 43.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 129.

There are a few points Knott's method does not clearly explain. For example, it does not clearly elaborate on the processes or operations involved in the production and representation of space(s) nor any place(s). Knott recognises space as a 'dominant *conceived* (social) representation', place as the '*lived* moment(s)' of spatiality. Dialectically implicated and mediating between the two are spatial practices that 'constitute *perceived* space'.¹²⁶ What Knott does not answer, or at least conceptually explore, is how conceived spaces become the lived moments. Neither does Knott account for the difference between systems and structures or individuals. Knott misses this opportunity and in doing so commits the same error as Tuan, allowing normative themes to 'misrepresent' 'personal and subtle experiences'.¹²⁷

This is directly evident in how Knott defines her object of research as Knott's terminology functions to frame the interpretation of the location religion. The impact of this on Knott's spatiality will become more apparent below, especially in terms of the Religious/Secular Field. There, but more so in Chapter 7, I show how Knott's empirical strategy limits where religion can be made visible and how religious spaces are understood internally and externally. I mentioned above how Knott, via Lefebvre, accepts the idea of a unified cultural space, within which are overlapping social spaces, and lived moments. For Knott, the unified cultural space, its systems and structures, are the field within which all social spaces and lived moments including religions cohere. However, does this give due weight to religion? Flood writes, though religions 'exist within cultures – within particular social systems' they are not 'primary abstract systems' and 'while they are concerned with socialization' and sociability, 'they

¹²⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 32-33 (original emphasis); referring to Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 525.

¹²⁷ Tuan, *Space and Place*, p. 201.

primarily function to address questions of ultimate meaning at a bodily and temporal level in which human beings make sense of their experience'.¹²⁸ In other words, religions exist within societies but they should not be equated with them and that 'it is primarily in action that religions respond to human need'.¹²⁹ Where is the limitation? A spatial approach to religion needs to be able to articulate the lived reality of religion as a practice of everyday life and not only the social and situational reality of religion as a social and cultural way of life. Furthermore, a spatial approach should be able to provide a framework for religion in situations where power dynamics are at play but also where they are not. Even as Knott's empirical methodology focusses on particular instances of localized religion it only does so in terms of a broader culture and in what she calls force-power relations, as when she defines the religious and non-religious space(s) of the Left-hand against each other and the cultural symbol of the Left-hand.

3.2.1. The Religious/Secular Field as a spatial object of study

A question raised by the new visibility thesis for religion is: How do we formulate religion given our time and place in the later-modern West? Knott anticipates and asks the same question, adding a qualification that such a formula must be amenable to a spatial approach. One of the premises of this thesis is that a uniform religious view cannot be assumed.¹³⁰ Further, the thesis stresses that the new visibility of religious phenomena today has changed our understanding of religion, requiring different methods of identifying these phenomena. Knott's spatial approach can be seen as an attempt to meet this demand. What is required is a means of conceiving the relation

¹²⁸ Gavin Flood, *The Importance of Religion: Meaning and Action in Our Strange World*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

¹²⁹ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 58.

¹³⁰ Michael Hoelzl, 'The New Visibility of Religion and Its Impact on Populist Politics', in *Religions*, 11.6, 2020, 292, pp. 1-16 [11].

between religion and secularity, such that the presence of the one is not taken as the absence of the other.

Knott's general terms of spatiality conceives this relation in dynamics of power as the dominant manifestation of spatiality. Knott argues that such a formulation may be articulated as a 'Western epistemological field of the "religious" and the "secular" constituted [as] a site of struggle with multiple religious and secular positions'.¹³¹ But, Knott discounts previous definitions of religion and secularity in favour of this view of their spatial field as force relations. Further, Knott proposes that there are locations that can be neither identified as religious and secularity, having dynamics of each or neither, she suggests the need to move beyond a dichotomous of religious and secular locations, 'mov[ing] beyond them' to include a third location, which she calls 'post-secular' (this is a different form of postsecularity than Habermas) and also a fourth location composed of a multitude of undecided, agnostic, or otherwise noncommittal positions.¹³² Knott illustrates the field in the following figure:

¹³¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 124.

¹³² *ibid.* p. 125.

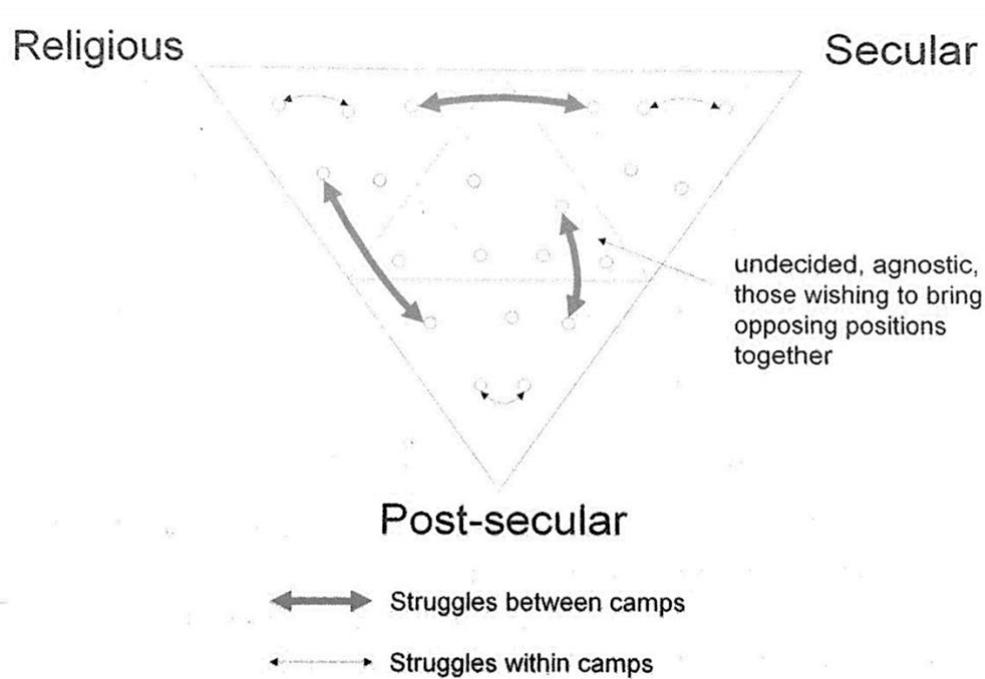


Figure 3.1

The Religious/Secular Field, and its Force Relationships, from Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p.125

The field represents the four spatial fields of religious, secular, postsecular, and undecided. The relation of these to one another is be seen as dialectic and not merely oppositional.¹³³ It is instances of intersection between the four camps which are the sources from which Knott draws her data in order to analyse the location of religion. The conceptualization of this field is foundational to Knott's construction and to the object of her operational approach. Any potential critique of the field lessens the strength of Knott's notion of spatially contested religion.

The Religious/Secular Field represents a characterization of religion that is in contrast with Habermas' postsecular view and more closely aligned with Taylor's (new) secularism view. The previous chapter suggested that Habermas's postsecular approach to religion is premised on the acceptance of religion as a socializing force, but also on

¹³³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 125.

the conviction religion be limited to individual and institutional expressions. Habermas' position is that of an exclusive substantive view of religion with reference to specific structures, beliefs, and practices. Religion and secularity are positioned in opposition to one another and religion is categorized according to modern secular qualifications. Taylor's approach to religion positions it as one among many ways of imagining and functioning in the world, another way being secularity, within the secular age. Taylor's is an inclusive functional view of religion and secularity, where both have to do with ultimate problems and fundamental meanings. This position tends to breach what is usually seen as boundaries between religion and secularity, especially in terms of religion extending beyond conventional forms. According to Danièle Hervieu-Léger, this approach 'constitute[s] a partial, yet radically limited, response to the question of the location of religion in modernity. Religion is nowhere, or else it is everywhere ...'¹³⁴

Knott's representation of religion in the Religious/Secular Field is an attempt to acknowledge the empirical facts of ongoing secularization while drawing attention to the location of religion. Knott suggests that what have often been referred to as conventional forms of religion are far beyond the institutional and individual forms they are supposed. Instead, 'they inhabit spaces, but also transform and create them' moving beyond the institutional and individual.¹³⁵ The dynamic nature of religion suggests that the common definitional pairing of religious and non-religious (or secular) spaces and places is an inadequate categorization similar to that of the private and public domains. Referring to Foucault, Knott argues that while certain institutional or functional language might give an initial impression of separation, there are force relations

¹³⁴ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), p. 38.

¹³⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 60-61.

between the two that break down any such strict formulation.¹³⁶ She writes, ‘it follows that religious (and secular) discourse and practice, and discourse *about* “religion” (and the “secular”) is similarly implicated in this struggle’.¹³⁷ Consequently, any identification of religion as an object of study must consider not only the physical and social spaces of religion that they contest and inhabit, but also the manner in which the discourse itself, the mental spaces of the study of religion, is a contested area.

Where Knott’s conception of the Religious/Secular Field falls is, as with her spatiality, an over-categorization, which is itself a result of a more problematic issue: the manner of its categorization of religion. It was suggested above that Knott’s empirical categorization of spatiality, while intending to reflect the dynamism and plurality of spaces, overidentifies spatiality with social systems. Similarly, in categorizing religion and secularity within the Religious/Secular Field, Knott operates upon religious phenomena in such a way as to redistribute them. One problem arising from this categorization is Knott’s depiction of the Religious/Secular Field as one of force–power relations. While Knott claims that in her view religion and secularity (and postsecularity) are not in opposition, in her dialectic relationship her language is clearly disposed to oppositional terms. Her Religious/Secular Field is an arena of force–power and contestation. This demarcation of religious/secular relations as contested is an example of the methodological operation that predisposes Knott’s approach to a certain type of evidence and result.

¹³⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 63; citing Foucault, ‘As a complex modern power relationship, the “religions” and the “secular” together constitute what Foucault called, “...*in potentia*, a strategy of struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed, do not lose their specific nature, or do not finally become confused. Each constitutes for the other a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal.’” Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power’, in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow eds., *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed, 1983), pp. 208-226 [225].

¹³⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 63.

I think that the most significant evidence of this is the reification of postsecularity as ‘produced by the dialectic of the religious and the secular’ and ‘seeing the good in both’.¹³⁸ Knott cites various scholars to suggest the postsecular as a break from traditional religion and from over-secularity, which can ‘embrace the secular with openness, and discover the sacred within it’.¹³⁹ This raises various questions of the Religious/Secular Field. First, I would ask if postsecularity is intended to be in contention with both religion and secularity, as the field suggests, while simultaneously being open to both? If such a position is possible, can religion and secularity also be in contention with one another, while being open to both? If this is possible, what is the need for postsecularism? Another question: Is postsecularism supposed to also be read as post-religion? Or is it ‘post’ ‘secular’ in the sense that it is beyond secularity’s opposition to religion but open to the sacred?¹⁴⁰ Is there or should there be a ‘post’ ‘religious’ position, and if so, what would it retain of religion while being open to secularity? There are more questions that could be asked; however, showing the ultimate limit to Knott’s field, as she states,

I have suggested a dialectical relationship between what I have called religious confessions, secular confessions, and post-secular confessions as a way of locating the two sides of the coin within the same relational field.¹⁴¹

The reification of the postsecular is conceptually problematic, but more, it undermines Knott’s spatial approach. It makes it possible for religion to be located outside religion.

Paradoxically, it is due to secularization that such an operation separating elements of religion is possible. Studies of secularization, such as Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, have convincingly shown that the development of secularism, understood as a way of being in the world distinct from religion, involved a reification and compartmentalization of

¹³⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 71.

¹³⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 75; also, Richard K. Fenn, *Beyond Idols: The Shape of a Secular Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ This is very much Knott’s understanding. Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 76-7.

¹⁴¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 77.

religion. He traces, for example, how Christian theology was shaped into the exclusive humanism of the modern moral order.¹⁴² It is for this reason that Knott is later able to dedicate a particular discussion to the sacred that is disembedded from religion and distinguished as a particular category boundary for her method.¹⁴³ What this shows is that Knott's identification of religion is lacking. Rather than seeing pluralization as consistent with religion,¹⁴⁴ Knott makes a distinction: some pluralism is part of religious contestations and other pluralism requires the creation of a new category, postsecular confession.¹⁴⁵

3.3. Conclusion

Spatial studies emerging from social and cultural theory recognized that space is not a backdrop against which religion is situated. Instead, space and spatiality are ideas that can frame discussions of the physical, social, cultural, political, and economic shape of society. A spatial analysis of religion can offer perspective on the visibility and evaluation of the religion, especially in relation to the arenas in which it is situated, including the public sphere. A spatial study of society raises poignant questions regarding these arenas. Framed as an arena of public expression and discourse that can occur in informal locations such as coffeehouses, parks, and streets, or formal sites like government offices, town hall meetings, or the media, the public sphere is both substantial and situational, and so amenable to a spatial analysis. Religion, when it is interpreted as a way of conceiving and perceiving the situational elements of society and then lived out in relation to the aspects of the world, is similarly amenable to a spatial analysis.

¹⁴² Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2007).

¹⁴³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 85ff, 215ff.

¹⁴⁴ Hoelzl, 'The New Visibility of Religion', p. 11.

¹⁴⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 124-6.

The spatial approach to religion as outlined by Knott provides a solid base upon which these locations of meaning can be viewed in order to see where religion is. It was seen that Knott's approach, even as it is a novel and significant step towards articulating a spatial approach to religion, is limited conceptually. The value of the spatial approach to religion would be strengthened if it were to be based upon a position that recognizes that while religion and non-religion are at times in contest with one another, at other times their relationship is more dynamic and complex. The spatial approach would also be more critically reflective of the importance and meaning of religion if it accepted that religion is a peculiar way of being in the world. Finally, for the spatial approach to be useful it needs to account for individual creative action as the manifestation of religion. Accomplishing this requires a different philosophy of religion and cultural analysis of religion than Knott is able to provide. These are elements of the spatial approach of Michel de Certeau.

Knott misses an opportunity to strengthen her approach by overlooking nuances of de Certeau's theory. While Knott mentions de Certeau as one of the continental intellectuals who influenced the spatial turn she makes limited use of his theory of practices in her concept.¹⁴⁶ If Knott had more clearly engaged with de Certeau, her theoretical framework could be much more robust. Knott's case study of the left-hand is a good work of spatial analysis but because of her framework it is incomplete. A proper reading of de Certeau's spatiality does not invalidate the analysis Knott's categories and criteria provide, rather it can deepen them providing a great and more applicable study.

¹⁴⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 2, 17, 24, 27, 39, 40, 42, 176, and 229 Knott makes reference to de Certeau within the text five times. The most significant is when she clearly notes how her use of terms place and space differ from de Certeau (p. 42). Knott follows Andrew Merrifield here and I refer to this in chapter 6 (n. 67) of this thesis.

My aim in this chapter has been to consider the discourse of religious spatiality and to identify some gaps in the methodology and analytical frame. Just as in the previous chapter, religion took a secondary position to the main subject (the public sphere, spatiality) in order to provide illustration. This has been done intentionally. As it is de Certeau's spatiality that is the subject of this thesis, religion will continue in this secondary and supportive role to some degree. However, in the following chapter it will be argued that de Certeau's spatiality emerges from his broader scholarship that I characterize as primarily a philosophy of religion. Therefore, religion will take on a more specific and central role in the following chapter as de Certeau's formulation of religion – given the time and place of the late-modern West – is a founding principle of his social and cultural thought.

Chapter Four

4. Understanding Michel de Certeau for a Spatial Approach to Religion

Is religion a special case whose ‘alterity’ must be translated and accommodated?¹ Is the space of religion in the public one of individual moral sense or institutional social presence? Can we only locate religion in contested cultural and social fields? Thus far, it has been argued that there is room for a spatial approach to religion that identifies it as historically and dialectically interconnected with secularity, and locatable through considering religious practices and social productions of meaning. Unfortunately, Knott’s situation of religion engenders a constrained understanding of religion and focuses on points of ideological and material tension. There is room for a conceptual spatial approach to overcome these limitations and allow a way of discovering the space of religion without reducing religion to an epistemological site of struggle. This position extends from de Certeau’s spatial analysis and its context within his broader philosophy of religion.

This is the first of three chapters that will explore Michel de Certeau’s project including his philosophy of religion and his theory of space as a cultural approach to describing religious spatiality. The basic problem of the space of religion in the public sphere is how to situate the exclusive dimensions of religion in relation to a system principally committed to individual freedom and equality. De Certeau’s work provides such a means to identify, describe, and analyse the public presence of these divergent ways of belief and practice in a way that does not exclude either but rather allows for a just

¹ De Certeau uses the term alterity to refer to otherness or the state of difference and heterology is the term that he applied to study of alterity. For example, de Certeau writes of the possibility of a cultural Freudian analysis in perceiving alterity in the midst of ‘scientificity’, see ‘The Freudian Novel’ in Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 24. For an analysis of heterology see Ian Buchanan, ‘What is heterology?’ *New Black Friars* 77.909 (1996), pp. 483-493.

description of each, and their relationship. His methodology, centrally heterological, dialogical, spatial, and emerging out of his philosophy of religion, makes visible religious and secular phenomena and the dynamic relationship between them.

4.1. Interpreting de Certeau

4.1.1. De Certeau's method and his project

Andrés Freijomil suggests that with de Certeau we have a scholar whose method is imprecise because, as he writes, '*celle-ci se veut aussi fragmentaire et disséminée que les espaces du savoir que de Certeau a franchis*' [it is intended to be as fragmentary and disseminated as the spaces of knowledge that de Certeau crossed].² By this he means, firstly, that de Certeau wrote on diverse topics through varying means. But he also intends that de Certeau's major works, excluding *La possession du Loudun*, were largely composed rather than written through a linear and regular process.³ To explain this, Freijomil, illuminating this process, shows how de Certeau utilizes a '*poétique du braconnage*' [poetics of poaching], re-employing his own words to similar or different purposes. Freijomil argues the purpose of this poaching is to pluralize the meanings of his texts to avoid 'writing that conquers', writing that objectifies what would otherwise be subjective.⁴ According to de Certeau, these forms of writing, having attained near perfection through Enlightenment and modernist epistemology, obscure their subjects and, by their purpose, expand one system of meaning at the expense of the other.⁵ Freijomil demonstrates that de Certeau's writing is an action aimed at overcoming the conventions of text and reading. For de Certeau, the relationship between author, text, reader, and reading is not linear; it is a layered dialogical relationship that he attempts to

² Freijomil, 'La pratique', pp. 109-110 [translation in the text is my own].

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. xxv-xxvi. [originally, Michel de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).]

⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 166 [emphasis added].

reflect in his writing. De Certeau, by his intentional fragmentation of his text, aims to expose fissures in forms of writing in order to identify how reading allows differences in meaning to become newly visible.

Michel de Certeau, like the later Ricœur, explored the question, 'What is a text?'.⁶ Ricœur's answer is an attempt to go beyond two positions. The one is from the natural sciences and the central tool of positivism, identifying the text as a representation of objective matter, needing no interpretation. The other is that of the postmodern relativist for whom the text is subject-centred interpretation. Ricœur advocated a hermeneutical principle. The text is dialogical, neither identified with the author nor the reader. The action of the text is neither that of explanation nor interpretation but instead a discourse. Ricœur wrote of the need for a new concept of interpretation, a critical hermeneutic. For Ricœur this involved a mental change on the part of the reader. The practice of this adjustment is in the appropriation of the text: 'Reading [in turn] is the concrete act in which the destiny of the text is fulfilled. It is at the very heart of reading that explanation and interpretation are indefinitely opposed and reconciled.'⁷

Differently de Certeau addresses the question by looking addressing the text rather than the reader. He critiques three elements of the modern text: which begins with the blank page, 'a space of its own that delimits a place of production', giving ground to the second element, the text, that comes about through 'a series of articulated operations (gestural or mental) ... that sketch out words, sentences, and finally a system'.⁸ The third element reflects the effective component of writing. The text is not undirected; there is a purpose, an ordering, an occasion:

⁶ Paul Ricœur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. John B. Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016 [1981]), p. 111.

⁷ Ricœur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, p. 126.

⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 134.

Its goal is social efficacy. It manipulates its exteriority. The writing laboratory has a 'strategic' function: either an item of information received from tradition or from the outside is collected, classified, inserted into a system and thereby transformed, or the rules and models developed in this place (which is not governed by them) allow one to act on the environment and to transform it.⁹

But, it is not only the occasion of the text that is significant but the purpose to which the text is directed. Together this is what de Certeau elsewhere calls a laminated text.¹⁰ It is not only that text is wrongfully perceived as objective representation whose function is to explain, but that laminated texts are the product of a place and whose efficacy is in *forming* the reader or consumer. The problem of the laminated text is, as de Certeau writes, that such 'scriptural conquests ... multiply products that substitute for an absent voice', this voice being that of the real subject.¹¹ The idea is clearly represented in the writing of history or cultural studies when the image is substituted for the thing, as an image of the Orient for many years was substituted for the reality, as illuminated by Edward Said.¹² For de Certeau, texts invariably contain a distance between subject and reader, a distance created and maintained by strategic function.

The modernist text presumes the reader as a passive receiver against which de Certeau argues that 'to read is to wander through an imposed system'.¹³ The reader is neither the author nor in the author's position but is seeking the 'displaced enunciation' of the text.¹⁴ She crafts in texts something different and 'combines their fragments and creates something un-known in the space organized by their capacity for allowing an indefinite plurality of meanings'.¹⁵ But importantly, the text is not without meaning. Its content,

⁹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 135.

¹⁰ de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 94.

¹¹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 161.

¹² Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1978). This is much the argument of the book, the idea being Orientalism as an institution for dealing with the Orient, in which 'by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it' (p.4).

¹³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 169.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 156-7.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 169.

organization, and described subject are the lexicon for any interpretation.¹⁶ De Certeau is intent on avoiding both objectivism and relativism. According to de Certeau, at the meeting of text and reading there is a two-way movement possible in which an actively read text can become *prise de parole* (speech, voice).¹⁷ This opposition of text (*écriture*) and speech (*parole*) Freijomil identifies as pivotal for de Certeau. *Parole* is, as Ahearne writes, where de Certeau locates the possibility of meaning turns into an instance.¹⁸ De Certeau differs with Ricœur in accepting that the voice of the text emerges from the interstices of explanation and understanding, not in positing a mental shift for the reader where the hermeneutic discourse functions between text and reader, but embracing and seeking to facilitate the irruption of *parole*.

Freijomil shows how de Certeau intends his compositions to facilitate reading as discourse. This involved extensive reuse of his own material; what Freijomil refers to as de Certeau's *braconnage* (poaching).¹⁹ Any larger works consist of previously written essays; and, many of these essays contain self-quotes of smaller pieces.²⁰ The interesting thing is the manner of the *braconnage*. The reuse of material often entails a notation indicating the original context. Yet, de Certeau's poaching also involves re-employment of the text in a way that differs from the original.²¹ Even as the original text is a symbolic unit, this reuse multiplies it, producing a polyvocality. The method gives a sense of porosity to de Certeau's work. Perhaps this is why one commentator

¹⁶ de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 95.

¹⁷ Freijomil, 'Les pratiques', p. 109. Freijomil intends '*prise de parole*' (speech or voice) in the sense which de Certeau uses the term when referring to utterance (*énonciation*), as a 'theoretical marker' (Certeau, *Practice*, p. xiii) indicating the act of theory as a practice (Michel de Certeau, 'Lacan: An Ethics of Speech', in *Heterologies*, pp. 47-66 [47]); originally published as 'Lacan: une éthique de la parole,' *Le débat* 22 (1982), pp. 54-69; and first translated and published in English as 'Lacan: An Ethics of Speech', trans. Marie-Rose Logan, *Representation* 3 (1983), pp. 21-39).

¹⁸ Freijomil, 'Les pratiques', p. 109; and Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 85.

¹⁹ Freijomil, 'Les pratiques', p. 109.

²⁰ For example, see the notes for 'Surin's Melancholy', in de Certeau, *Heterologies*, pp. 101-115, 250-252.

²¹ Freijomil, 'Les pratiques', p. 112-113.

concludes that de Certeau's 'work seems like the journal of a traveller' who first orients themselves in a place and then discovers in that place unfamiliar and new meaning.²² De Certeau avoids speaking objectively to avoid laying claim to any special authority, to give voice to many figures.²³ He undertakes to guide readers and to show them what they might otherwise overlook. Freijomil emphasizes, '*C'est pour cela qu'il n'y a pas de "centre", mais une "voix" qui compose et essaie d'établir le discernement à la "périphérie" de l'ouvrage.*' [That is why there is no centre, but a voice which composes and tries to establish discernment at the of periphery of a work.]²⁴ This is a practical attempt to overcome what de Certeau sees as an epistemic weakness of writing, introducing interstices into texts to free the reader from restrictive objectification and ideological reproduction. This lends weight to what Ahearne first summarized as de Certeau's method: firstly, de Certeau defines what structures (mental, social, etc.) enclose a subject; secondly, he shows how such an enclosure is fissured by instances of alterity; and thirdly, he explores the process where this alterity appropriates the enclosure and brings about a new sense of meaning.²⁵ This is, as Freijomil writes, an effort to create '*l'union dans la différence*' [union in difference].²⁶ The practice is an expression of what has otherwise been referred to as de Certeau's philosophical project, 'heterology'.²⁷

4.1.2. Heterology

Ahearne characterizes this philosophical project as an 'intellectual strategy consisted precisely in an endeavour to discern and to make ethical and aesthetic space for

²² Bocken and van Buijtenen, 'Spirituality as Criticism', p. 1 The idea of the traveller is a trope to which de Certeau frequently appeals (Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 10).

²³ For example, see de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Volume 1*, p. 1, and de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (dedication).

²⁴ Freijomil, 'La pratique', p. 112 [translation in the text is my own].

²⁵ Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 190.

²⁶ Freijomil, 'Les pratiques', p. 115 [translation in the text is my own].

²⁷ Buchanan, 'What is heterology?', p. 485.

particular forms of interruption'.²⁸ Heterology is de Certeau's attempt to understand and articulate a just ethnography and anthropology drawing on heterology as the philosophical conversation on the relation of the Same and the Other. Buchanan summarizes the problem de Certeau addresses:

on the one hand, there is the fear that the Other, if it is prediscursive, which is to say already constituted, will 'crush' the Same; and on the other hand, the fear is that the Same, if it is constitutive, such as is the case in phenomenology, will absorb the Other, or as Merleau-Ponty puts it, 'Insofar as I constitute the world, I cannot conceive another consciousness, for it too would have to constitute the world and, at least as regards this other view of the world, I should not be the constituting agent.'²⁹

What de Certeau intends is an attempt to create an alternative to the positions of the infinitely other and an alterity that is not infinitely other. In his heterology, the Same and the Other are still becoming and there is a possibility of understanding.³⁰ The point is that de Certeau's method and project serve cultivate interruptions and openings allowing otherness to emerge. This heterology is not only aimed at an epistemic critique or a multiplication of voices but is similar to constructivism and Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, in that it supposes that all people are creators and that the conditions of the real, not only its experience, can be determined.³¹

It is this creative potential that distinguishes the object of de Certeau's heterology from the heteronomy and heterotopia of Foucault. The difference between Foucault and de Certeau will be more fully explored in Chapter 6, but perhaps a clarifying passage is needed here. Heteronomy is action influenced by an Other outside the individual; this is in contrast to autonomy. In Foucault, this takes the form of technological or political power over the individual. Heterotopias are the 'real sites ... that can be found within a

²⁸ Ahearn, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 3. See also Ian Buchanan, *The Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

²⁹ Buchanan, 'What is heterology?', p. 486, citing Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London and New York: Kegan and Paul, 1962), p. 350.

³⁰ Buchanan, 'What is heterology?', pp. 489-450.

³¹ Buchanan, 'What is heterology?', p. 488. Buchanan refers to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1994); and, Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1994).

culture ... different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about' in which the Other is often placed.³² These heterotopias are places of layered meaning that are real approximations of idealized utopias. Foucault identifies five different types of heterotopia, but common to each is the idea of their being formed by heteronomous forces and simultaneously 'absolutely real' (situational) and 'absolutely unreal' (substantial); real and mythic places of contention (force–power relations) in the spaces we live.³³ Foucault formulated this idea of heterotopias at the end of de Certeau's life and while there is no record of a response to it we can approximate and articulate the difference. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* de Certeau is critical of the 'heterogenous systems' of Foucault, indicating that while they explore varied heteronomous places, this does not account for the 'infinitesimal procedures' that have no such place and yet produce meaning through action.³⁴ De Certeau's heterology, as we have seen, is directly concerned with showing the fissures in the heterotopias allowing us to see the real and unreal mythic spaces of meaning which are interruptions to heteronomy.

It is the presence of this heterological impulse in his spatial theory that makes it so amenable to the objective the spatial approach to make visible the spaces of religion in the midst of an apparently non-religious society. The strength of this amenability is further increased when we see that de Certeau's project is not merely a philosophical or social theory, but actually emerges from a theological perspective.³⁵ In an essay which opens *L'Etranger ou l'union dans le difference* [The Stranger or the Union of Difference], de Certeau relates the Emmaus road experience of two of Jesus' disciples

³² Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces (Des espace autres)' *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986), pp. 22-27 [23].

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 46, 49.

³⁵ Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 5; Buchanan, 'What is heterology?', p. 488. In arguing for the importance of the theological framework to understanding and applying de Certeau I disagree with some of the key commentators on his work.

as recorded in the Christian Bible (Luke chapter 24:13–35).³⁶ In the record, two disciples walk together and discuss the recent news of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. As they walk, Jesus comes among them, though unrecognizable, and explains to them that mystery. Later Jesus reveals himself, only to vanish. Using this as a starting point, de Certeau meditates on the ideas of the Same and Other and on Christianity as a way making sense of our experience of Otherness; insofar as Christianity describes a community built on the presence of God who is always Other, and only truly becomes this community when that presence is shared with those outside it.³⁷ What this does is show that de Certeau’s heterology is not only an analytical method and communicative practice but it contains an ethical imperative. Allowing *parole* to emerge is an imperative of social study.

There is a more substantial text that develops the same idea of the relationship-with-the-other as central to de Certeau’s overall vision. It is taken from the same *L’Etranger*. There, de Certeau writes that each individual, group, or community in history,

... finds its meaning only in relation to that which it is not, and basically in relation with God. This ‘nothing without’ is presented already in a certain sense by Jesus when he says: I am nothing without my Father and I am nothing without you, my brethren, or without a future that is unknown to me. Each of us is capable, to some extent, and in however modest a way, of being open to the infinite, by this conjunction with others (something indefinite) and with God (the infinite).³⁸

For de Certeau, meaning is the result of discursive encounters with the wholly Other. That infinite absolute is not met in exceptional experience. This wholly Other is experienced as we come to know the immediate other. The wholly Other permeates ‘in mysterious fashion all our relations, our space, the very differences that divide us and

³⁶ Michel de Certeau, ‘L’Etranger’ in Luce Giard (ed.), *L’Etranger ou l’union dans le difference* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991 [Paris: Gallimard, 1969]), pp. 13-18.

³⁷ Dominique Salin SJ., ‘Michel de Certeau and the Spirituality of Ignatius’, trans. Joseph A. Munitiz, *The Way* 55/3 (July 2016), pp. 48–57 [55-56].

³⁸ Michel de Certeau, ‘L’Experience spirituelle’, in Luce Giard (ed.), *L’Etranger ou l’union dans la difference* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991), p. 1-12 [10] cited and translated by Salin, ‘Michel de Certeau and the Spirituality of Ignatius,’ p. 56.

hold us fast without our really knowing where all that is leading us'.³⁹ It is the transcendent *a priori* present within the immanent that provides the possibility of a just ethnography or just cultural studies, allowing alterity both presence and the possibility to speak, as Derrida puts it, 'the affirmative experience of the coming of the other *as other*'.⁴⁰

This heterological principle undergirds de Certeau's cultural studies. Buchanan notes that on his meditations on the city and the difficulties that it poses for analysis, de Certeau formulates the conclusion that neither a view from above nor the view from the street provides a satisfactory explanation of the reality of the city, since both of necessity exclude the other.⁴¹ He seeks is a way in which both views can be simultaneously expressed in their dialogical relation. This comes to be expressed in de Certeau's spatial formulation of *lieu* and *espace*, strategy and tactics. While I frame this spatiality here, these spatial ideas will be taken up in the chapters 5 and 6.

4.2. Framing de Certeau's spatiality

De Certeau's spatial project is designed to allow for recognizing the variability of social expressions within any given dominant context. As a result, he does not treat religion and secularity as ideologies merely contesting over terrain. The relation is more dynamic, especially when explored in the dynamic of everyday practices instead of institutions and systems. In this way, de Certeau's approach to religion and secularity is cultural. He aims in this to encourage the visibility of meaningful differences even in the presence of objectifying systems and structures. This requires a willingness to question previously accepted strategies for defining these differences. Coming to see

³⁹ Salin, 'Michel de Certeau and the Spirituality of Ignatius,' p. 56.

⁴⁰ Jacques Derrida, 'The Deconstruction of Actuality', trans. Jonathan Rée, *Radical Philosophy* 68, pp. 28-41 [36].

⁴¹ Buchanan, 'What is heterology?', p. 490.

and engage the Other is also suggested to have an ethical component. All this is essential to the premise of the theory of the New Visibility of religion and is central to the question of this thesis. Any connections, however, need to be more fully explored in order to elicit the particular concepts that will make the application of de Certeau's spatiality to the question of religion and the public sphere as efficacious as possible.

4.3. The relationship of religion and secularity

In order to be able to properly contrast de Certeau with Knott, I will follow her, framing the question of religious spatiality as the relationship between religion and dominant secularity. Knott suggests that the way this relationship is framed has important implications for whether the very terms of the framework will be weighted towards a secular or religious orientation.⁴² Consequently, we need to have a sense of where de Certeau draws the line between the terms.

As I have shown above, I hold that there are strong links between de Certeau's theology and his project. This could do nothing more than indicate his own personal standpoint, or it could as I show be constitutive of his view of religion and secularity in culture. The situation of religion in de Certeau's work is contested. In cataloguing de Certeau's work, Giard suggests,

La question de Dieu, de la foi et du christianisme n'a cessé d'habiter Michel de Certeau. Elle est à la source d'une impossibilité à se satisfaire d'un seul type de savoir, d'où ce parcours méthodique de disciplines.

[The question of God, of faith and Christianity has ceased for Michel de Certeau. Pursuing that knowledge had become something impossible to satisfy, hence the change to engaging various disciplines.]⁴³

I do not think such a strong position is warranted.⁴⁴ Both Peter Burke and Philip Sheldrake mark the theological imprint in de Certeau. Burke utilizes the idea of *ré-*

⁴² Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis*, (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]), p. 91

⁴³ Luce Giard, 'Cherchant Dieu', in Michel de Certeau, *La faiblesse de croire*, ed. and introduced by Luce Giard, (Paris: Seuil, 1987), p. i-xiv [i] [the translation in the text is my own].

emploi [re-employment] to track his use of theological terms in his cultural studies, although he suggests that de Certeau drew upon theological language only to use them in a critical fashion.⁴⁵ Sheldrake situates de Certeau's theology as part of his cultural studies, but suggests it only guides what values he attributes to certain practices.⁴⁶ Both take de Certeau as having dismissed any ontological possibility of religion. This likely arises out of his critical historical perspective on Christianity, as well as statements amounting to the idea that modernity has rendered our language unable to speak of God.⁴⁷

In contrast are others including Bocken and van Buijtenen, Freijomil, and Ward, who argue that de Certeau is certainly a religious thinker; moreover, that he can be read theologically. Bocken and van Buijtenen write that de Certeau's studies of mysticism are an exploration of the location of religious experience in modernity, showing

how the land of mysticism is no longer our country but that its remnants are dispersed like boulders throughout our own landscape, causing some to stumble. The experience of the mystics is precisely that they can journey through different areas without ever meeting God, and their longing is the locus where the absence of God is palpable.... The painful experience of the absence of God is most certainly operational in the modern subject, as a reality that alarms and even disturbs this subject.⁴⁸

These authors locate religion as central and constituent within de Certeau's thought.⁴⁹

Yet, as Bocken and van Buijtenen point out, to situate him within a confessional

⁴⁴ This interpretation of de Certeau contributes to one of those unwarranted reductions mentioned in chapter 1 as Giard has continued to produce posthumous works by de Certeau, including volume 2 of *The Mystic Fable*.

⁴⁵ Burke, "The Art of Re-Interpretation", p. 34.

⁴⁶ Philip Sheldrake, 'Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and The Practice of Everyday Life' in *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 12.2, (Fall 2012), p. 207-216 [207]. See also, Philip Sheldrake, 'Human Identity and Particularity of Place', *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 1.1 (Spring 2001), pp. 43-64.

⁴⁷ Sheldrake, 'Michel de Certeau', p. 207; and, de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol 1.*, pp. 91, 93.

⁴⁸ Inigo Bocken, 'Spirituality as Criticism: Michel de Certeau and Ignatian Spirituality' unpublished English translation draft script; originally published as a chapter in Inigo Bocken and Eveline van Buijtenen, *Weerbarstige spiritualiteit. Inleiding in het denken van Michel de Certeau* (Heeswijk-Dinther, The Netherlands: Berne media, 2016), p. 1. I was provided a copy by the author (Bocken). See also, Inigo Bocken, 'Nomad and Layman - Spiritual Spaces in Modernity' in Inigo Bocken (ed.), *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, Studies in Spirituality Supplement 24 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), pp. 111-123.

⁴⁹ Ward, 'Spiritual Spaces', p. 501.

position as a means of identifying a ‘master key to a deeper unity’ is to run counter to his professed position as a traveller and to his notion of spirituality as well.⁵⁰

Knott warns against both a religious and confessional approach to a spatial approach to religion as each affects the way everyday spaces are defined and depicted but also by the way they ideologically isolate each other.⁵¹ She also warns against any view of modern culture that sees religion as nowhere or else as everywhere. In either case, identifying particular spaces of religion would be impossible.⁵² Consequently, to show the potential of de Certeau’s spatial theory I need to consider how de Certeau’s thinking predisposes his analysis of social space. Does his idea of religion evidence a substantive or functional view that locates religion in specific limited spaces or else as being beyond and within all social spaces? Or finally, does he locate religion and its experience as equivocal to secularity and its experience, as coextensive in a site of epistemological struggle, as does Knott? De Certeau explores a particular historical moment, *La mystique*, to frame a concept he sees as encapsulating the relation of religion to modernity and spatiality.

4.3.1. La mystique

De Certeau situates the origins of the relation of religion to secularity in manner similar to Taylor, excepting where Taylor talks of the Immanent Frame de Certeau talks of what he terms as non-places.⁵³ The non-place is described by Marc Augé: ‘If a place can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space that cannot

⁵⁰ Bocken and van Buijtenen, ‘Spirituality as Criticism’, p. 2.

⁵¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 79

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 81

⁵³ de Certeau, ‘A Variant: Hagio-Graphical Edification’ in *The Writing of History*, pp. 269-283 [282].

be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place.’⁵⁴ Essentially a non-place is a non-social system of meaning. In the first volume of *The Mystic Fable*, de Certeau contrasts these with other systems of meaning. Like Taylor he traces the origin of such systems to the demystification of the world and of God.⁵⁵ For de Certeau, however, there first emerged many non-places which were each a ‘restoration project’ drawing from ecclesial heritage the idea of a unified whole and attempting to unite society by ‘constructing an order amid the (new) contingencies of history’.⁵⁶ But during the seventeenth century one particular system, identified with rational empiricism, produced by the closed system Taylor calls the Modern moral order. de Certeau writes of it as a ‘a bubble of panoptic and classifying power, a module of imprisonment that makes possible production of an order’.⁵⁷ Even as this order came to dominate the social narrative an alternate was present, *la mystique*.

La mystique, as de Certeau uses it, should be taken to be a technical term. This is discussed in the ‘Author’s Note’ of the English translation of *The Mystic Fable Volume 1*.

This term cannot be rendered accurately by the English word ‘mysticism’, which would correspond rather to the French *le mysticisme*, and be far too generic and essentialist a term to convey the historical specificity of the object of this study. There is no need here to retrace the steps by which *la mystique*, the noun, emerged from the prior adjective, *mystique*. But it may be of some interest to note that this grammatical promotion has its parallel in English, in the development of such terms as ‘mathematics’ or ‘physics’, fields of inquiry of increasing autonomy, also taking their names from an adjectival forerunner.⁵⁸

La mystique for de Certeau is not a body of beliefs, it is an autonomous ensemble of discursive and experiential practices. *The Mystic Fable* is de Certeau’s apology for *la*

⁵⁴ Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe, (London and New York: Verso, 1995), pp. 77-78. Originally published as Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux, Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992).

⁵⁵ de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol. 1*, p. 4.

⁵⁶ de Certeau, ‘Mystic Speech’, *Heterologies*, p. 87.

⁵⁷ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 111.

⁵⁸ Michael B. Smith, ‘Translator’s Note’ in Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable vol. 1. The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. ix-x. Smith adopts the anglicized *mystics* in italics, but I prefer to retain the French. Therefore, I will use *la mystique* in italics to reference this particular subject concept.

mystique.⁵⁹ It is, for de Certeau, ‘a field that might have won a name alongside metaphysics’.⁶⁰ As de Certeau introduces it, it is an alternate epistemology bound to and at times hostile towards but never eliminated by modernity. The modern non-place produced a cosmos in which God was absent. In contrast, *la mystique* embodied hearing ‘the vanishing entity’, in the midst of modern silence.⁶¹ The language and practices of *la mystique* were aimed at giving voice to what of the cosmos was lost to inform a particular way of being in the world. The innovative element was that this language and practices did not wholly originate in prior Christianity but were re-appropriations of the modern non-place. Hence, *The Mystic Fable* explores the furtive presence of *la mystique* within and among the rational non-place: ‘these mystics explored all possible modes (both theoretical and practical) of communication, which they viewed as an issue formally separable from the hierarchical organization of knowledge and the validity of statements’.⁶² *La mystique* insists experience cannot be reduced to what is seen, named, and ordered but taking each invested and directed them towards different ends.

The heterological project of de Certeau is evidenced in *The Mystic Fable*. Ward writes that de Certeau explores this mystic space in order to invest in it a contemporary significance. Ward uses the idea of a spiritual space, taken from an essay by de Certeau, to put things into focus.⁶³ The ‘spiritual space’ is another of de Certeau’s non-places, Ward writes.⁶⁴ He contrasts it with the two spaces de Certeau marks out in *The Mystic Fable*, naming the three non-places as the Rational Utopia, the Mystic Utopia, and the

⁵⁹ Marsanne Brammer, ‘Thinking Practice: Michel de Certeau and the Theorization of Mysticism’, *Diacritics* 22.2, (1992), p. 26-37 [28].

⁶⁰ Smith, ‘Translator’s Note’, in de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol.1*, p. x.

⁶¹ de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol.*, p. 4.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶³ He takes the idea of ‘Spiritual Spaces’ from the essay ‘A Variant: Hagio-Graphical Edification’ in *The Writing of History*, pp. 269-283 [282].

⁶⁴ Ward, ‘Spiritual spaces’, p. 501.

Eucharistic Utopia.⁶⁵ Ward's thesis is that de Certeau suggests that both the Rational and the Mystic Utopias are exclusive. The former is locked in a world whose operations are self-grounded and in need of no other explication beyond their self-evidence.⁶⁶ The latter is locked in a 'relation to a historical context which both requires them and denies them the credit of being anything but products of the imagination'.⁶⁷ The Rational Utopia and the Mystic Utopia both extend from a nominalism denying the ability of language to speak of the other (and Otherness) as real.⁶⁸ Like his textual analysis, which sought to present reading as a sort of dialogue between text and reader, de Certeau pursues a heterological approach to overcome the binaries of rational and spiritual and show how the mutual presence of each without the exclusion the other, is not only possible but essential for modern spirituality. One key aspect is that the Spiritual space does not result from a contested and contestable relation between religion and secularity, as it does with Knott. In his analysis, de Certeau frames this as the Eucharistic Utopia, which is analogical: the idea of 'similarity in difference, otherness *within* sameness, presence and absence'.⁶⁹ The image Ward draws from de Certeau as illustration is that of the Christian church as Eucharist: 'Word in the world, produced "the liturgical" combination of a visible community or people (*laos*) and a secret action (*ergon*) or mystery', or a combination of the body and spirit, the secular and sacred.⁷⁰

The significance for my thesis is that Ward shows that that spiritual *topoi* govern de Certeau's notion of the production of space.⁷¹ Spirituality and spiritual spaces are not at the centre of de Certeau's work; they make that work possible. The question, however,

⁶⁵ Ward, 'Spiritual spaces', p. 502.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 503.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 506.

⁶⁸ de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, pp. 91-93.

⁶⁹ Ward, 'Spiritual spaces', p. 507.

⁷⁰ Ward, 'Spiritual spaces', p. 508; citing de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable Vol. 1*, p. 83.

⁷¹ Graham Ward, 'Michel de Certeau's Spiritual spaces', *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.2, (2002), pp. 501-518 [501]. This was previously published as in *New Blackfriars* 79.932 (1998), pp. 428-442.

that comes from this is one stated by Ward: ‘is de Certeau’s heterological project more than counteractive, more than critique?’⁷² Here Ward raises concerns of an awkwardness in de Certeau’s project, to an extent recognized by Giard and Ahearne.⁷³ By suggesting the necessity of the dialogical relationship between the rational and mystic Ward suggests de Certeau is caught between privileging a theological space that ‘can have no place within his secular modernity-framed, heterological project’ and at the same time marginalizes that same theological space.⁷⁴ Since it is my argument that de Certeau’s spatiality offers a beneficial structure to analyse the visibility of religion and religious phenomena in the midst of the public sphere, it is not entirely necessary for me to comment on this theology. It is enough for my purposes to acknowledge that de Certeau offers a conceptually stronger foundation for a spatial approach to religion than Knott, which it does by framing the relationship between religion and secular as both one of tension but also one of mutuality. On this point, the ambiguity that Ward references as de Certeau’s ‘unending heterology’ is actually key.⁷⁵ The dialogical nature of de Certeau’s spatiality situates the spiritual space as utopia (that following Louis Marin on Thomas More, should be understood as both *outopia* [no place] and *eutopia* [a good place]), the horizon of the continual discourse between the Same and the Other is possible and essential.⁷⁶

Ward notes that, in aiming for the contemporary significance of spiritual spaces, de Certeau fails to engage the participatory practices of Christian believing, instead

⁷² Ward, ‘Spiritual spaces’, p. 507.

⁷³ Ward, ‘Spiritual spaces’, pp. 509-513; also, Luce Giard, ‘Cherchant Dieu’ (Introduction) in Michel de Certeau, *Le faiblesse de croire*, ed. Luce Giard, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), pp. i-xix [iv]; and, Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 128.

⁷⁴ Ward, ‘Spiritual spaces’, p. 501.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 512-513.

⁷⁶ Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial Play*, trans. Robert A. Volrath, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1983), p. xv; cited by Ward, ‘Spiritual spaces’, p. 501.

emphasizing the importance of sacramental space and the body as palimpsestic.⁷⁷ No doubt this is problematic if one is looking to de Certeau as a resource for exploring the potential of his spatiality regarding the worship that constitutes and performs the embodied spirituality of Christianity, but as it turns towards his cultural studies and a spatial approach to locating religion in society there is reason for optimism. These spaces de Certeau constructs are hermeneutical in character and practical in economy. This makes them amenable as a way of speaking towards the material and metaphorical of space, the body, the relational and dynamic nature of space, all of which are necessary components to a cultural analysis of religious spatiality.⁷⁸ The theological background of de Certeau's spatiality contributes a necessary contrast to Knott's secular spatial theory and method, which constrains religion in order to facilitate her notion of the spatial field. De Certeau's theory allows for an analysis of the possible mutual presence of religion and secularity, instead of positing them as always in contention. What this means is significant for the question of religious spatiality and for the question the space of religion in the public sphere, especially in terms of challenging the distinctions between public and private as well as reason and belief.

Michel de Certeau's spatial approach to religion reflects a broader heterological project that is rooted in a hermeneutical and dialogical philosophy. This is present both in his method of research and theory of knowledge. The investigation into *la mystique* relies upon identifying and investigating the plurality and relationship between various types of knowledge and various ways of being. Implicit in that study but not explicitly articulated is de Certeau's concept for investigating the production and consumption of cultures. This is the subject of *Culture in the Plural* and *The Practice of Everyday Life*. It is in these works, though primarily the latter, that de Certeau formalizes the concepts

⁷⁷ Ward, 'Spiritual spaces', p. 515.

⁷⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, Chapter 1, pp. 11-34.

and terminology of his spatiality. Understanding de Certeau's spatiality as rooted in his broader project and informed by his theology contributes to the goal of this thesis by indicating that his religiously informed spatiality not only accounts for religious phenomena in the midst of secular society, but can even contribute to an understanding of secular locations of meaning and practices.

4.4. Conclusion

Michel de Certeau's spatial approach follows from his critique that normative and empirically descriptive systems of interpretation obscure alterity. He writes that representations generally reproduce their own system of meaning, that collecting and interpreting evidence 'actually means manufacturing objects'.⁷⁹ He suggests how such operations may, in their relations to forms of alterity which they place outside themselves, become caught up in the process of alteration. The alteration results in the other becoming as a fantasm, hauntingly present but untouchable, while the representation establishes 'signs offered up for specific kinds of treatment'.⁸⁰ It is as a corrective to one such alteration that de Certeau proposed *la mystique* as a present alternative, though perhaps unseen, epistemology emerging alongside the rational utopia of secularism. The problem that is encountered is how to articulate the presence of divergent spaces and the vitality that can come from their mutual presence.

To resolve this de Certeau suggested, using a clinical principle from psychoanalysis, that understanding anything must begin with an examination of the apparatus that lies behind practices and the use of symbols, which together culminate into everyday

⁷⁹ de Certeau, 'The Historiographical Operation' *The Writing of History*, p. 73.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

practice and culture.⁸¹ He operates on the idea that, in being able to identify the apparatus (belief and desire) that structure non-places and direct how people consume or use things, it can become possible to give understanding to the meaning attributed to practices and artefacts. This then leads to an ability to see the identity of otherness and give expression to people and cultures in a meaningful way.

Michel de Certeau identifies the apparatus as a combination of two sets of oppositional terms, writing ‘to avoid this reduction’, a flattening of being into an image; ‘I resort to a distinction between *tactics* and *strategies*’ as operations whose analysis can give meaning to practices as the voice of being.⁸² Both are types of practices: strategies are organizing principles, while tactics are the inventive practices of people.⁸³ But these must be understood within the context of *topoi* that Ward references as spatial categories that de Certeau developed to give structure to his analysis of plural culture as reflected in his analysis of *la mystique*. These spatial categories are the second set of terms, *lieu* (place) and *espace* (space). In the general introduction of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau sets out the basic structure of the first terms. It is not until much later in the book that *lieu* and *espace* are treated as objects of enquiry in their own right. It is a combination of these concepts that allows for spatiality to be seen as a combination of belief and practices as the places of meaning they create, allowing for the heterological aim of de Certeau’s cultural analysis. The identification and crucial

⁸¹ Although I cannot find any particular reference to Louis Althusser in de Certeau, his use of apparatus resonates with that of Althusser in his ‘Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d’État (Notes pour une recherche)’ [Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards and Investigation], *La Pensée* 151 (1970), pp. 3-38; also, in *Positions* (Paris: Les Éditions sociales, 1976), p. 67-125. Therein, Althusser advances the dual thesis that ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence and ideology as having a material existence. Where de Certeau differs from Althusser is not in the dual thesis but in the location of ideology. It is ideologies that de Certeau associates with the systemic places of production which he differentiates from individuals and their practices. Instead of ideology de Certeau would substitute the terms desire and belief when referencing the everyday practices of people.

⁸² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life Vol. 1*, p. xix.

⁸³ *ibid.*

distinction between strategy and tactics as procedures or operations and between *lieu* and *espace* as locations of meaning is central to the argument that a spatial approach can contribute to the study of religion in its relation to the public sphere.

Chapter Five

5. The Spatial Theory of Michel de Certeau: *Lieu* and *espace*

As part of the process of opening up social space and its relations to an analysis of religion, de Certeau's categories of *lieu* and *espace* provide an analytical frame to the dialectically interconnected aspects of social space. De Certeau did not deem them a simple typology.¹ Even though they are the organizations of places that result from narrative actions they are different in form and function. One or the other comes to the fore in different times and locations to a greater or lesser extent. De Certeau's intention in identifying the distinction was not theoretical or abstract, but concrete, laying out the codes and taxonomies of the spatial order in order to consider embodied stories, opening up their elementary forms and practices organizing space.²

5.1. De Certeau's *Lieu and espace*

De Certeau's spatial theory is marked by the use of two sets of oppositional terms. *Lieu* and *espace* are one pair; the other, strategy and tactics. The conceptual significance of these pairings emerges not only from what they signify but also from the relationship that exists between them. I consider the proper difference between strategy and tactics in Chapter 6, but note it here to support the understanding of *lieu* and *espace*. The essential passage where de Certeau defines strategy reads:

J'appelle stratégie le calcul (ou la manipulation) des rapports de force qui devient possible à partir du moment où un sujet de vouloir et de pouvoir (un entreprise [sic] une armée, une cité, une institution scientifique) est isolable. Elle postule un lieu susceptible d'être circonscrit comme un propre et d'être la base d'où gérer les relations avec une extériorité de cibles ou de menaces (les clients ou les concurrents, les ennemis, la campagne autour de la ville, les objectifs et objets de la recherche, etc.)

[I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relations that become possible when a subject of will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be set apart. It

¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. Steven Rendall, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 117

² *ibid.*, p. 116

postulates a *lieu* to be delimited as its own (*un propre*) that can serve as the base from which to manage relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.)]³

Strategy is a function of, emerging from and reinforcing, *lieu*. De Certeau identifies that *lieu* is the organization of *un propre* [the clean]. It 'is a place where the ambiguities of the world have been exorcised' to make it available 'for a partial but regulatable operation'.⁴ While *lieu* is ordered and complete, this can only be achieved by closing off and maintaining it from externalities or alterity, although this is only ever a 'postulate'. It is in reality not wholly ordered. This is an important point to which de Certeau consistently returns. De Certeau notes an internal law and fact. The law of *un propre* rules in *lieu*: elements taken into consideration are equal, ordered, and homogenous, brought into order through the creative power of strategy. Although, the fact is that the elements of place are open to being appropriated.

Lieu and strategy are contrasted with tactics and *espace*:

Par rapport aux stratégies (dont les figures successives bougent ce schéma trop formel et dont le lien avec une configuration historique particulière de la rationalité serait aussi à préciser), j'appelle tactique l'action calculée que détermine l'absence d'une propre. Alors aucune délimitation de l'extériorité ne lui fournit la condition d'une autonomie. La tactique n'a pour lieu que celui de l'autre. Aussi doit-elle jouer avec le terrain qui lui est imposé tel que l'organise la loi d'une force étrangère.

[In contrast with strategies (whose successive figures introduce a certain movement into this formal schema and whose link with a specific historical configuration of rationality should be clarified), a *tactic* is a calculation determined by the absence of a proper centre. No delimitation of exteriority, then, provides it with the conditions for autonomy. The place of the tactic is the place of the other.]⁵

Tactics produce *espace*. The relationship of *espace* to tactics is different than that of *lieu* to strategy. The pressing point of contrast de Certeau identifies is that tactics are a practice without 'a proper locus'. What is meant by this is that tactical practices exist within and use the resources of the *lieu*. Unlike strategies, tactics are principles of action undertaken by those designated as exterior to or others from *lieu*. De Certeau deems that

³ Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien I: arts de faire* (Paris: Union Générale des éditions, 1980), p. 85 (translation is my own).

⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 134.

⁵ de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien I*, p. 86 (translation is my own).

any *espace* is other than the order of *lieu*. *Espace* is created by the inventive use of elements different to their ordered intention. It is the result of an act to remake *lieu* into a different space of meaning, an *espace*. Even as both strategy and tactics are ‘a production, a *poiēses*’ (de Certeau adapts from the Greek verb, to create or invent), there are important contrasts that relate importantly to *lieu* and *espace*.⁶ One specific contrast is that strategies are done and *lieu* maintained in the ‘open’, whereas tactical production is ‘a hidden one’, as ‘it is scattered over areas defined and occupied by (strategic) systems of “production”’.⁷ Consequently, *lieu* are generally and clearly visible, whereas *espace* are less obvious, contributing to a sense of absence. This visibility and the hiddenness of *espace* is reflected in strategy and tactics as spatial calculations. Strategies seeks to construct *lieu* as the dominant social imaginary, frame, and idea of fullness. Tactics are quiet and sometimes hidden methods and means to evade, resist or oppose the *lieu*. The logic of *espace* is not obvious. Understanding this underlying logic of the practices supports the predictive capacity of the spatial approach. Identifying it and its relation to the visible *lieu* requires a more precise understanding of the spatial productions.

5.1.1. *Lieu* and *espace*: material or metaphorical locations of meaning

Moving on to explore *lieu* and *espace*, the following is the key passage in which *lieu* and *espace* are defined:

Au départ, entre espace et lieu, je pose une distinction qui délimitera un champ. Est un lieu l'ordre (quel qu'il soit) selon lequel des éléments sont distribués dans des rapports de coexistence. S'y trouve donc exclue la possibilité, pour deux choses, d'être à la même place. La loi du « propre » y règne : les éléments considérés sont les uns à côté des autres, chacun situé en un endroit « propre » et distinct qu'il définit. Un lieu est donc une configuration instantanée de positions. Il implique une indication de stabilité.

Il y a espace dès qu'on prend en considération des vecteurs de direction, des quantités de vitesse et la variable de temps. L'espace est un croisement de mobiles. Il est en quelque sorte animé par l'ensemble des mouvements qui s'y déploient. Est espace l'effet produit par les opérations qui

⁶ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xii.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. xii.

l'orientent, le circonstancient, le temporalisent et l'amènent à fonctionner en unité polyvalente de programmes conflictuels ou de proximités contractuelles. L'espace serait au lieu ce que devient le mot quand il est parlé, c'est-à-dire quand il est saisi dans l'ambiguïté d'une effectuation, mué en un terme relevant de multiples conventions, posé comme l'acte d'un présent (ou d'un temps), et modifié par les transformations dues à des, voisi-nages successifs. A la différence du lieu, il n'a donc ni l'univocité ni la stabilité d'un « propre ».

[At the outset, between *lieu* and *espace*, I make a distinction which will delimit a field. Place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of co-existence. There is no possibility of two things being in the same location. The law of the 'propre' rules in *lieu*: the elements taken into consideration are *beside* one another, located in its own 'propre', distinct and defined. *Lieu* is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.

An *espace* exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. *Espace* is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense activated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. *Espace* occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and lead it to function in a polyvalent unity of conflicting programmes or contractual proximity. *Espace*, compared to *lieu*, is as the word when it is spoken, that is when it is caught in the ambiguity of actualization, and transformed into a term that depends upon different conventions and situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations that come from successive contexts. Unlike *lieu*, it has none of the univocity or stability of a 'propre'.]⁸

In short, de Certeau writes providing his well-known phrase '*l'espace est un lieu pratiqué*' [space is a practised place].⁹ The nuance of this construction is often lost, since place and space are often thought to be material or metaphorical locations, whereas de Certeau's construction suggests that each is a situational and substantial determination of a story, in which belief and desire are central factors.

The way that will be used to situate the discussion of *lieu* and *espace* will require a shift in language. *Lieu* and *espace* have been referred to primarily as spatial productions or as locations of meaning. Given the sense in which they have been referred to above, this will be changed to spatial artefacts or to artefacts of meaning.¹⁰ I appeal for this shift

⁸ de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien I*, p. 208 (translation is my own).

⁹ *ibid.* (translation is my own).

¹⁰ The word 'artefact' is used here in both senses of the term ascribed in the Oxford English Dictionary: (1) an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest; and, (2) something observed in a scientific investigation or experiment that is not naturally present but occurs as a result of the preparative or investigative procedure. The first sense allows for a reading of *lieu* and *espace* as productions of human activity easily attributed as material locations, while the second sense of the word allows for a metaphorical interpretation. *Lieu* and *espace* are not normally perceived markers of cultural production, but it is not that they are absent so much as they are only made apparent as accessible notions via the application of the spatial critique. Also, the second sense of the term appeals to something not naturally present which may be taken to mean something that is visibly present or obviously present whereas the theological dimension of the spatial categories are neither and only become visible as a result

since the language of artefacts is more accurate given the dimensions of *lieu* and *espace* as spatial productions. Another reason is that it allows more easily for de Certeau's sense of these artefacts of meaning to differ from locations of meaning as they are figured in Knott's spatial theory.

The use of the term 'location' implies that the meaning of *lieu* or *espace* is associated with a material or physical object or setting such as a government building, temple, home, or perhaps even associated with a particular position or institutionally recognized qualification. But to delimit spatial meaning in this way leads to an over-identification of meaning with the physical. Delimiting the space of religion this way leads to an unhelpful inferential link between religion and certain practices or beliefs because of the presence or absence of some symbol. This problem affects interpretations of the public presence of religion when that is identified with symbols, institutions, or supposedly religious 'elites'.

In the case of religion, this can occur when particular symbols (such as buildings or items of dress) are equated with religion, as in the case of the Canadian province of Québec, with Bill No. 60 and Bill No. 21.¹¹ These religious locations or symbols can become easily reified.¹² This raises a particular problem regarding spatiality and religion. Spatiality, as we see, is lent meaning by its social and cultural context. The mere presence of a symbol should not be equated with a religious space or religious

of applying de Certeau's theologically oriented spatial analysis. Meanwhile, meaning is meant in both a prescriptive and descriptive sense.

¹¹ Bill No. 60 'Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, and providing a framework for accommodation requests' 1st Session, 40th Legislature, Québec, 2013 (never assented to) [Hereafter Bill 60] and Bill No. 21 'An Act respecting the laicity of the State' 1st Session, 42nd Legislature, Québec, 2019 (Assented, 16th June 2019), SQ2019, c. 12 [Hereafter Bill 21].

¹² Gerd Baumann warns against this and offers a formulation for multi-relational thinking in *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 140-141.

practice. What this means is that with regard to religious symbols we must exercise caution before we equate them with the presence of religion.

A different problem that can stem from identifying religious meaning with the presence of certain symbols or structures is that it reinforces a problematic divide between public and private, where what is visible or structural is attributed to what is public and therefore social, while what is unseen is attributed to what is private and therefore internal. This has significance when considering the question of religion and its relation to society.¹³ And this problem is magnified if the physical manifestations of religion are taken as representative of the whole of a religious tradition, as when sacred sites are viewed as representative of a religion when it is demonstrably clear that such sites cannot fully bear the marks of their religious tradition.¹⁴ When *lieu* and *espace* are conceived especially as material (physical) or metaphorical (imagined) locations of meaning, they are insufficient categories for an analysis of religion.

¹³ A good example of this problematic distinction is the discussion surrounding Canada's Province of Alberta Bill No. 44 'The Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism Amendment Act' 2nd Session, 27th Legislature, Alberta, 2009 (Assented, 4th June 2009), SA2009, c..26 [Hereafter Bill 44]. The bill seems to try to strike a balance between the purview of state education and parental rights for child education. In the bill 'sexual orientation' was included for the first time as protected ground from discrimination under Alberta's human rights legislation. The bill also reaffirmed a portion of Alberta's *School Act* giving parents the right to remove their children from courses of study or educational programs that dealt explicitly with religion or sexuality, adding 'sexual orientation' to the list. The ensuing debate between critics and supporters evidenced the problematic over-identification of meaning with symbols or structures. For example, see Clark Banack 'Conservative Christianity, Anti-statism, and Alberta's Public Sphere: The Curious Case of Bill 44' in Solange Lefebvre and Lori G. Beaman (eds.), *Religion in the Public Sphere: Canadian Case Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), pp. 257-274.

¹⁴ Knott discusses this with the example of servants of Krishna and Vrindivan in *The Location of Religion* (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]), p. 13ff. Evidence that the identification of location with religious meaning has been challenged in the emphasis on connecting the meaning of religious ritual to the human body in conjunction with or as opposed to place. See especially Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); also Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987). Knott extends her critique to the whole conception of the sacred and space in her third chapter.

5.1.2. Approaches to space at the time of de Certeau

De Certeau is aware of the tension between the situational and substantial views of space that were introduced in the Chapter 3 section ‘Opening up space’. Essentially, these can be distilled to two ideas. The first is that space and spatial productions are material and objective, while the second is that space(s) are metaphorical or experiential. The situational or material view builds on the idea of Cartesian space, the space of physics, and the typical notion of spaces and places as independent and outside of us. This itself can be interpreted two ways. One takes a Newtonian idea of space as empty, without any point of reference.¹⁵ The other is Descartes’ proper space, where space is a plenum, occupied at all points by being.¹⁶ For Descartes, space and the nature being, even divine being, are interwoven. Despite their differences, Jacobson writes, ‘ultimately, Newton and Descartes both conceive of space largely as a sort of generic location marker for bodies’.¹⁷ In either case, space is something that is separated from people as thinking things and accessible through rational principles.¹⁸ Space, therefore, has a meaning of its own. It is part of the structure of the world in which meaning or at least knowledge of existence may be found.

¹⁵ Isaac Newton., *Principia*. trans. Andrew Motte. Rev. Trans. Florian Cajori. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1934). Of Newton’s view Jacobson writes, ‘This space exists independently of any and all objects as well as of matter whether formed or formless. As such, it is empty and without any adhering properties, such as color, texture, or even extension. It is utterly undifferentiated. As always similar and immovable, absolute space also must be understood as existing regardless of whether or not anyone is present to acknowledge its existence. It neither relies in any way on a percipient or knowing being for its existence or persistence, nor can it be changed by any activity of such a being. Far from being able to exert an influence on this space, we cannot even perceive this absolute space, because there is no substance to it such that it could be noticed by any one of our sensory organs.’ Kirsten E. Jacobson, ‘Being at Home: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Space’ (2006) Thesis, The Pennsylvania State University, (ProQuest Information and Learning, 2007), p. 10.

¹⁶ Jacobson, ‘Being at Home’, p. 18; citing Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* 4th ed. and trans. Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 1999), p. 64

¹⁷ Jacobson, ‘Being at Home’, p. 21.

¹⁸ While Newton’s view of absolute space is generally considered to have been eclipsed and Descartes notion of proper space is seemingly at odds with current theories of perception, Jacobson argues that at their heart there are many perception theories in cognitive science that are still attuned to Descartes proper space. Jacobson, ‘Being at Home’, pp. 33-39.

The metaphorical or experiential take on space is traced to a short essay written in 1768, ‘Concerning the Ultimate Foundation of the Differentiation of Regions in Space’, this idea of space as the background to life was challenged by Kant.¹⁹ Knott suggests that even as Kant accepts Descartes’ proper space to support his distinction between *noumenal* and *phenomenal*, in this he also sets out the terms for space as experiential.²⁰ Prior to de Certeau the experiential view of space had been clearly outlined by Merleau-Ponty in his discussion of geometrical and anthropological space in *Phenomenology of Perception*.²¹ I summarized Merleau-Ponty’s concept in the section ‘Constitution of space’, but it is worth briefly repeating because de Certeau contrasts it with his own position. In *Phenomenology*, Merleau-Ponty defines geometric space as a homogenous and isotropic spatiality, ‘indifferent to its contents’ and having ‘provided phenomena with a setting of inert existence’.²² Then, he differentiates anthropological space as an experience in relation to the world; it is the relation between the subject and space.²³ As with Descartes and Kant, Merleau-Ponty tries to differentiate between the objective outside and a situational experience, and privileges space as existential and existence as spatial.²⁴ Merleau-Ponty argues that experience is a relation to the world that precedes any distinction between rationality and experience and, therefore, that our perception is unable to be dissociated from the direction of existence ordered by place, and situated by desire.²⁵ Merleau-Ponty turns the situational view of space and the relation of perception to space on its head conceiving of space as relational.

¹⁹ In G. B. Kerford and D. E. Walford (trans. and introduction), *Kant: Selected Pre-Critical Writings and Correspondence with Beck* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), pp. 36-43; cited by Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 16.

²⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 16, n.22.

²¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. Colin Smith, (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); originally *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945)].

²² *ibid.*, p. 63.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 311.

²⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 117.

²⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 331-332.

5.1.3. De Certeau's addition to thinking on place and space

Michel de Certeau's position on space and place similarly depends on trying to relate the physical elements of existence with the meaning attributed by experience. He very obviously does not define space as an abstract background but does not accept Merleau-Ponty's privileging perception. Rather, he differentiates *lieu* and *espace* as indices denoting determinations of stories'.²⁶ These stories are to be seen as a type of labour that constantly transforms an environment and in turn takes environments as the site for creative practices.²⁷ In addition, these stories 'organize the play of changing relationships between places and spaces', the forms of which 'are numberless'; spaces are subject to but not identified with their relations.²⁸ The distinction turns on the question: How are stories incorporated into the spatial theory?²⁹

In answering this question, Buchanan suggests the path forward is to dig into de Certeau to expose a Lacanian scheme. He, like Tom Conley, understand Lacan and psychoanalysis to be the key to understanding de Certeau.³⁰ On this basis, Buchanan perceives in de Certeau an uptake of Lacan over Merleau-Ponty in order to get past the purely perceptual notion of space into a more epistemological consideration.³¹ It is true that de Certeau sets aside Merleau-Ponty, but he does not wholly reject his phenomenological conception of space. He accepts the categories but then uses their limitations to define *pratique*, practices or operations, as not limited to geometrical space, and as more than anthropological space in his essay 'Walking in the City'.³² de

²⁶ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 118.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 109.

³⁰ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 109; also, Tom Conley, 'Translators Introduction' in Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. vii-xxiv, [xxiv n7).

³¹ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 109.

³² Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 93, de Certeau cites Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976 [1945]), pp. 332-333.

Certeau wants more from the given of spatiality than perception, which phenomenology does not seem able to provide given its partiality against metaphysics. Also, Buchanan suggests that what de Certeau wants in addition to the rationalist account of the apprehension of space is a dimension that can account for uses of place that fall outside secular reason.³³ This is exactly the point that de Certeau aims for through his insistence on stories or myth as a determination of spatiality – the sense that place and space are neither merely physical and material, nor wholly metaphorical and experiential, but that they are bound to a metaphysics through story and myth.³⁴ This counts against Buchanan’s argument from this point on. In pursuing de Certeau’s incorporation of stories he misinterprets Lacan and psychoanalysis as the foundation instead of properly situating them as a hermeneutical application of the anthropological principle de Certeau drew from his studies of *la mystique*. This has the negative impact of prejudicing his conclusions against an interpretation of place and space as anything beyond an identification with the naming and storytelling of culture.³⁵

How does the spatial theory incorporate stories, the myth and the fable? An entry to de Certeau on this point is to recall the autobiographical reflection of ‘Seeing Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center’.³⁶ Looking down he wonders if he is really seeing the city of New York. He finds in this a parable for the problem of the relation of theory to practice, of the object and the experience, that is the difference between the city from above and the city from down there.³⁷

³³ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 110.

³⁴ This metaphysics refers to the theological background which informs de Certeau’s anthropology and his notions of agency, resistance and subjectivity, and otherness.

³⁵ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 124.

³⁶ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 91.

³⁷ It is this reflection that equips de Certeau with a trope, others being that of text and the reader or language and its use, that he uses in his epistemological reflections. de Certeau frequently moves between these various analogies often multiplying them over one another to emphasize his point. As I engage with de Certeau I will endeavour to limit any repetition of these phrases. This is the same parallel that de Certeau uses in his cultural studies. See, Michel de Certeau, *La culture au pluriel*, ed. and introduction 152

Given that the subject of this thesis is the space of religion, this difference will be exemplified using something closer to the topic. In a chapter entitled ‘The Inversion of What Can Be Thought’, de Certeau uses the case of religion to discuss *lieu* and *espace*. The context for the questioning is a consideration of the supposed waning of Christianity in society. In searching for a way to express the idea of the meaning of religion (*espace*), he problematizes the notion of religious fact.³⁸ Is the religious fact the experience of *espace*? Or are the claims of religion, as they are systematized in the structure and institutions of religion? The problem de Certeau finds is that the life of religion, the arrangement of elements that make a religion what it is, the actually experienced vitality, are not contained in the model of religion that is usual to social and cultural theory. He writes, ‘who will tell us the precise relation ... between a waning of Christian practices and a spiritual vitality that was perhaps invested into other modes of expression ...’.³⁹ Lives cannot be represented in this way; they cannot be read or truly mapped – there is always something missing. The irony is that it is very precisely the effort to define religious fact, often by religious practitioners, leads to much confusion over religion.⁴⁰ This view from above is too isolated a vantage point to give sufficient scope to religious vitality. To redress this de Certeau inserts the idea of story, contrasted against what Merleau-Ponty calls memory, as the necessary element that connects the

Luce Giard, (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1994, [original, Union Générale d’Éditions, 1974]); Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, trans. Tom Conley, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2001 [1997]).

³⁸ de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, pp. 139ff.

³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 139-140.

⁴⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p 118-121 In a section where de Certeau considers the difference between what he calls ‘maps’ of the city and ‘tours’ as foundations for a state of knowledge of the city he concludes, ‘The map, a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a “state” of geographical knowledge, pushes away into its prehistory or into its posterity, as if into the wings, the operations of which it is the result or the necessary condition. It remains alone on the stage. The tour describers have disappeared.’ [p. 121].

practices as the necessary condition for identifying meaning.⁴¹ It is not the model of religion nor the explicit religious practices that are the artefact of meaning, although it is by practices that the myth renews its meaning and by which its meaning may be found.

De Certeau distinguishes fact or phenomena (*lieu*) from vitality (*espace*), noting that the facts themselves are not necessarily imbued with meaning. From this, the conclusion can be drawn that de Certeau qualifies a difference between the artefacts of meaning and the designated facts. Religion can be seen from above as a living category only because we are able, through religious *espace*, to see it from below, in the particular ways that its story is manifested. This spatial distinction manifests itself in de Certeau in many ways. Applying the analogy of the city to the distinction, on the one hand there is the concept of the city, which, ‘like a proper name’, allows for consistency and order, even a level of comprehension, in an otherwise boundless situation; on the other there is the experience of the city, which is transitory, creative, dynamic, and as such has ‘no (obviously) readable identity’.⁴²

Faced with the challenge of understanding the city given the difference between the facts of everyday practice and the view from above, de Certeau wonders how the city can be conceived if not from a top-down objective perspective.⁴³ We have seen, however, this similar refrain in de Certeau’s hermeneutical methodology and in his religious philosophy. As de Certeau articulates the problem, ‘there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences’.⁴⁴ The solution is to engage *lieu* and *espace* as artefacts of meaning or as ‘ways of being’, or stories (myth or fable), rather than ‘states

⁴¹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 122; Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 235.

⁴² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 94-95.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 118.

of being'. This is what is meant by the determinations of spatiality, *lieu* and *espace*, and what strategy and tactics are to codify. The extension of this approach is to focus on 'ways of seeing' what is seen rather than simply on what is seen,⁴⁵ and this is how de Certeau's approach resonates with the New Visibility theory.

In that same piece, 'The Inversion of What Can Be Thought', de Certeau is also critical of overidentifying the vitality and its apprehension with mental and social experience, being critical of the late-modern identification of subjective meaning with those experiences. While de Certeau insists that there are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences, he does not reduce *espace* into something only perceived by the subject. De Certeau wants more from spatiality than perception. In the case of religion, it is seen as a living category only because religious *espace* allows it to be seen in the particular ways that its story is manifested. But this nonetheless does not imply that there is no religious fact. If religious meaning is only identified with its mental and social determination, then for a historian such as de Certeau, 'the only possible religious history would be a history of religious *societies*', not religion itself.⁴⁶

De Certeau does not suggest that spatiality is absolute, abstracted from the subject or the place within which it is; on the contrary, it is within spatiality that the subject and the object are brought together and are open to exploration. What his spatiality does not do is to confer ontological status. In questioning the possibility of *de facto* religious meaning on epistemological grounds, de Certeau challenges the identification of that meaning with the physical such as buildings or institutions; meanwhile, it also challenges the identification of religion with its experience and functionality. *Lieu* and *espace* must be understood as artefacts whose meaning is embedded in the stories which

⁴⁵ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, p. 141.

frame the interaction between the spatial subject and the spatial object; stories that are perceived through a consideration of spatial practices. The fact of this matter requires that I preview the discussion of the spatial practices in order to complete the task of outlining de Certeau's approach to spatiality.

De Certeau situates the spatial practices in a fundamental sense of human nature. His view of subjectivity reflects his hesitancy towards modernist structures, and he goes about making this case through different avenues. Buchanan traces the argument through de Certeau's engagement with Lacan.

All spatial practice, de Certeau asserts, must be seen as a repetition – direct or indirect – of that primordial advent to spatiality, as we might now want to call it, namely 'the child's differentiation from the mother's body'. It is through that experience that the possibility of space and of a localization (a 'not everything') of the subject is inaugurated.⁴⁷

From here, the psychoanalytic figuring continues: 'to walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper' (proper here is a noun); where the lack should be understood in a Lacanian sense.⁴⁸ Perhaps the connection is most clear in a few short paragraphs where de Certeau connects spatial practices with Lacan's mirror stage and the child joyfully standing before the mirror seeing itself as one (whole) but also as another (the image with which they identify themselves); concluding, 'to practice place is thus to repeat the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is, in a place, *to be other and to move toward the other.*'⁴⁹ It is precisely this language that leads me to think that the proper frame for spatiality is de Certeau's Ignatian spirituality and *la mystique* and their theological resources for understanding subjectivity. De Certeau's spatial practices are patterned on practices from the history of mysticism that aim to open up a frame in which radical immanence and radical alterity

⁴⁷ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 113; citing de Certeau, *Practice*, p. 109.

⁴⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 103.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

can be connected.⁵⁰ The conclusion that I draw is that de Certeau's spatial theory approaches a theological anthropology, in that spatial practices are in some sense a realization of human nature. This theological dimension emerges most in his notion of agency. Some might object that this view introduces a difficulty by essentializing human activity as religious and not resolving how to draw a line between religion and non-religion. On the one hand, this is with good reason as there is no static boundary between them.⁵¹ On the other hand, this criticism misses the idea that what de Certeau proposes is not essentializing religion but essentializing an anthropology that recognizes how practices realize the myth of which they are an embodiment, whether that story is religious or secular or whatever it might be called. I believe this is a stronger conceptual approach to spaces and practices that avoids the potential difficulty Knott acknowledges, that the very terms of her framework arise out of and are weighted towards a secular intellectual orientation that may (and as I argue in Chapter 7 do) represent religion according to secular humanist ideas.⁵²

In the preceding section, *lieu* and *espace* were introduced as the terms de Certeau uses to differentiate determinations of space. It was argued that de Certeau's notion of these categories cannot be reduced to material and metaphorical locations, but that it includes both as aspects within a delimitation of the two as artefacts of meaning or ways of being. The remainder of this chapter will look at how de Certeau draws upon the artefacts of meaning for cultural discourse. The conclusion of this will set the final terms for the application of the spatial analysis. The application of *lieu* and *espace* as social and cultural categories will contribute to the argument that the distinctions

⁵⁰ Inigo Bocken, 'Everyday Life as Divine Practice: Modernity and Transcendence in Michel de Certeau', in Wessel Stoker and W.L van der Merwe (eds.), *Looking Beyond? Shifting Views of Transcendence in Philosophy, Theology, Art and Politics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 173-192 [174].

⁵¹ See also James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 21

⁵² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 91

between public and private, belief and reason, and sacred and secular are insufficient categories when applied to religion and its relation to the public sphere. It will also be shown that a religious spatiality can be articulated that does not require constraining religion empirically, situating religion and non-religion in wholly oppositional terms, nor excising the sacred as a means of universalization.

It is important to note the implications of the idea proposed. As categories for understanding ways of being, when applied to religion, *lieu* and *espace* are categories that allow for the identification of physical, mental, social, and mythic expressions of being; and are also indices of everyday practices as activities, modes of appropriating cultural products, and accounting for personal experience and transformations.⁵³ In this, de Certeau's spatial categories can serve to account for the differences between religious and non-religious phenomena, the seeing of these phenomena, where they are seen, who is making them seen, and ways that they may be evaluated.⁵⁴

5.2. Searching *lieu* and *espace*

In pursuing the argument and implications noted above, the discussion will take on a different form, one less dialogical and theoretical and instead searching and explicative. Forms of culture as well as ordinary practices will be referenced for the purpose of providing illustrations and cases. How does this spatiality allow for practices to be seen as essential for locating the spaces of religion? This is explained by understanding de Certeau's *lieu* and *espace* as determinations of stories in a dialectic relationship, and at each as a sites of sorts of practices. This consideration will discuss the importance of maintaining the two terms and how this contributes to a spatial view of religion. Then,

⁵³ Luce Giard, 'Introduction: Opening the Possible' in Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural* trans. Tom Conley, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. ix-xv [xi].

⁵⁴ Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl, 'Introduction' in Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), p. 5.

attention will be drawn to the relation of spatiality with time. This consideration of the relation of *lieu* and *espace* as creations reflected a past, present, and future supports their use as concepts for analysing religion.

In the final section of this chapter, I will return to more fully considering story and its relation to de Certeau's spatiality. The reason for this is to explore what de Certeau's philosophy of religion contributes to his understanding of everyday practices. It will question whether the theological tone of his subjectivity is a strength of his spatiality or it is weighted towards religion even as Knott's is weighted against. In the end, it will be argued that while de Certeau's spatiality recognizes an inherent human desire for meaning, the spatial approach allows for a dynamic relationship between plural orders of meaning instead of an oppositional relationship.

5.2.1. The need for two spatial determinations

Why does de Certeau emphasize two essential and distinct spatial determinations, *espace* and *lieu*? In the opening of *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha takes on existing sociological definitions of culture, suggesting that it is 'the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*'.⁵⁵ This 'beyond' is a moment of time and space where primary categorizations such as nationality, gender, class, or religion have given way to an awareness of subject position – including race, gender, sex, generation, institution, and geopolitical locale – to mark identity in the modern world.⁵⁶ For Bhabha, the question of culture requires thinking beyond 'originary and initial subjectivities' to focus on the 'moments or processes' or interstices 'that are

⁵⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 1 [original emphasis].

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

produced in the articulation of cultural differences'.⁵⁷ It is these interstices that provide the field for the defining of society. In articulating this, Bhabha posits a distinction that when attempting to locate culture, the dominant functional or structural theory must give allowance to a more subjective or humanistic theory.⁵⁸

Approaches to social space(s) are built on a similar distinction. Bourdieu talks of social theory 'oscillat[ing] between two seemingly incompatible points of view'.⁵⁹ There are objectivist structural theories of spatiality that focus on social spaces as systems in which all its parts interact – or function – together and in the process form culture and society as a whole, treating 'social facts as things'.⁶⁰ This calls back to the social theory of Émile Durkheim. Casey says of Durkheim that he 'relies on the language of space and spatiality as if it were the only alternative to talk of time, and functioning as a theoretical space in which social systems are located'.⁶¹ Applying this view, spaces represent the cultural norms of a society. Each space is understood as a manifestation of certain cultural values that lend a voice to and guide people in making their choices. Therein social space(s) can be taken as objective representations of a culture. This take on social space(s) accepts a set of stated cultural values as the basis of its physical, mental, and social sites and consequently focusses on studying these sites as a means of exploring those cultural values.⁶² As an example, a spatial study of education on this idea, would involve first studying material or institutional representations of education – educational institutions, halls, textbooks, libraries, student housing – and then making

⁵⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory* 7.1 (1989), pp. 14-25, [14].

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Edward S. Casey, 'How to get from space to place in a fairly short stretch of time: Phenomenological prolegomena', in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), pp. 13-52 [15, n.40].

⁶² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.49; Lily Kong, 'Mapping "new" geographies of religion: politics and poetics in modernity', *Progress in Human Geography* 25.2 (2001), pp. 211-233 [2]; and, Kim Knott, 'Religion, Space and Place. The Spatial Turn in Research and Religion', *Religion and Society: Advances in Research*, 1 (2010), pp. 29-43 [33-35]. Both Kong and Knott apply the idea to analysis of the sacred.

claims about the space of education within a culture and society. Contrasting this is are approaches that view social structures as inherently unequal and representative of only particular and power segments of society.⁶³ For these theorists, there is always the question of systemic issues reinforce inequality. Therein, social spaces are not expressions of cultural values but structures of force and power. On this conflict view, space(s) are sites of contention and opposition or resistance where the under-represented or unseen act to increase their influence or assert their own identity. A key value of these theories is the place of economic production and materialism as economic status and material goods as measures of power in a society.⁶⁴ Therein social space(s) either support or reinforce subject positions. Critical Race Theory is a recent expression of such a take, leading to analysing social space(s) as manifestations of a particular moment of racial force-power dynamics.

de Certeau's spatial theory cannot be clearly situated in either approach, although in that he is not alone. In *Thinking Space*, Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift indicate that place and space as social categories of thinking are increasingly identifying space in and as a process at the interstices between the normative and the subjective.⁶⁵ Crang and Thrift also suggest that the sort of synthesis that spatiality aims to offer between structuralism and subjectivism was best brought together by Henri Lefebvre.⁶⁶ Lefebvre⁶⁷, Andrew Merrifield suggests, is something of a cult figure in contemporary discussions of place

⁶³ Knott, 'Religion, Space and Place', p. 33.

⁶⁴ Lily Kong, 'Geography of Religion: Trends and Prospects' *Progress in Human Geography* 14.3, pp. 355-71.

⁶⁵ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, 'Introduction' in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶ Crang and Thrift, 'Introduction', p. 22.

⁶⁷ I want to make a separate note here to identify a challenge to the reader in the forthcoming few pages. Lefebvre's place cannot be read as a comparable but differential term with de Certeau's *lieu*. Similarly, Lefebvre's space cannot be so compared to de Certeau's *espace*. This can clearly be exemplified in that while de Certeau summarizes 'l'*espace est un lieu pratique*' [space is practiced place]; Lefebvre's notion is summarized (with a wink to de Certeau) by Andrew Merrifield as 'place is a practiced space'. [Andrew Merrifield, 'Place and Space: A Lefebvrian Reconciliation', in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* New Series 18.4 (1993), pp. 516-531 [522 and n.8, 528]. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that all that separates Lefebvre from de Certeau is a reversal of terms.

and space.⁶⁸ There is good reason to give preference to de Certeau over Lefebvre, and considering why explains the importance of de Certeau's two spatial determinations; and, since it is on Lefebvre's conceptualization of space that Knott builds the notion of her spatial field, it supports how de Certeau's spatial theory could strengthen Knott's.⁶⁹

The point of limitation with Lefebvre is connected to his conception of space. The subject of his work is social space. He writes, '(Social) space is a (social) product'.⁷⁰ Reasoning on this, each society has its own mode of production and offers up its own space.⁷¹ He writes,

In reality, social space 'incorporates' social actions, the actions of subjects both individual and collective who are born and who die, who suffer and who act. From the point of view of these subjects, the behaviour of their space is at one vital and mortal: within it they develop, give expression to themselves, and encounter prohibitions; then they perish, and that same space contains their graves. From the point of view of knowing (*connaissance*), social space works (along with its concept) as a tool for the analysis of society.⁷²

Within this scope, place has a minimal role. Later thinkers like Merrifield have expanded the notion of place within Lefebvre.⁷³ Yet, all places are fixed moments of the same space; they are the apparently static material thing-form of space.⁷⁴ 'Place is where everyday life is situated'; it emerges 'through the interpenetration of objective and subjective forces: it is a state of being' and 'formative political-economic processes'; although place and space are different moments (as points of time driven to a completion)⁷⁵ of the same unity.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Andrew Merrifield, 'Henri Lefebvre: A socialist in space' in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (ed.), *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 167-182 [168].

⁶⁹ Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion*, (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]), pp. 35-58.

⁷⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1974) translated as *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991). Here the English is referenced, p. 26.

⁷¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 31.

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Merrifield, 'Place and Space', pp. 516-531.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 521.

⁷⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 22.

⁷⁶ Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 522; citing, Edward Relph, 'Geographical experiences and being-in-the-world' in David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (eds.), *Dwelling, place and environment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 15-31. Merrifield also makes use of David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, 'Dwelling, place and environment: an introduction', in David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer 162

The limitation of Lefebvre (and by extension Knott's spatial approach to religion as she follows Lefebvre) arises as we consider the key to his interpretation. Lefebvre's 'production of space' is a spatialization of Marx's conception of fetishism.⁷⁷ Merrifield describes Lefebvre's analysis as an attempt to understand space, the nature of the urban and everyday life, in the perpetuation and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production.⁷⁸ In this vein, space 'has taken on a reality of its own, a reality clearly distinct from, yet much like, those assumed in the same global process by commodities, money and capital'.⁷⁹ Space is a product wholly situated within and constituent with a society's local and general systems of production and reproduction. To wit, revolutionary and subversive practices are, although ideologically opposed to the dominant structure, part of the self-same social space and its systems of production and reproduction. All spatial practices are disciplined by the same determination. All practices are analysed by the same logic, using the same categories of spatialization without a mechanism for identifying different sorts of practice or different sorts of uses of social products. Therefore, even as Lefebvre's work on everyday life may constitute an important source (as de Certeau acknowledges in his only reference to Lefebvre in *The Practice of Everyday Life*).⁸⁰ It is only possible for Lefebvre to differentiate between practices by invoking differing scales of space. As a result, different sorts of social production and different uses of social products are collapsed into a single categorization; the local and the general are not differentiated by anything but their scale within space.

(eds.), *Dwelling, place and environment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 1-12; and, David Harvey, 'From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of postmodernity', in Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Tom Putnam, George Robertson and Lisa Tickner (eds.), *Mapping the futures – local cultures, global change* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 3-29.

⁷⁷ Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 520.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 520, 522.

⁷⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 26.

⁸⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Live*, p. 205, n. 5.

To an extent this makes sense. Societies are composed of modes of production and a collective sense of itself that allows for communication and agency by furnishing common references, products, and the possible paths that may be pursued.⁸¹ There are countless cases, however, that suggest that societies cannot be conceived as a whole representing all the practices that occur therein; a society is unable to wholly discipline individual practice towards its mode of production. This is the basis of de Certeau's critique of Foucault, which will be seen in the following chapter. There are too many differences between the local and the global to make reliable claims that a spatial analysis of their practices and artefacts of meaning would be translatable. One pertinent difference has to do with the physical, mental, and social resources of practices that contribute to creating meaning. This is where it becomes important to consider de Certeau's *lieu* and *espace* as two determinations of stories.

Lieu is defined as an artefact that is the product of strategic operations characterized by order and stability reflected in de Certeau's notion of *un propre*.⁸² *Lieu* is an order (of whatever kind, global, local, institutional, etc.) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of co-existence, and by its strategic operations that various things are produced and reproduced. These things are physical, mental, and social products such as streets, laws, television programmes, etc. Also, they are the materials that are appropriated through tactical practices of users. These altogether result in the making of *espace*, as an artefact of meaning. Global and local *lieu* are not simply differences of scale as Lefebvre suggests; they are different. Global *lieu* cannot be the same as local *lieu*. Their *un propre*, the elements of their order (i.e. institutions, structures, purposes, ideals, goals, etc.), their practices, and what they produce will

⁸¹ de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. 3.

⁸² see above 'de Certeau's: *lieu* and *espace*'.

differ. Similarly, socially produced *espace* will vary by each context. It is a mistake to predetermine that practices of such space are conditioned by the same modes or production, presuming the same historicity and sociality across all places and spaces.

That *lieu* and *espace* allow for a spatial analysis of the local and the global in a manner that differs from Lefebvre's spatial theory is further supportable. Lefebvre draws attention to the local and global as locations for a spatial analysis that differs only in scale, equating the local with the individual and global with institutional agency and practices. This implies a parallel between individual and institutional agency within the mode of production. This can be shown as problematic if individual and institutional practices and production can be identified as different. This is the case de Certeau is making when he references the case of the ambiguity between the Spanish colonizers and the local Indians.

Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept.⁸³

The point is not to suggest that Lefebvre's spatial analysis is wholly without merit; it is only to suggest that the manner in which he attempts to scale a spatial analysis, by equating such different places and spaces as the local and global, the individual and institutional, is problematic. Also, equating place and space as different aspects of a unity is misplaced. Instead, what is needed is a way of organizing spatial language that takes into consideration the plural characteristics of spaces that exist in any combination of time, place, location, or scale, and considers different types of agency and resources. *Lieu* and *espace* meet this qualification. The evidence is de Certeau's application of the concepts to study a myriad of contexts through scholarly, popular or marginal,

⁸³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiii.

imaginary or political forms of culture, both locally, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, and at a large scale in *Culture in the Plural*.

It is the recognition of the plurality of *lieu* and *espace* and not only of scales of space that makes de Certeau's spatial analysis particularly applicable to a question of the relationship between religion and the public sphere, between religion and secularity. This point, however, turns on whether it can be determined that religion and secularity are different ways of being-in-the-world and not different aspects of a social unity. Knott willingly applies Lefebvre's spatiality because she does not acknowledge the true distinction in this difference. This refers back to Knott's constraining of religion, which was shown to misunderstand religion as a unique way of being not merely a different sort of social practices; especially if we acknowledge that religion is, in the modern West, a particular way of being that contrasts and even opposes the secular. A spatial approach to religion requires a spatial theory that can recognize this plurality, it is of essential importance.

5.2.2. Two senses and tenses of *lieu* and *espace*

Exploring de Certeau's spatial language and the manner in which he connects spatiality with time is central. In *Practice*, Certeau's spatial approach adheres to an understanding of spatiality in two senses. These two senses should not be equated with the spatial terms, as if one sense of the relationship is expressed in *lieu* and the other in *espace*. On the contrary, *lieu* is one spatiality and *espace* another, and each has a relationship with time in two senses. This dual sense of the relationship with time is of a sort of duality that will surface again in the following chapter in the discussion of the spatial practices. The dual sense is the manner in which the practices and the productions are manifestations of subjectivity as part of a story. The present meanings these

manifestations engender are found in artefacts that contain the past (origin) even as they project an as of yet unfulfilled future (purpose). The relation of the spatial to its past and to a projected future is central to any spatial approach to religion as previously noted when discussing Knott.⁸⁴ This section follows de Certeau's identification of these two senses of spatiality.

The first step is to see *lieu* and *espace* as synchronous spaces that contain the past, their origin, within them. This recalls de Certeau's historiographic epistemology that views the past as contained within the present and consequently as a functional component of the present. De Certeau refers to these as 'stratified places' and remarks:

The revolutions of history, economic mutations, demographic mixtures lie in layers within it, and remain there, hidden in customs, rites, and spatial practices. The legible discourses that formerly articulated them have disappeared, or left only fragments in language. This place, on its surface, seems to be a collage. In reality, in its depth, it is ubiquitous. A piling up of heterogenous places. Each on, like a deteriorating page of a book, refers to a different mode of territorial unity, of socio-economic distribution, of political conflicts, and of identifying symbolism ...⁸⁵

Here is seen a similar spatial application to a principle that will be explored in the following chapter. Spatial practices are creative in that they produce *lieu* and *espace* in the present, though at the same time they are conditioned or at least constrained by the past that they retain within them. This past may be identifiable through a careful use of analysis; and yet, in this analysis, it is only pieces of the past of which there had at one time been a 'legible discourse' (signs, symbols, locations, etc.). 'The legible discourses that formerly articulated them have disappeared, or left only fragments in language.'⁸⁶ This resonates with Lefebvre and Knott. While some of this past may be identifiable,

⁸⁴ Gavin Flood writes of the temporal character of religion: 'a picture emerges of traditions defining themselves against each other through time and developing terminologies which articulate their self-understanding. These terms imply tradition-specific narratives of origin and purpose along with practices and observances which constrain an individual's life from birth to death.' Gavin Flood, *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), p. 46 Regarding the temporal relation of spatial theory Knott identifies Foucault, Lefebvre, and Jameson as theorists of who particularly noted the relationship of space to time and history. *The Location of Religion*, pp. 4ff, 23-25.

⁸⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 201.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 201.

Knott writes, ‘the inscriptions of the past may be there to be identified and decoded, but it is the *present* space that shows its face and offers itself for observation’.⁸⁷ And even as the inscriptions of the past may be observable, it also is present as an absence, unknown and unspoken, whose alterity challenges orders and shifts trajectories, as coming out of ‘opaque and stubborn places’.⁸⁸ For this reason, de Certeau writes of present spatiality as ‘a palimpsest’, arguing that to perceive the meaning of *lieu* or *espace* within only its present manifestation, without due consideration given to its past or origins, is to misunderstand it.⁸⁹ De Certeau concludes: the ‘dynamism of space is not restricted to the shimmering simultaneity of the relations that consume it’.⁹⁰

There is an added dimension to the pasts attending in present spatiality; while the present configuration is the outworking of earlier causes, these are themselves extending into the future.⁹¹ So on the one hand, spatiality is, as Doreen Massey suggests, ‘the intersection of configured social relations’ born out of the activity of people and things within and through social space.⁹² On the other hand, and this is a point which is not clear in Lefebvre’s distinction of this Spatial Triad, each form of space is an extension of the past and the present into the future. De Certeau captures this further idea as it relates to both *lieu* and *espace*. The extension of *lieu* is the reproduction and expansion of its story, its ‘order’; it is the expansion of a ‘kind ... that defines every place ... not on the order of a juxtaposition but rather takes the form of imbricated strata’ that is

⁸⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 24.

⁸⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 201.

⁸⁹ Evoking the historiographic critique noted in the previous chapter, he writes of the palimpsest that ‘scientific analysis knows only its most recent text; and even then, the latter is for science no more than the result of its epistemological decisions, its criteria and its goals.’ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 202.

⁹⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 24.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² Doreen Massey, ‘Politics and Space/Time’ in Keith and Pile (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 141-161 [155]. This informs Knott’s idea of the synchronous dynamism of spatiality. It is synchronous because it contains the past within, and dynamic in that they are internally in tension, meanwhile they extend beyond themselves towards other spaces. Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 23-25.

continually enumerated, made ‘available for analysis’ and formed into a ‘manageable surface’.⁹³ The extension of *lieu* takes the simultaneity of past and present order and strives to carry it forward to the future through the expansion of that order to other locations.

This differs from *espace*. With *espace* there is no location that serves as its *propre* and there is no order that sets the frame for its practice and meaning. The extension of *espace* is different, as it occurs in and through the ‘vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables’ to which *lieu*’s order is exposed. The extension of *espace* is through the creativity of its tactics.⁹⁴ Of the difference, de Certeau writes:

in relation to *lieu*, *espace* is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts. In contradistinction to the *lieu*, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper.’⁹⁵

Espace is a palimpsest of past and present, but it does not increase itself in the way of *lieu*. *Lieu* extends itself by ordering locations according to a supposed ahistorical arrangement of things and from these endeavours to order the future. *Espace*, through its tactical practices, creatively appropriates things from *lieu* that it uses to give meaning to the present in a way that echoes the past. An *espace* is a synchronous artefact of past and present; within *espace* the future is unknown, except in the imagination of belief.

The sense of *lieu* and *espace* as encompassing past and present while also moving through the present into the future is an important aspect of a spatial analysis. Space and time ‘cannot be teased apart’.⁹⁶ Therefore, an analysis of spaces of meaning must incorporate a temporal component as well as an account of its physical, mental, and

⁹³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 200.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁹⁵ *ibid.* In the quote I substitute and italicize the technical term for the translation in order to retain consistency.

⁹⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 24.

social location. That a spatial analysis considers the view of spatiality as physical, mental, and social manifestations of artefacts of meaning that are ‘configurations and outworkings of earlier occurrences or causes’, that ‘extend from those, in the past, to other events and consequences in the future’⁹⁷ is key to the argument that a spatial analysis can supplement the discourse of religion in the public sphere. If religion and the public sphere can be argued to be ‘articulated moments in networks of social relations’ then, as Doreen Massey argues, an analysis of their relation requires a sense of space ‘which is extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way’ differing systems of thought and their practices and productions over time.⁹⁸

5.2.3. The spatial role of (religious) belief

The differences between de Certeau and Lefebvre on spatiality extend beyond how each understand social dynamics. This can be clearly explored by considering how each expressed the spatial role of belief. Continuing to make moves towards connecting *lieu* and *espace* to a religious spatiality, this subject will be explored through examining how Lefebvre’s spatial trialectic has been interpreted and applied towards an understanding of religion. Then, de Certeau’s idea will be explained. Firstly, however, to identify the difference: Lefebvre’s locating of belief in his trialectic reflects his Marxian foundation in dialectic materialism; de Certeau’s locating of belief develops from his hermeneutical philosophy of religion.

The difference can be seen when considering the foundations behind Lefebvre’s trialectic and de Certeau’s *lieu* and *espace*. Lefebvre’s trialectic insists social space is

⁹⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 24.

⁹⁸ Doreen Massey, ‘Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place’, in Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, George Robertson and Lisa Tickner (eds.), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 66.

fashioned out of spatial practice.⁹⁹ What Lefebvre calls space is characterized by a continuous social dynamic between the three forces or representations of space, representational space, and spatial practice. Lefebvre suggests that, at one time, religious ideology and religious space were the representation of space, but that over time, with the shift in which social structures possessed authority, this was supplanted by the modern capitalist space.¹⁰⁰ On this view, religion no longer produces its own social spaces but is a social practice within the functional dynamism of modern space. Religion's 'institutional gestures' and the bodily gestures of individuals contribute to the social space, using historically located symbols, thereby investing in everyday life a religious meaning to space.¹⁰¹ Belief for Lefebvre is a spatial practice. What is the function of spatial practice within the larger social space?

Spatial practice serves two purposes in social space. Merrifield points out that, on the one hand, Lefebvre suggests social practice may reinforce social space. What would be seen here is a treatment of religion and religious belief where each are interpreted as perceptions of social space, which while giving expression to religious ideology are nonetheless consistent with the dominant social representation.

Lefebvre insists, spatial practices are fundamental in ensuring continuity and cohesion in terms of overall capitalist social space through the way space is perceived ... these daily spatial practices reproduce a spatial and political hierarchy which I have identified as a space-place dualism. Furthermore, the perpetuation of the global space of capitalism is both acted out, and dependent on, these spatial practices operating as they do. Any challenge to this political power must recognize that the political power of represented space over representational lived space is not a detachment of differentiated forces.¹⁰²

Herein, religious belief is simply another factor that contributes to the production of the general modern social space. On the other hand, Lefebvre argues that spatial practices are not 'determined by an existing system' but have 'potential energies ... capable of

⁹⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 116, 163; also, Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 525.

¹⁰¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 212-213 Lefebvre doesn't seem to give any special significance to the word gesture, rather using it simply to denote action.

¹⁰² Merrifield, 'Place and Space', pp. 525-526; citing Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 366.

diverting homogenized space to their own purposes'.¹⁰³ On this view, Lefebvre could be said to be interpreting religion and religious belief as representations of space within and in conflict with homogenized social space, as a part of its set of relations and forms.

The limitation of Lefebvre on this point is that every representational and gestural move must be interpreted within the same larger social space and as part of the system of production, reproduction, and renewal of that space; even if that part is one of contestation.¹⁰⁴ Religion, then, is visible, insofar as it is part of the relations and forms of the social space. The analytical framework ties Lefebvre's spatiality within a sociocultural theory of religion that associates religion with its gestures and symbols. It can only locate religious space according to its gestures and symbols and identify a lack of religion where these gestures and symbols are absent. The secularization thesis resonates with this idea. But, as the New Visibility theory asks, what if religion and religious believing is present but not visible in the ways it has been historically seen?

De Certeau's hermeneutical approach and its expression in spatiality provides a way to combine the analytic aspect of Lefebvre's spatiality with a conceptual frame open to the possibility of religious phenomena that are not visible in the ways we are used to seeing it. For de Certeau, belief is to *lieu* and *espace* akin to what Alisdair MacIntyre would call their 'tradition'; to make spatiality a product of a social imaginary, as 'the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, etc.'¹⁰⁵ De Certeau's identification of belief as an act of believing moves beyond Lefebvre.

¹⁰³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 391.

¹⁰⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 366ff, Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 526.

¹⁰⁵ See Alisdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); also, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* Gifford Lectures (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); and, Charles

Beliefs, belief, and believing are, for de Certeau, different. Consider two passages from *Practice*. In the first, de Certeau uses believing in the sense that it is an act to ‘tell a truth ... which is not reducible to the particular beliefs that serve it as metaphors and symbols’.¹⁰⁶ Believing is an action of which beliefs serve as metaphors or symbols. But then he writes,

As a first approximation, I define ‘belief’ not as the object of believing (a dogma, a program, etc.) but as the subject’s investment in a proposition, the act of saying it and considering it as true – in other words, a ‘modality’ of the assertion and not its content.¹⁰⁷

De Certeau refuses the association between belief and ‘objects of believing’ or the symbols to which he otherwise referred. The potential confusion lies in the distinction between beliefs and belief. Beliefs are content. Belief is a practice. De Certeau does not distinguish assent as a particular practice unlike other kinds of practice. Instead, he sees belief and believing as variations on a practice, which is to ‘tell a truth’. Belief and believing are more than a reason for doing something, an ascription to gestures and symbols. Believing is declarative practice. This is the connection between belief and the construction of places and spaces as artefacts of meaning.

De Certeau writes of belief as the ‘subject’s investment’ in a proposition, ‘the act of saying it and considering it as true’ or, in other words, a ‘modality of the assertion and not its content’.¹⁰⁸ In the same section, he laments that the ‘capacity for believing seems to be receding everywhere’.¹⁰⁹ By this, it can already be noted that de Certeau does not explain belief as assent to a theory, to a set of convictions, or as a structure of symbols upon which values may be based. Neither does he see belief and believing as a term

Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge, MA. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007) pp. 171-72.

¹⁰⁶ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

denoting a general human practice or even as contextual. Instead, belief and believing is a practice; more than that, it is a capacity for a practice. That capacity is common in the sense that it can be political believing or religious believing, and in that it is a characteristic shared by all people. This is an important point. When de Certeau writes of belief, it is not explicitly religious belief of which he writes. Rather it is a 'force' that is movable and may be directed towards different ends within different ways of thinking.¹¹⁰ To confuse his understanding of belief as a special case that refers only to religion is to misunderstand the idea. De Certeau does attest that belief and believing supports the functioning of 'authority', that it gives life to institutions, and that belief also motivates 'a search for love and/or identity', and consequently that this 'force' has been tried to be 'captured' in order to authorize a system or practices.¹¹¹

The significance of belief as practice for de Certeau is evidenced in pieces such as 'The Weakness of Belief' and 'How is Christianity Thinkable Today?'¹¹² He writes in the former,

feeling the Christian ground on which I thought I was walking disappear, seeing the messengers of an ending, long time under way, approach, recognizing in this my relation to history as a death with no proper future of its own, and a belief stripped of any secure sight, I discover a violence of the instant.¹¹³

The context of the statement is not de Certeau's bemoaning the loss of his own faith, but rather when he perceived within the community of Christianity a final separation of belief as a practice through its final acceptance of the Enlightenment reification of the mind by the adoption of a 'scriptural economy' for belief. This separation of belief from

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* 'People tried to "capture" this force by moving it from one place to another: from the so-called pagan societies they led it toward the Christianity it was supposed to support; later it was diverted from the churches in the direction of political monarchy; and later still from a traditional religiousness to the institutions of the Republic, the national organization of schools and its educational ideology, or various forms of socialism. These "conversions" consisted in capturing the energy of belief by moving it about.'

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² Michel de Certeau, 'The Weakness of Belief: From the Body to Writing a Christian Transit' trans. Saskia Brown, in Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 214-243; also, 'How is Christianity Thinkable Today?' in Graham Ward (ed.), *The Postmodern God* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 142-155.

¹¹³ de Certeau, 'The Weakness of Belief', p. 230.

a practice of believing turned belief into assent; this segregation of mental from physical and social spaces was, for de Certeau, feeling the ground disappear. Belief, then, within de Certeau's thought functions in bringing together a way of thinking about the world with a way of being-in-the-world.

There is a significant difference between de Certeau and Lefebvre on the spatial role of belief. Lefebvre distinguishes between conceived (objective) space and lived (subjective) space. The former is the province of the dominant social space and the latter is passively experienced space. In this equation, lived space is given meaning through the symbolism and practices associated with belief as assent to an ideology. This lived space is always under threat from the conceived, ordered, hegemonic space that tries to intervene, codify, and rationalize.¹¹⁴ This hierarchical framework limits religion to the symbolic and immaterial, associating religion with its gestures and symbols. Religious space is visible by its contestations with the dominant social space. Consequently, in the narrative of the secularization thesis, religion is identifiable by its re-emergence and is to be explored where and how it challenges the secular order. De Certeau makes a comparable distinction between conceived and lived space in *lieu* and *espace*. However, by identifying belief as a way of being-in-the-world distinguished from symbolism and gestures, de Certeau suggests that religious *espace* cannot be identified through its institutional and individual gestures, nor by its use of symbols interpreting and contesting the dominant order. The proper subject for identifying the lived spaces of religion are the particular practices by which the being-in-the-world is active and through which *espace* is created. These practices will be explored in the following chapter.

¹¹⁴ Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 523.

5.2.4. The spatial role of story (myth)

The element of story (myth) was introduced above as a salient aspect of de Certeau's conception of *lieu* and *espace*. Here, before moving onto the chapter on the spatial practices, this will be readdressed to argue what I suppose its full importance to be within de Certeau's hermeneutic and contribution to a religious spatiality. I do this making special reference to *la mystique* in order to connect story to the physical, mental, and social of spatiality. De Certeau suggests that social space, as produced through human practices, is a sphere in which not only sociality can be identified, but so too can the traces of transcendence, in the form of a human desire for meaning. However, this transcendence is not explicit, nor is it contained within any *lieu* and *espace*, but may be glimpsed through the dialogical interaction between *espace*.

From what has been examined of de Certeau's position thus far, it could be speculated that he agrees with Foucault in bringing together knowledge and power in the way Jeremy Carrette summarizes Foucault on religion and religious belief:

Religion for Foucault was always part of a set of force relations and discursive practices which order human life ... a reading that does not position religion in some separate realm but inside a political struggle of knowledge-power. In this way Foucault provides a radical framework to question the politics of all religious and theological thinking. He brings religion back into history and back into the immanent struggle of identity and subjectivity.¹¹⁵

The idea of religion as something that orders human life, putting religion inside a political realm of struggle, resonates with de Certeau, although there is a difference between the two that can be illustrated by making reference to Taylor's idea of the immanent frame and of immanentization.

In *A Secular Age*, Taylor argues that the modern period is marked by the immanent frame, as a constructed social space that frames our lives and society within a natural

¹¹⁵ Jeremy Carrette (ed.), *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
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order. It circumscribes the modern social imaginary. An outworking of this frame is immanentization, by which Taylor means the process whereby human meaning and significance are defined within the social space of an enclosed, self-sufficient, naturalistic universe without any reference to transcendence.¹¹⁶ Even as this is the case, Taylor argues the desire for fullness, even in the immanent frame, is haunted by a perspective that this fullness requires the human to be transformed beyond what is often understood as human flourishing.¹¹⁷ In the case of Christianity this takes the form of participation in the love of God for human beings, in Islam it is participation in the will of Allah for creation, and for Indian religions it encompasses adhering to *dharma*. Taylor argues this includes, in the Modern Moral Order, a certain kind of flourishing marked by mutuality and pursuing his/her/their happiness.¹¹⁸ Similarly, de Certeau identifies human activity as a search for meaning beyond the materialism of the immanent frame but different than Taylor, who locates desire in individual action, de Certeau recognizes that the practices associate with that desire will produce a social presence of the transcendent.

Much of de Certeau's thought is concerned with the question of if and how God may be seen and spoken of within the modern period. De Certeau situates the founding period of the present condition as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He argues that the period in which the early mystics asked the question 'How can we speak of God?' presaged the modern period. (In this his argument is similar to Taylor's appraisal of our 'cross-pressured' situation in *A Secular Age*).¹¹⁹ He finds in mysticism a background against which both the radical immanence of modernity and radical alterity of Divine Otherness are connected. But unlike Taylor who describes the secular age through an

¹¹⁶ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 539ff.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 430

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 594ff.

exegesis of conditions and content of belief in tension, de Certeau explores it through identifying how and where religion has continually (been) given meaning in practice. In doing so, de Certeau's spatiality may allow everyday practices and the artefacts of meaning they produce to be understood as spaces where the connection between the immanent and transcendent can be seen, cultivated, and be made efficacious.¹²⁰ The correspondence of the immanent-transcendent in subjectivity is a central notion that, whether recognized or not, operates as an energizing force for the way people understand the world and live within it. This is, I suggest, one of the ways that de Certeau understands the concepts of *lieu* and *espace* as determinations of stories (myth).

How does de Certeau justify the presence of the transcendent in spatiality? The answer turns on de Certeau's idea of the hiddenness of transcendence that accompanied the emergence of the modern period. Bocken suggests that de Certeau interprets the dimension of God as the irreducible authority and experience whose absence allowed for the strategic practices to establish *lieu* as an expression of human fullness in place of what had previously been set apart as the work of God.¹²¹ It is also the absence of God that allows for the possibility of subjective action through tactics and the making of *espace*. It is only the absence of God that opens the possibility for the ordered or emancipatory and critical capacities of human practice and imagination to create and sustain social spaces invested with meaning, with a story.

Believing is appropriating the (transcendent) story as the subjective act. It is the process in which the story engages with the physical, mental, and social dimension of spatiality. Believing as a practice is a way of seeing the world and a way of operating within the

¹²⁰ Bocken, 'Everyday Life as Divine Practice', p. 174.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 190.

world. In occupying that position, de Certeau writes that belief is no longer discursive but primitive. He writes:

It is secluded, ordinary, like a 'source' of something that will later differentiate and elucidate itself. This *knowledge* is not *known*. In practices, it has a status analogous to that granted fables and myths as the expression of kinds of knowledge that do not know themselves.¹²²

It is a knowledge of power that energizes the link between theory and practice, but whose essence cannot be wholly enumerated, but only perceived in the structure of theory and the action of practice. In the context of religion, this may be understood in the words of Gavin Flood:

Religions are primarily ways of life rather than theories about the origin of the world ... Religions are not scientific propositions but encounters with mystery and expressions of human needs that form ways of life, ways of acting, ways of responding to the strange world in which we find ourselves.¹²³

On de Certeau's model, this sort of meaning-making activity, often ascribed to the symbols and gestures of religion, should also be applied to non-religion. In the hiddenness of transcendence, the effective power of believing operates in every location. This notion is borne out by the fact that many religious concepts have been excised from religion and applied to secularity.¹²⁴ In the secular context of later modernity, as Flood notes, the cultural encounter with something beyond culture is mediated not by the religious tradition (story) but by its own in translated forms of practice and ideas whose origin is religious.¹²⁵

¹²² de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 70-71 [original emphasis].

¹²³ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 2 Flood suggests that what prototypically differentiates this from non-religious believing and other sorts of meaning-making is that its narrative incorporates aspects of soteriology and salvation, or at the least a sense of human completion (p.5).

¹²⁴ See various authors in Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun (eds.), *Varieties of Secularism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010). Within that work see William E. Connolly's chapter 'Belief, Spirituality, and Time', pp. 126-144; Specifically see pp. 131-133 where Connolly makes a clear distinction between the idea of radical transcendence and mundane transcendence. The former grounds ideas of human salvation and soteriology. The latter grounds an idea of human progression or completion while maintaining a sense of 'mystery' as Flood would have it.

¹²⁵ Flood writes, 'In the secular context of late modernity, the situation is made more complex by the proliferation of spiritual technologies divorced from tradition and linked to a consumerist *Zeitgeist*, on the one hand, and an increasing environmental awareness on the other.' Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p.16. This is also part of Taylor's thesis in *A Secular Age*. An interesting thesis by Graeme Smith is that modern secularism is an ethical iteration of Christianity removed from its ancient historical grounds and based upon its recent role in the formation of liberal societies. Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2010).

The relationship between story and believing as a meaning-making is an enunciative force that cannot be measured, but whose presence can be recognized. In *The Mystic Fable*, de Certeau argues:

This term originally referred to the stories whose task it was to symbolize a society, stories that were therefore in competition with historiographic discourse. For the *Aufklärung*, although the ‘fable’ speaks [*fari*], it does not know what it is saying, and one must rely on the writer-interpreter to obtain the knowledge it expresses without knowing it. It is therefore discarded, classed with ‘fiction,’ and like all fiction, it is presumed to mask or to have mislaid the meaning it contains.¹²⁶

The story is for de Certeau a knowledge that is not generally categorized by its practitioners, nor can it be wholly classified by the reflections of non-practitioners. While this is the case, it should not be neglected. As de Certeau shows, in his study of *la mystique*, the story is, ‘a journey ... whose techniques make possible the successive definition of definable “objects” within an undefinable reality’.¹²⁷ Story shapes the physical, mental, and social of spatiality. A spatial approach must give allowance for story as a determination of practice and space. Consequently, a consideration of strategy and tactics, of *lieu* and *espace*, must include as part of the discourse the traditions and even the ultimate aims of the content of belief, especially where those traditions and aims speak towards everyday life or the production of culture.

5.3 Conclusion

De Certeau writes of *lieu* and *espace* as locations of meaning and as ways of being-in-the-world. They are dynamic productions of practices, macro and quotidian, and belief. These locations, or delimitations, should not be perceived as only physical locations. However, this does not mean that these locations should then be idealized or associated entirely with social or mental artefacts of culture. Instead, *lieu* and *espace* may be comprised of each of these. To each of these locations of meaning as physical, mental, and social dimensions is added a mythic dimension. Understood together, these express

¹²⁶ de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, p. 12.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 13.

the nature of *lieu* and *espace* as manifestations of ‘meaning-making’, as the result of practices to instantiate visions of human fulfilment. However, they are different orders.

The relation of *espace* to *lieu* resonates with Bhabha on culture to the past:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with ‘newness’ that is not part of the continuum of the past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or as aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent ‘in-between’ space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The ‘past-present’ becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.¹²⁸

Similarly, *espace* is a newness emerging as a renewal of *lieu*, refigured and performed in the present.

In Chapter 3, Knott’s spatiality was critiqued, in part because her distinctions between space and place, while providing language to describe the way space is represented and conceived, lacked particular ability to articulate the lived reality of religion as a practice of everyday life, and not only the social and situational reality of religion as a social and cultural way of life. De Certeau’s distinction between *lieu* and *espace* allows that as well. This function of his spatial approach emerges out of the *telos* of *lieu* and *espace* and the way that this extends as out of specific spatial practices, strategy, and tactics. It is this spatial theory that will give us an indication as to how we can describe everyday practices as constitutive of culture that may enlighten how we can more accurately perceive religious phenomena in a broader secular milieu. This will allow for a view of religion as not only located in its relation to non-religion at their points of contestation. Further, it will allow for a view of religion that is not normative and institutional or functional and private.

De Certeau’s spatial theory is an attempt to make possible an investigation into the ways that members of a society operate. The aim is to see that everyday practices are

¹²⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 7.

not merely the obscure background of social activity. This includes recognizing that these practices are not wholly constrained by society's system of meaning. To accomplish this, de Certeau constructed a means of differentiating between social practices and the places and spaces that these practices produce. So far, then, we have argued that these productions, *lieu* and *espace*, should be understood as artefacts of meaning that are both material and metaphorical. De Certeau's approach to space does not accept a nominal abstract meaning of space, but neither is the meaning of space wholly subjective. While space and its meaning are constructed, this construction is not determined by a social system. It is, instead, a function of the spatial practices of the members of society who, drawing upon knowledge handed down to them, give voice to or express a reality. This reality may resonate with society's system and therefore reproduce it, but it may just as easily subvert that order and express a reality outside the system. The challenge de Certeau set himself is to make these practices visible.

Chapter Six

6. The Spatial Theory of Michel de Certeau: Strategy and Tactics

De Certeau aimed to conceive of a theory of the operational logic present within the ‘signifying practices’ of people.¹ Even as the aim of the theory is an awareness of practice, we must remember it is a conceptual and theoretical framework. These practices are creative and sometimes indeterminate, not reducible to psychology of structuralism, emerging from something separated from its authors and social context. ‘This labor, more essential than its backgrounds or its representations, is *culture*’.² De Certeau contrasts what Bauman later described as culture as concept and culture as structure with culture as praxis; the making of culture is the result of humankind’s ability ‘to challenge his reality and ask for a deeper meaning ... whether individual or collective ... to build the reality of his existence’.³ Speaking of the space of religion should not equate religion with norms and ideals, but instead begin with its creative practice. De Certeau’s strategy and tactic allow for the identification and distinguishing necessary to make this possible.

6.1. Ways of operating: strategy and tactics

What is it that makes a place a home? I first considered this question during the years I operated my own business constructing homes in western Canada. Initially I had phrased the question as: What is the difference between a house and a home? Some early considerations indicated that question was ill-formed. Not everyone lives in a house. Moreover, not everything that conveys a sense of home is a residence of some

¹ Michel de Certeau, ‘Preface’ in *Culture in the Plural*, ed. Luce Giard, trans. Tom Conley, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2001 [1997]), p. vii; originally, *La culture au pluriel* edited with introduction by Luce Giard, (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1994 [original, Union Générale d’Éditions, 1974]).

² *ibid.*

³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis* (London: Sage, 1999), p. 139.

sort. I have anecdotally heard the phenomena of homeness applied in many ways: as being astride a horse in the prairies of western Canada, as standing atop a peak peering out over the world, as the basketball court or football pitch, and even as simply being seated beside a loved one. So, what makes a place a home and what does this illustrate for my purposes here? I do not actually suppose that I can answer the former question, but my early considerations gave me a sense that homeness is not something intrinsically bound to domestic residence. Instead, homeness seems to be produced and resulting from the dynamic of a person's interpretation of locations and their actions associated with those locations. In fact, what makes a place a home seems more connected with a practice than it does with a location.

We have already seen considered the difference between strategy and tactics. It is important that we return to it so the two can be properly examined. The essential passage where de Certeau defines strategy reads:

I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relations that become possible when a subject of will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be set apart. It postulates a *lieu* to be delimited as its own (*un propre*) that can serve as the base from which to manage relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.)⁴

Immediately, there are two things needing to be observed.⁵ The first is that a strategy is a type of calculation (an operation or manipulation). That is, strategies are thought and action. The second point is the relation of strategy to place. There is here a certain ambiguity regarding place. In the first sense, de Certeau refers to place as *un propre* ('a

⁴ Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire* (Paris: Union Générale des éditions, 1980), p. 85 (Translation is my own, see p. 148 for original).

⁵ Unlike Ian Buchanan, who also draws attention to these two points, I treat these as separate though interrelated. He writes, 'The essential point to observe, of course, is that strategy is a function of place, yet it takes a certain kind of strategic thinking or operating to actually produce a place. This bi-univocality, which as we shall see is present in tactics as well, is doubtless both the most intriguing aspect of de Certeau's logic of practices and the most confusing, or at any rate least transparent.' See, Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publishing, 2000), p. 87. I differ from Buchanan in that I treat these two as separate. de Certeau is careful to note the difference between practices of production, practices of reproduction or a use of place. The strategic operations or thinking that produce a place are not wholly identifiable with practices of reproduction, one is more original than the other.

clean'). Elsewhere, he writes: it is 'where the ambiguities of the world have been exorcised. It assumes the withdrawal and the distance of a subject in relation to an area of activities. It is made available for a partial but regulatable operation.'⁶ Once an *un propre* is 'delimited as its own' it takes the form of *lieu*. In this sense, strategy is a function of *lieu*. In another sense, *un propre* is the background that is crafted and reproduced in the strategies of *lieu*. Moreover, the production and continual reproduction of *lieu* informs the relation of *lieu* to any other, via the strategic operations, and subsequently 'relations with an exteriority' are also imposed. While I write this, I am thinking of terms of service and software updates on my technology as possible strategies. These are designed to maintain a manufacturer's control over their proprietary products, access to information, and to provide new applications for the technology. All of which are designed to support and reproduce their presence in the market and in my life. Strategic operations continually order a place in order to reproduce the *un propre* of *lieu*. The idea is conveyed by Lefebvre: 'it brings [materials and resources] all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it'.⁷

There are similarities but also important differences between strategy and tactics, especially as to the relationship to *lieu* and *espace*. The essential passage where de Certeau describes tactics reads:

In contrast with strategies (whose successive figures introduce a certain movement into this formal schema and whose link with a specific historical configuration of rationality should be clarified), a *tactic* is a calculation determined by the absence of a proper centre. No delimitation of exteriority, then, provides it with the conditions for autonomy. The place of the tactic is the place of the other.⁸

⁶ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 134.

⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 410. In this quote Lefebvre is writing of space though the sense he uses the word is more closely related to de Certeau's sense of *lieu*.

⁸ de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien I*, p. 86 (Translation is my own, see p. 148 for original).

Tactic, like strategy, is also thought and action. This is a main point that de Certeau stresses. The difference between strategy and tactic is not that the former is an expression of will and power whereas the latter is not. The pressing point of contrast de Certeau identifies is that tactics are a calculation determined ‘by the absence of a proper locus’. Tactics have a relation to *lieu*, but that relation is not in the same sense of its production and reproduction. Instead, a tactic is a practice that does not belong to that order but to that which has been designated as exterior to or other than *un propre*. Tactics differ from strategies in that they act within and upon *lieu* to take its materials, resources, and products and directing them towards a different purpose. In this sense, then, the tactical subject is not a freed and autonomous actor within the order, but is instead a creative actor whose appropriation of *lieu* leads to the creation of a different space, *espace*.

De Certeau notes three distinctions of strategy and its place. The first he calls ‘a triumph of place over time’; the second is the ‘mastery of places through sight; and thirdly, he attributes to strategy the ‘power of knowledge’.⁹ Using these I can note the differences between strategy and tactic. I will use the example of technology companies and their consumers throughout these points.

- 1) De Certeau’s first distinction is the idea of what tactics produce. Tactics function within a place that is not their own, but in doing so produce their own *espace*. That is consumers do not produce their own technology, but make use of what is available. Given that their production results from their use of things that are not their own, tactics are creative and furtive actions. This is distinguished from the delimiting and imposing nature of strategies which define and delimit the scope

⁹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 36-37.

of that product. Whereas strategies produce *lieu* (techno-place), tactics produce *espace* (user-space).

2) Another distinction de Certeau makes has to do with the relation of each to time.

A strategy, he writes, has a ‘base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances’.¹⁰ One of the circumstances in which strategy is able to exert an organizing effect is its relation to time. Time is a resource to be managed, strategic operations are able to organize themselves in a relation to time. This de Certeau calls strategy ‘having victory of place over time’.¹¹ The technology company will have a plan of product development, release, updates, and even redundancies. On the other hand, because a tactic does not have a place of its own, it ‘depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized “on the wing”’.¹² The consumer is generally unaware of product schedules and must respond to them as they are made open.

3) Strategy is distinguished by its mastery of places through sight. By this, de Certeau suggests that division of *un propre* makes it possible for strategy to exercise a ‘panoptic practice’. It has the ability to transform what it sees into objects to be measured, and thus controlled, thereby including them in the scope of its vision.¹³ Strategic operations, being functions of an established order, are able to ‘see’ into the distance to predict or run ahead of time by reading sites and locations and from there crafting the future into its likeness.¹⁴ Again, owing to tactics’ lack of autonomy, such an ability is beyond their furtive scope. Instead, tactics operate through a principle of ‘making do’. That is, the vision of tactics is

¹⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xix.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹² *ibid.*, p. xix.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁴ The recent global Covid-19 pandemic has shown there are obvious limits to this ‘sight’, especially in terms of predictive capacity for the future.

limited to the particularity of its site and its possibilities. The same examples from point two can be used here.

- 4) Finally, strategy can be understood to possess the ‘power of knowledge’.¹⁵ There are two elements here: the first is the knowledge necessary to circumscribe what is uncertain or other into knowable and predictable spaces of meaning. De Certeau writes: ‘it would be more correct to recognize in these “strategies” a specific type of knowledge, one sustained and determined by the power to provide oneself with one’s own place.’¹⁶ Strategies are ‘inaugurated through the constitution of their “own” areas (autonomous cities, “neutral” or “independent” institutions, laboratories pursuing “disinterested” research, etc.).’¹⁷ Although in his statement de Certeau uses the particular phrase ‘power of knowledge’, the context of the passage indicates that the reversal of that formula could be used as well: a ‘knowledge of power’ is a characteristic of the essence and operations of *lieu*. Therein also lies the second element, the knowledge of power, that de Certeau classifies as ‘*a certain power ... the precondition of this knowledge* and not merely its effect or its attribute’.¹⁸ The precondition is the desire and the ability to accomplish the provision of ‘one’s own place’. It makes knowledge possible and at the same time is directed by knowledge. Strategies produce their place in and through this knowledge. Technology companies are aware of their necessity in the world and while they continually manoeuvre to increase their presence in the industry, the industry is not at risk of disappearing. This gives these companies both a knowledge and a power to craft their place within society, which includes injecting themselves into new places (i.e. markets or

¹⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 36

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*, [original emphasis].

services). Tactic, he writes, differs in that ‘it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power’.¹⁹

All of this goes to say that strategy and tactic are both ways of operating and are practices requiring will and power, but they differ in terms of their type of production of meaning.

There is one other striking similarity between strategy and tactics, which results from their both being productive. This similarity is one that is noticed when considering these practices within the broader scope of their relationship with *lieu* and *espace*. De Certeau understands *lieu* and *espace* as determinations of stories, as representing ways of being. This requires something distinctive from the spatial practices. Strategies and tactics, will be conditioned by the particular philosophical hermeneutic of their subjects. In an earlier study of culture, de Certeau explores these hermeneutical principles, making a distinction between functional and institutional structures and social systems and the mobile elements that continually move along its borders. He locates culture (the way people live and the meaning attributed to this way) in the mobile tactical practices of social subjects. He writes that:

The management of a society leaves in its midst an enormous ‘remainder.’ On our maps, *that* is what is called culture. It is an ebb and flow of muffled voices on the architects’ blueprints in their advanced stages of drafting.²⁰

In *Culture in the Plural*, de Certeau contrasts the ‘remainder’ or the voice of culture against scholarly, popular or marginal, imaginary (ideological), and political systems. The relationship between the social systems and the mobile elements is a contrast of social hermeneutical approaches.

¹⁹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 37.

²⁰ de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. 134.

Culture in the Plural previews much of what he later develops in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, though lacking the particular pairings of *lieu* and *espace* and strategy and tactics and the theoretical depth of that later work. *Culture in the Plural* deals specifically with social structures and elements of representation; the later work focuses on considering the value of ordinary practices, and the dynamics of daily activities. The move from the structural and systemic to the ordinary and quotidian is not a step down in terms of social significance, from the social to the individual. Quite the contrary: de Certeau suggests that it is individual practice that is the locus in which social relations and determinations interact. Similarly, the move is not a move away from the theoretical to the empirical. Instead, the question is directed towards understanding ways of operating and not directly the subjects (or persons). De Certeau is concerned with operational logics and not the particular orders and instances, arguing that a study of culture is better served by the study of ordinary practices than the study of social systems.²¹

6.1.1. Locating strategies in the study of religion

Where might we see strategic practice exemplified in the study of religion? Lori G. Beaman points out that, in Canada, the discussion around religion and the public sphere is generally framed in terms of the neutrality of the state and state institutions, the public visibility of religious expression, and the social welfare and economic impact of religion.²² She suggests that even the discourse of postsecularity, supposing itself more open to religious voices and a wider public sphere in relation to religion, seems instead to retrench religion, making room only for a particular type of cultural religion amenable to secular modern values. The example she provides is the seemingly

²¹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xi.

²² Lori G. Beaman, 'Between Public and the Private: Governing Religious Expression' in Solange Lefebvre and Lori G. Beaman (eds.), *Religion in the Public Sphere: Canadian Case Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), pp. 44-65.

paradoxical opening of Canadian society to Islam; encouraging communities to form *madaris* (Islamic schools) while at the same time enacting laws that effectually limit the Islamic practice within these schools, i.e. banning face coverings.²³ What is seen here is, as Beaman's subtitle suggests, a governing of religious expression in private and in public. I do not think Beaman goes far enough when she questions 'Who can claim authority in any given circumstance?' and 'How can religious expression be justified?'²⁴ The deeper question is, as the New Visibility argument supposes, who is *seeing* religion, how is it being *seen*, and how is it evaluated? Consider this through the view of de Certeau's principle of strategic practices. In the cases such as those exemplified by Beaman, religion is subsumed under a secular frame and then, as de Certeau describes when discussing strategic possibilities, organized according to the 'regulation of initiatives', 'constructive activity', 'economic production', and secular ideas of identity.²⁵ The strategic impulse to order experience and society in a totality that in the case of modernity constrains religion to a form consistent with its own social, economic, and political representations and modes of behaviour. Against this totality and strategic aim to combine all experience within a field according to its criteria, based on the idea of the proliferation of its progress and initiatives, are the tactical operations of the individual and the social body. A similar strategic impulse is otherwise pointed out by Asad's critique of the European political idea of abstract citizenship. He argues that the concept equates a secular idea of humanity with citizenship and then compels through legal statutes all members of a society to assimilate to that idea as a condition of participation in the public.²⁶ The problem, as Asad argues, is that in equating secularity with good citizenship religion is presupposed as problematic and opposed to society.²⁷

²³ Beaman, 'Between Public and Private', pp. 56-8.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁵ de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. 111.

²⁶ Asad, *Formations*, p. 169. Connolly summarizes Asad's key points in critique: (1) Secularism is not merely a division between public and private realms allowing religious diversity to flourish in the latter. It

6.1.2. Locating tactics in the study of religion

Tactics act upon a place that is not their own. More specifically, tactical practices are the use of material and means that are, properly, not their own within a context or order that is not of their making. Asad gets close to this in terms of political minority groups: ‘perhaps the crucial point about a politically established cultural minority is that constitutionally it cannot authorize new cultural arrangements but only request them’.²⁸ But the inference that the space must be requested implies an openness that tactics do not always portray. De Certeau applies the idea more broadly, using the recurrent theme of the consumer to illustrate the point. The consumer does not decide what programmes or advertisements are on television or what words are present on the written page, but they acquire and use these products towards their own ends. The pertinent point here is that as tactics make use of that which is not their own, *espace* is formed out of that which is not its own. Hence de Certeau says, ‘*space is a practiced place*’. Using the analogy of the city landscape, he writes, ‘thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs.’²⁹

can itself be a carrier of harsh exclusions. And it secretes a new definition of “religion” that conceals some of its most problematic practices from itself; (2) In creating its characteristic division European secularism sought to shuffle ritual and discipline into the private realm. But it loses touch with the ways in which embodied practices of conduct help to constitute culture, including European culture; (3) The constitution of modern Europe makes it incumbent to treat Muslims in its midst on the one hand as abstract citizens and on the other as a distinctive minority either to be tolerated (the liberal orientation) or restricted (the national orientation); and (4) European, modern, secular constitutions of Islam, converge on a series of simple contrasts that falsify the deep grammar of European secularism and contribute to the culture wars some of these definitions seek to ameliorate. William E. Connolly, ‘Europe: A Powerful Tradition’, in David Scott and Charles Hirschkind (eds.), *Power of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 75-92 [75-76].

²⁷ Talal Asad, *Formations of Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity*, (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 7, 173.

²⁸ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 259.

²⁹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 117.

Tactics signify the use to which society's representations and modes of behaviour are put. This 'making', as de Certeau calls it, 'is a production, a *poiēsis* – but a hidden one, because it is scattered over areas defined and occupied by systems of "production"'.³⁰ The creative activity is hidden in the sense that it does not manifest itself through the creation of its own objects, 'but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order'.³¹ An example from *The Practice of Everyday Life* refers to a difference resulting in the subversion of Spanish colonial efforts to impose their culture among indigenous populations. The indigenous people submitted or even consented to the imposition but *made* of the 'rituals, representations, and laws' imposed upon them something other than what was intended; something that served their culture and meaning. 'They were *other* within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them.'³² The difference was attributable not to systems, symbols, and representations, but to the underlying logic of the practices using them towards different ends. A similar difference, though in some cases to a lesser degree owing to a common history, will be evident in modern society where, as Taylor would have it, social imaginaries different from the dominant social order use the products of culture spread about and imposed by that order.

This hiddenness of tactics leads to a real difficulty. How do you locate what by definition is hidden and furtive? Importantly, while *espace* may be hidden they are not invisible. The problem of their visibility results from the fact that *lieu* is blind to them not that they are not there. The resolution to the problem is the awareness of the possibility of tactics and *espace* and a willingness to question to order of *lieu*.

³⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xii [original emphasis]. de Certeau intends *poiēsis* in the original Greek sense of an activity in which a person brings something into existence that had not exist before.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

6.1.3. A field of strategic and tactical possibilities

Lieu and *espace* are co-existent; they reside simultaneously in myriad computations. A field or site can at the same time be a strategic *lieu* and tactical *espace*. Yet, it remains to be seen how these places and spaces can be identified. It is towards a system to identify each and their relation to each other that de Certeau's spatial theory is aimed. After having discussed the differences between strategic and tactical practices and possibilities for the formation of meaning, de Certeau writes:

The presence and circulation of a representation (taught by preachers, educators, and popularizers as the key to socioeconomic advancement) tells us nothing about what it is for its users. We must first analyse its manipulation by users who are not its makers. Only then can we gauge the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization.³³

The quote points to the importance of the difference that exists between the strategies of *lieu* and the tactics of *espace*, and that it is by analysing the differences in practice that any distinction between *lieu* and *espace* will reside.

The mechanism by which this is possible and how the difference can be seen and analysed is the very thing which de Certeau aims to explore in *Practice*. He introduces the project with the statement that:

The point is not so much to discuss this elusive yet fundamental subject as to make such a discussion possible; that is, by means of inquiries and hypotheses, to indicate pathways for further research. This goal will be achieved if everyday practices, 'ways of operating' or doing things, no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity, and if a body of theoretical questions, methods, categories, and perspectives, by penetrating this obscurity, make it possible to articulate them.³⁴

The analysis of strategies and tactics as calculations; the dynamic of practice as an interpretive principle of action woven together with ways of believing; the explanation that *lieu* and *espace* are the products of those actions and coextensive with those ways of believing: all of these move us towards an understanding of individuals, society, and culture, and ultimately to a sense of the space of religion in the public sphere. Further, it

³³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiii.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. xi.

is the basis upon which de Certeau argues against the predicated notion that there can exist universal places or even a universal reason and ways of acting or believing that can serve as a basis for the members of a society to create and embody common beliefs or meaning. This implication of de Certeau's spatial theory is what allows for it to be an appropriate starting point and an underestimated framework for the study of religion, and allows it to account for the persistent presence of religion in the public as well as the private of everyday life.

6.2. The underlying logic of strategies and tactics

The applicability of spatial theory to the question of the space of religion in the public sphere is really beginning to become clear. Taking seriously the empirical evidence that shows that secularity is dominant narrative in Western society, the question can be framed as the question of religious *espaces* within the dominant secular *lieu*. De Certeau shows the importance of recognizing the different sorts of practices that reflect the ways in which people operate within society. He uses strategy and tactics and their relationship with *lieu* and *espace* to explore the meaning of these actions and the ways of being they form and express. It is clear how the idea can be taken towards arguing for the persistent presence of religion within and against the strategy and structure of secular society. This, however, is not the whole of the picture. Tactics are creative practices that move within and against systems of meaning that misidentify and fail to constrain them. Also, tactical practices and their *espace* can also lead to an alteration, sometimes recognized and sometimes not, of those systems.

6.2.1. Searching the spatial operations

There is a potential for criticism of de Certeau in his continual return to the theoretical of practices instead of analysing specific practices. There is validity to this. Yet, I think

it possible to give a justification. De Certeau naturally avoids cataloguing practices to escape the criticism that he is levelling against the strategies of others. The problem is that it raises the question of what applicability can result from his theory. In his introduction of de Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics, Buchanan writes:

Strategy and tactics are undoubtedly de Certeau's most well known concepts, yet for all their notoriety they remain poorly understood. Part of the problem rests with de Certeau's own rather too thin formulation of the them in the first place, which is suggestive but not nearly as richly argued and exemplified as was really needed to make secure their conceptual future.³⁵

Buchanan strives to develop a fuller picture of the terms, though in the process he moves away from what I think is one of de Certeau's central points. Even as these terms may well be de Certeau's most known concepts, if they are poorly understood I do not consider this as result of a lack of formulation, as Buchanan suggests. What Buchanan interprets as a 'too thin formulation' I see as an intentional and necessary silence, reflecting again the tensions that are central to de Certeau's dialogical hermeneutic.

In de Certeau's theological and epistemological reflections the hidden presence of the Other creates a necessary interstice for the emergence of meaning. Therein, the presence Otherness is not, for de Certeau, principally a sign of resistance; it is a sign of difference and absence. They are living realities that pulse within and against systems and structures that cannot contain them. The same must be said of his tactics to strategies (as it is of *espace to lieu*). As Antonio Eduardo Alonso argues:

Across a diverse set of writings, Certeau relentlessly draws the gaze of his reader to what is missing. The practice of writing is, for Certeau, always founded on a rupture between a primordial unity and a present construction that cannot contain that unity. Writing depends on absence. A gap between the social body and discourse on it, between a historical event and the account given of it, or, in Certeau's explicitly theological work, between the person of Jesus and testimonies about him, is the precondition for writing. This gap, which finally eludes all discourse – whether in the key of history, theory, or theology – possesses Certeau's work.³⁶

This explains why de Certeau hesitates to provide a robust formulation complete with case analysis of these practices. De Certeau's framing of the spatial practices is intended

³⁵ Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 86.

³⁶ Antonio Eduardo Alonso, 'Listening for the Cry: Certeau Beyond Strategy and Tactics' in *Modern Theology* 33:3 (July 2017), pp. 369-394 [372].

to draw the gaze of the reader to what is missing or, better yet, to what is hidden within the gaps between the social body of culture and the discourse upon it. De Certeau explores what is hidden by exposing the limits of forms of thought and opening these forms to other ways of thinking, to new visibilities. Tactics pulse within (creating *espace*) and against systems (*lieu*) that do not contain them and may not even see them.

Everyday practices hinge upon the ensemble of operations referred to as procedures: systemic manipulations and making do. In exploring their underlying logic, de Certeau aims to clarify their functions relative to two theorists and their concepts. These he identifies as discourse (which Foucault called ideology) and the acquired (which he associates with Bourdieu's *habitus*).³⁷ He engages these two in a dedicated chapter.³⁸ In order to search the spatial procedure in a way that will contribute to my argument, I will observe how these themes are interwoven in how de Certeau detects spatial processes in the treatment of everyday practice and culture. De Certeau's fundamental conceptual move 'was to disenchain one (tactics) from the other (strategy). In so doing the relation between them becomes more contradictory than genuinely confrontational' and more visible.³⁹ His engagement also demonstrates the possibility that everyday practice has an unsettling impact on the places of society. Particular emphasis will then be given to de Certeau's idea of the relation of these procedures to time and language. The discussion will then turn towards subjectivity and meaning. It is in belief and believing that de Certeau detects the driving force of both strategic and tactical practices, although

³⁷ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 43.

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 45-60. Here, de Certeau specifically references, Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); and, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977/1993) Elsewhere, de Certeau engages Foucault's earlier work, see Michel de Certeau, *L'Absent de l'histoire* (Paris: Marne, 1974), p. 115-132. He also interacts with Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique. Précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle* (Geneva: Droz, 1972); also, Pierre Bourdieu, 'Les Strategies matrimoniales dans le système de reproduction', in *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations.*, 27 (1972), pp.1105-1127; and, 'Le Langage autorisé', in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 5-6: November (1975), pp. 183- 190; and, *La Distinction. Critique sociale du Jugement*, (Paris: Minuit, 1979), pp. 9-118.

³⁹ Ian Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau: Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 86.

guided by different desires. Contrasting what was seen with Knott, the spatial practices are not primarily indices of power and resistance; they are indexes of belief.

6.2.2. Spatial practices and the concept of culture

Strategy and tactics form a core principle in de Certeau's notion of culture. In this, de Certeau rejects other more prominent ideas of culture in favour of his spatial theory. The theories of cultural theory that de Certeau would have been most familiar with would have been those of Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralism, which was an alternative to the predominant functionalist or historical explanations. Functionalist explanations, drawing on Durkheim, dominated the social sciences through the 1950s. This is to say that social elements such as practices or institutions were identified by their stated purpose or the social function that they presumably performed in society. The existence of a thing was explained via function. The alternative at the time was a historical explanation, which accounted for the elements of a society through exploring its genealogy. Social fact was explained via its past and present manifestation, generally thought to follow a trajectory of development from less to more complex or from primitive to modern. Both functionalist and historical explanations contributed to the psychoanalytic approaches to culture exhibited by Freud and his notion of totemism. Against these, Lévi-Strauss suggested the existence of universal cultural systems in society as products of the structure of the human mind. Lévi-Strauss appealed exclusively to a mental structure, but then also suggested traces of that structure in various social aspects.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le pensée sauvage* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962); also, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966). Lévi-Strauss clarifies that "*la pensée sauvage*" is not a particular mind of a type of human. It is the 'untamed' thought, 'In this book it is neither the mind of savages nor that of primitive or archaic humanity, but rather mind in its untamed state as distinct from mind cultivated or domesticated for the purpose of yielding a return.' (1966, p. 219) Savage thought is contrasted with scientific thought. Savage thought resembles *bricolage*, the making of things with what is at hand, in this case structures of meaning, whereas scientific thought pursues a purpose trying to design an order and solution.

In seeking out a theory of practice, de Certeau is looking for the particular timing and operation of cultural activities. In rejecting the structural and functional or historical notions of culture, de Certeau's idea of culture as the product of discursive practices is laid out. He reads those two notions as, on the one hand, having catalogued and therefore made inert actual cultural activities (functional/historical), and on the other hand, extracted from the operations their liveliness and therefore their ultimate meaning (structuralism).⁴¹ In supporting his argument, de Certeau frequently makes appeals to the way that the language of culture has been studied. For example, he notes the common methods of studying proverbs and myths. This includes their isolation and collection, followed by their organization: identifying categories and units for analysis in terms of function and structure that are then used to provide a 'mental geography' of a given group.⁴² He concludes, 'the drawback of this method, which is at the same time the condition of its success, is that it extracts the documents from their *historical* context and eliminates the *operations* of speakers in particular situations of time, place, and competition'.⁴³ His general point is that such approaches to culture need to be countered with a means of articulating the specific uses of the cultural products like proverbs and myth.

Jeremy Ahearne argues that de Certeau's object is threefold. This includes identifying forms of otherness, tracing the processes of its manifestation within and against systems, and the alteration of structures and systems that arise from their proximity to

⁴¹ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 18ff; for discussion see, Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 88.

⁴² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 19.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 20 [original emphasis]. Buchanan suggests that today it could be argued that some of de Certeau's critique is not wholly applicable today. (see Buchanan, *Michel de Certeau*, p. 88-9). While it may be the case that social and critical method does not wholly fall into this category this is not a weakness of de Certeau's overall theory that undermines my project.

this otherness.⁴⁴ de Certeau's intellectual strategy consists of an endeavour to discern and to make space for forms of interruption, what he calls alterities or the other, that are lacking in other notions of culture.⁴⁵ Functional and structural notions of culture require a delimitation and simplification of its objects: either the constitution of a place or the relations between that place and another. The delimitation is a precondition of analysis. What can be thus delimited is all that is transported into the field of study. This is the data that can most easily be grasped, recorded, transported, and examined in secure places.⁴⁶ Anything that is unable to be so delimited or universalized through some reification remains outside the field of research or is operating on to make it amenable (such as Habermas' early ignoring of religion and Knott's Religious/Secular Field and immanentizing of the sacred). The missing is the everyday art of practices and their practitioners. In the case of the proverb, these are the 'innumerable tricks of bringing in a proverb at just the right moment and with a particular interlocutor' to bring the desired effect of inserting meaning into a place. Therefore, de Certeau writes, 'something essential is at work in this everyday historicity, which cannot be dissociated from the existence of the subjects who are the agents and authors of conjunctural operations.' The problem, however, is how to articulate a logic of tactical practices in a way that does not divest it of its meaning.

6.2.3. Spatial practices and discourse

De Certeau first identifies this problem in the relation between tactical practices to discourse and theory and engages with Foucault and Bourdieu.⁴⁷ This engagement opens the section of *Practice* in which de Certeau discusses 'Theory and the Art of

⁴⁴Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), especially Chapters one (pp. 9-37) and two (pp. 38-64).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁷ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 45.

Practice'.⁴⁸ Here, the contrasts are the specific relationship between theoretical discourse and the content of that discourse as a means of thinking about proper tactical practices.

How then does de Certeau analyse these spatial practices in conversation with Foucault? Let us begin with a summary of Foucault's understanding of discourse as ideology. Foucault uses the term 'discourse' to represent any historically contingent social system producing meaning and knowledge. Foucault specifically identifies texts and writing. The effect of discourse is material and produces what he calls 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'.⁴⁹ Discourse is a way of organizing knowledge that functions to structure social relations through a collective understanding, which is accepted as social fact.⁵⁰ Discourses are produced by the effects of power within a social order. This power orders the structures that define the meaning of knowledge of truth within the discourse. And this order and its meaning are considered prior to the discourse.⁵¹ The discourse, therefore, acts to produce and reproduce itself and its structure as society changes, allowing it to appear universal and ahistorical.⁵²

⁴⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 43ff.

⁴⁹ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M Sheridan Smith (New York Pantheon Books, 1982), pp. 49 and 135-140; originally, *L'Archéologie du Savoir* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969)]; see also, *L'ordre du discours*, (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971); and, 'The Order of Discourse' in Robert Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader* (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁵⁰ In an excellent summary article on Foucault and Discourse, Rachel Adams notes that in this aspect, Foucault and Jacques Lacan's 'discourses' on discourse overlap. Lacan considers discourse from the view of psychoanalysis and the inter-subjective setting. Foucault considers discourse from the structural view of institutions and power. Rachel Adams, 'Michel Foucault: Discourse' *Critical Legal Thinking: Law and the Political* (Online: Critical Legal Thinking, 2017), <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/11/17/michel-foucault-discourse/> (last accessed 21st October 2020).

⁵¹ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 135-140.

⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 126-134.

Of Foucault's analysis of discourse de Certeau writes:

By showing, in one case, the heterogeneity and equivocal relations of apparatuses and ideologies, he constituted as a treatable historical object this zone in which technological procedures have specific *effects of power*, obey their own *logical modes of functioning*, and can produce a fundamental *diversion* within the institutions of order and knowledge.⁵³

There is a resonance between Foucault's discourses and what de Certeau refers to as 'scriptural economies' or as the employment of a politics of language when discussing the strategic use of language.⁵⁴ The idea carries within itself what Foucault attributes to the two heterogeneous systems of power within discourse. These are political power and the social body. Political power is placed over the (social) body. Foucault's discourse theory outlines the advantage of political power over the social body and also aims to allow a 'minor instrumentality' of the social body, whose 'opaque power' has no possessor.⁵⁵ Despite a resonance with Foucault, however, de Certeau claims:

It remains to be asked how we should consider other, equally infinitesimal, procedures, which have not been "privileged" by history but are nevertheless active in innumerable ways in the openings of established technological networks.⁵⁶

Noting this, de Certeau aims to extend and deepen Foucault's sociocultural critique.⁵⁷

De Certeau identifies his path as a consequence of and reciprocal to Foucault.

The significant difference between the two is not the identification of two systems of power, but how they analyse the system of strategic operations and the many minuscule practices aimed at the organization of details, and the possibility of transforming a multiplicity into a heterogeneous society. Foucault focused on the mechanisms and technical procedures of strategic operation, emphasizing the totality of the discourse. In

⁵³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 49 [original emphasis].

⁵⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp.131-153. See also, Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia and Jacques Revel, *Une politique de la langue. La Révolution française et les patois: L'enquête de Grégoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975). Ahearne discusses this idea in *Michel de Certeau Interpretation and Its Other*, pp. 52-53, 164-166.

⁵⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 46. Here, de Certeau cites a litany of locations where Foucault uses the phrases. This is not a complete list: Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, pp. 96-102, 106-116, 143-151, 159-161, 189-194, 211-217, 238-251, 274-276.

⁵⁶ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 49.

⁵⁷ de Certeau had begun *Practice* prior to the publishing of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. Further, as I have argued, *Practice* is a particular application of a critical approach that de Certeau had otherwise been following for years prior to Foucault's significant publications.

this, de Certeau finds reason for critique. He questions how, if the mechanisms are as Foucault describes, it is possible that the mass of common humanity is able to resist the discipline of the discourse? How is there any minuscule instrumentality? What is the power of tactics? De Certeau finds that Foucault offers no convincing justification for the power of resistance that he acknowledges:

If it is true that the grid of “discipline” is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also “miniscule” and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them.⁵⁸

What de Certeau’s spatial notion and theory of practices does is provide evidence for a questioning of Foucault. How are we to consider the tactics, minute and quotidian, that are not privileged by history but are nevertheless active in uncountable ways in the gaps of established discourse?

6.2.4. Spatial practices and the acquired

De Certeau contrasts his spatial practices with Bourdieu’s *habitus*.⁵⁹ De Certeau positively assesses Bourdieu’s ethnological work on the everyday practices of the Kabyle and Béarnais. He is critical, however, of how Bourdieu moves from analysis of particular practices to *habitus* as a theory of practices. De Certeau identifies in this a removal of particular creative power from subject and an erasure of the cultural significance of everyday practice.⁶⁰

De Certeau and Bourdieu begin at a common theoretical point. Both reference Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Merleau-Ponty as influencing their ‘non-intellectualist, non-relativistic analysis of the relation between the agent and the world’.⁶¹ They differ

⁵⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiv [the spelling error is original].

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words. Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 10.

on how they structure social practices. Bourdieu proposes a coextensive relationship of three positions. These three positions are the field of objective positions, the structured system of available practices, and the expression of subjective agents (the ‘symbolic stance’) that make up what Bourdieu calls the *habitus*.⁶² For Bourdieu, modern societies are comprised of a number of ‘relatively autonomous microcosms [which are] specific and irreducible’.⁶³ Each of the microcosms are a network of objective relations between positions. The relations themselves are the structured systems (power dynamics organized by the historically defined field) of practices. The network of relations exist in a dynamic state of tension. The tension requires the structure to constantly be renewed and reproduced, which is accomplished through the actions of agents of subjective agents. Bourdieu proposes that agents are limited, situated in the field according to a configuration of properties defining their place and opportunity for participation within society. As Thrift summarizes the combination of the objective and the structured system, ‘Whereas the field is the objectified state of historical processes, the habitus is [its] embodied state.’⁶⁴ More specifically,

the concept of habitus refers to an ensemble of schemata of perception, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking, and acting - that structures all the expressive, verbal, and practical manifestations and utterances of a person. Habitus has to be thought of as ‘a generative principle of regulated improvisations’* (which are called practice), an incorporated structure formed by the objective conditions of its genesis. It is ‘embodied history, internalized as a second nature’, as Bourdieu says, ‘the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product’**. By contrast with the familiar sociological concept of role, habitus refers to something incorporated, not to a set of norms or expectations existing independently of and externally to the agent. Likewise, as it is thought to be part of living organism, thus functioning in the way of living systems, habitus refers to a generative principle, not to a set of fixed and finite rules.⁶⁵

⁶² Nigel Thrift, *Spatial Formations* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 14. de Certeau highlights an example of the division and correlation in Bourdieu’s ethnographic studies, de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 55. See note 38 for references to the ethnographic work of Bourdieu.

⁶³ Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 97.

⁶⁴ Thrift, *Spatial Formations*, p. 14.

⁶⁵ Beate Kraus, ‘Gender and symbolic violence: female oppression in the light of Bourdieu’s theory of social practice’, in Craig Calhoun, Edward Lipuma and Moshe Postone (eds.), *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), pp. 156-177 [169-170]. * Citing Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of A Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 78. ** Citing Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, p. 56. Cited in Thrift, *Spatial Formations*, p. 15.

The habitus is, as Thrift points out, an ‘embodied consciousness’⁶⁶ that

Makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity, continuously pulling them from the state of dead letters, reviving the sense deposited in them, but at the same time imposing the revisions and transformation that realisation entails.⁶⁷

There is, then, an ontological complicity between the habitus and the social field. To put it in language more closely connected to de Certeau, social orders of production and reproduction open places for action, and actions are a response to that opening, acquiring meaning through the embodiment of that opening.

De Certeau writes that what Bourdieu misses is the idea of practices as indexes of belief, as creative calculations, when ‘certifying their amenability to socio-economic rationality’ and in doing so declares them ‘unconscious’.⁶⁸ The complicity that Bourdieu asserts, microcosms and agency, makes the *habitus* a ‘dogmatic place’, affirming structured systems as a “reality” which the discourse needs in order to be totalizing’.⁶⁹ Despite conceding Bourdieu’s effective investigations of culture, de Certeau finds that his general theory misidentifies the nature of everyday practice. De Certeau notes that there is something of Bourdieu’s mistake that teaches something about the ultimate relationship between tactics and any theory:

tactics, through their criteria and procedures, are supposed to make use of the institutional and symbolic organization in such an autonomous way that if it were to take them seriously the scientific representation of society would become lost in them, in every sense of the word.⁷⁰

Tactics especially, in de Certeau’s mind, but also strategies are the result of a plurality of meaning, not a singular meaning expressed and identified systemically in structure and also socially embodied. The dynamism of their relationship cannot be contained through a scientific representation of society. Each are indices of belief such that to each, the other is in certain respects a radical other. This is the gap between strategy and

⁶⁶ Thrift, *Spatial Formations*, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, p. 57.

⁶⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 59.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

tactics of which de Certeau speaks. This is the reason that de Certeau appeals to spatiality as a means for encountering and exploring subjectivity.

Thrift writes, ‘de Certeau tries to surmount the problem of Bourdieu’s implicit denigration of the tactical properties of practices by exploring how space intervenes both in constituting tactics and in forming the other’.⁷¹ Thus, ‘a tactic insinuates into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance’.⁷² Practices, for de Certeau, are spatial-symbolic, which cannot be wholly integrated into a totalizing theory. They may be discovered using metaphor, through understanding myth and story. Again, Thrift explains it well: ‘through the movements of the body and the powers of speech the subject (now a walker) can jointly produce the possibility of converting one spatial signifier into another’.⁷³ These practices are part of the embodiment of narratives that was seen in the previous chapter.

As spatial-symbolic and freely creative actions, they [tactics] produce

liberated spaces that can be occupied. A rich indetermination gives them ... the function of articulating a second poetic geography [*espace*] on top of the geography of the literal forbidden or permitted meaning [*lieu*]. They [*tactics*] insinuate other routes into the functionalist and historical [strategic] order of movement.⁷⁴

The response to Bourdieu is similar, though not the same, as that of de Certeau to the specific technicity of Foucault. The attempt to delimit the field of the multiplicity of practice (Foucault) or the theorizing of practice (Bourdieu) is to inscribe a particular strategic way of thinking and seeing, and in the process, lose other ways of seeing what is visible.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Thrift, *Spatial Formations*, p. 16.

⁷² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xix.

⁷³ Thrift, *Spatial Formations*, p. 16.

⁷⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 105 [text in parenthesis added to bridge the concepts].

⁷⁵ Michel de Certeau, ‘The Gaze: of Nicholas of Cusa’, trans. Catherine Porter, in *Diacritics* 17.3 (1987), pp. 2-38 [6]; see the same, Michel de Certeau, ‘The Look: Nicholas of Cusa’, in *The Mystic Fable Vol. 2*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 23-70 [29].

De Certeau points out that tactics cannot be categorized according to a heterogenous order. This allows for de Certeau to identify how power seeks to exclude anything that does not fit its order. Also, it allows for de Certeau to suggest the possible ways in which tactics, and their *espace*, can and do leave marks on the official *lieu*. Moreover, as Schirato and Webb point out, de Certeau is able to contextualize those theories of practice, not as metadiscourse or generalized maps, but as practices themselves. As practices, they are specific to time and place and informed both by their theoretical antecedents as well as the politics, episteme, and discourse of the field(s) in which they operate.⁷⁶ De Certeau's resonance with the hermeneutical tradition is shown in this conclusion. Ricœur summarizes the response to critical ideology that 'critique is its own tradition'⁷⁷; so too could de Certeau's idea that all practices are indexes of belief be summarized: belief (order) is its own practice.

De Certeau's analysis of the works of Foucault and Bourdieu, which he takes as objects of knowledge, exemplify his hermeneutic and style of writing and an ethics of inquiry. In these, rather than seeking to explain the nature of practice, his aim has been more tentative, to make a discussion possible, to make possible a theory that allows for an ambiguity inherent in subjectivity. He has accomplished this through showing the necessary separation between strategies and tactics. Tactics cannot be understood as practices within a unified theory or order of discourse; they are an alterity, a different order of practice. The distinction is part of the justification for the spatial separation of *lieu* and *espace*. Moreover, the distinction supports a means for exploring the character of practices, which may not otherwise have been visible. But what this does is open de

⁷⁶ Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, 'The Ethics and Economy of Inquiry: Certeau, Theory, and the Art of Practice.' in *Diacritics* 29.2 (1999), p. 86-99 [87].

⁷⁷ Mario J. Valdés (ed.), Ricœur, *A Ricœur Reader: Reflection & Imagination* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 306. The quote is Ricœur's summary of Gadamer in response to Habermas.

Certeau up to a criticism. If tactics are hidden, other, and ambiguous, how can they be spoken of with any specificity and how can they be applied to any particular problem such as locating the public presence of religion. What is the use of trying to speak of something that cannot be spoken of without distorting it? I believe this can be clarified by seeing how de Certeau understands the relation of practices, tactics especially, to subjectivity, experience, imagination, and the body.

6.3. Strategies and their alterity

Identifying practices marked by such radical alterity can be more clearly perceived by considering how de Certeau understands their function as indices of belief in relation to subjectivity, and he explores this using their relation to time and language. In this section, it will be seen that de Certeau's distinction between the spatial practices is partially informed by psychoanalysis but also by his religious philosophy, which in turn also furnishes the means for locating tactics. Exploring these connections allows a greater recognition of the difference between strategy and tactics, which is a requirement for applying the spatial theory of de Certeau as a critique of Kim Knott's spatiality and for contributing to the discourse of the space of religion in the public sphere. As a note on what follows, in mentioning psychoanalysis and religion, it may be expected that de Certeau makes specific application of particular practices. This is not the case; instead, I show de Certeau's extracts a conceptual apparatus in order to elicit a set of tools to be applied to a theoretical study of culture through spatiality.

6.3.1. The relation to ideas of time

What are the psychoanalytical resources for de Certeau's spatial approach and its social and cultural meaning? While in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau refers to Freud in his opening consideration of culture, this is before much of his analysis of the

spatial practices themselves. The answer to the question of what and how psychoanalytic resources contribute to the spatial approach is in identifying in de Certeau key intangibles (not categorical terms or analytical phrases), perceiving how they inform the structure of his investigation into culture. Two concepts emerge: the psychoanalytical views of history and of the relationship between word and meaning (symbol and symbolism).

de Certeau's was both a historian and a student of psychoanalysis. These disciplines adhere to different views of history and de Certeau's cultural work represents this difference. History as a discipline infers the recording, knowledge, and interpretation of the past in a meaningful way and much cultural study relies upon a similar perspective. This is contrasted with the apparent antipathy to the past of psychoanalysis.

In most of Freud's writings, for example, it is as if the dimension of history had been suspended, so that it is easy to see the model of the ego, the id and superego as an eternal Platonic form, a shining jewel invulnerable to the vagaries of time. In so far as history is discussed, it is always in terms of a myth of origins which anchors the unchangeability of the psyche in a primal crime of biblical proportions.⁷⁸

De Certeau suggests the dissimilarity reflects different views of time and he is not wholly comfortable with either. In the opening chapter of *Heterologies*, de Certeau writes that the mechanism of psychoanalysis, the 'return of the repressed', is linked to 'a certain conception of time and memory, according to which consciousness is both the deceptive *mask* and the operative *trace* of events that organize the present'; he continues, 'If the past (that which took place during, and took the form of, a decisive moment in the course of a crisis) is *repressed*, it *returns* in the present from which it was excluded, but does so surreptitiously.' The past haunts the present.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Dylan Evans, 'Historicism and Lacanian Theory', *Radical Philosophy* 79 (1996), pp. 35-40 [35].

⁷⁹ de Certeau, 'Psychoanalysis and Its History' in *Heterologies*, p. 3. He writes, 'One of Freud's favorite examples is a figuration of this detour-return, which constitutes its ruse of history: Hamlet's father returns after his murder, but in the form of a phantom, in another scene, and it is only then that he becomes the law his son obeys.' [originally in "Histoire et psychanalyse," in Jacques Le Goff, Roger Chartier, and Jacques Revel (eds.), *La nouvelle histoire* (Paris: Retz, 1978), pp. 477-487].

Historiography, on the other hand, predicates a break between the past and the present. It is ‘the product of relations of knowledge and power linking two supposedly distinct domains’.⁸⁰

De Certeau accepts both ideas. This seems like an obvious contradiction. The disparate strategies of time are echoed in de Certeau’s the spatial practices. The strategic system identifies time as a resource to be measured; it confines the past, a strategic operation, as part of its procedure in reproducing *lieu*. A system may postulate a connection between its past and present, yet it establishes a separation that makes objectification of the past a possibility. De Certeau frequently cites the manner in which a colonizing nation confines the past in order to write anew the narrative of its ‘new land’. Tactical operations, however, function on the principles of the presence of the past. Time is never a resource to be used; it is instead a symbol of what may or may not be possible. In this way, the past lives within the present and only waits for an opportunity to return and be enacted. Within *espace*, the past is often a continuous narrative giving meaning to the present.

There is yet another way to view strategy and tactics through reference to differing strategies of time. In the historiographic sense of time, the past is an ‘other’ that is constrained through separation, and its unsettling nature is overcome by its being ‘written upon’ by the present. Objectifying the past ensures that its impact on the present cannot go beyond what is said of it. This seemingly closed system is not as stable as it aims to be, or it is stable only if viewed from within the strategic system. De Certeau argues that the past is often an implicit ‘otherness’ of *lieu*. This directly parallels Freud’s ‘return of the repressed’. An example from the therapist’s clinic is the

⁸⁰ de Certeau, ‘Psychoanalysis and Its History’ in *Heterologies*, p. 4.

depressed patient whose suffering results from an past trauma. Here the past is not an object, powerless and separate. It is not possible to constrain the past; it always returns. De Certeau expects that the occurrences of the past in the present take many forms. Tactical practices, therefore, can appear as reiterations of the past in the present either as an unconscious repeating of the past or even an act aimed at the reforming the present.

Extracts from the psychoanalytic concept of time contribute to how de Certeau understands the presence of the past. De Certeau contrasts that concept of time with the historiographic sense of time as the two ‘uses’ of time he ascribes to the strategic and tactical operations of the spatial theory. I have explained this process as though de Certeau extracted those concepts towards the purposes identified. However, it is not possible to draw a direct purpose, since de Certeau is not that explicit in their connection. Yet, their resonance is unmistakable.⁸¹ The same can be said for the connection between his idea of language and practices.

6.3.2. The relation to language

By language, de Certeau understands not only a grammar or a specific variety of codified signs and rules that together form a system of meaning; he includes the construct of human symbolization in all its forms. What are the particulars of this wide-ranging perspective on signs and their meaning? The first peculiarity of de Certeau’s notion of language reflects his keenness to avoid the objectifying tendencies of totalizing structures. This is shown in his idea of language as both discursive and non-discursive.⁸² De Certeau’s acceptance of discursive language is evident his practice of

⁸¹ The connection of psychoanalysis to de Certeau’s spatial theory of culture is something I detected on my own although I later found the the connection in Ben Highmore’s exploration of de Certeau’s cultural studies. see Highmore, *Cultural Analyst*, p. 60.

⁸² Discursive language can be described as a form of symbolization that relies upon the orderliness of language, its adherence to some internal logic, and its ability to indicate and to represent things. Non-212

communicating through speech and writing. This is nothing special, rather it is the acceptance of non-discursive language that is important. This concept applied to the interpretation of language that allows us to see a further dimension of the spatial practices.

Joddy Murray has suggested that de Certeau ‘posits a generative role for non-discursive language that exceeds the discursive’.⁸³ This would mean that language is not reducible to a symbolized system of communication. Consider de Certeau’s argument in ‘The Black Sun of Language’ from *Heterologies*:

No one can express in words that which gives everyone the power to speak. There is order, but only in the form of what one does not know, in the mode of what is ‘different’ in relation to consciousness. The Same (the homogeneity of order) appears as otherness (the heterogeneity of the unconscious, or rather of the implicit). To this first rift, we must add a second: analysis can uncover a beginning and an end to this language that speaks unbeknown to the voices that pronounce it.⁸⁴

De Certeau suggests that there is a language that exists outside words. It gives ‘everyone the power to speak’, and this is because consciousness experiences the ‘other’ through non-discursive language. To this is added that we experience the non-discursive ‘unbeknown to the voices that pronounce it’, as we attempt to speak discursively about it. Murray indicates that for de Certeau, the non-discursive gives rise to the discursive. There is a priority in the relationship. The non-discursive is a hermeneutical way-of-being that is only partially expressible in the discursive. Thought is pushed to its limits, even overpowered, when the discursive tries to encompass the non-discursive.⁸⁵

In a constant play between the excess of thought over language and the excess of language over thought, commentary ‘translates’ into new formulations the ‘remainder’ of the signified or the ‘residue’ latent in the signifier. It is an infinite task, since what one claims to find is always pre-given

discursive language includes things which do not fit within a grammatical scheme of expression. That does not mean that it is not symbolized in some sense, just that it is not limited to a textual chain of reasoning. For the idea of the separation of language into discursive and non-discursive I am indebted to Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art 3rd ed.* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1957 [1941]). Also, Joddy Murray for making its connection to de Certeau; see, Joddy Murray, “Michel de Certeau’s Language Theory” in *Journal of College Writing* 6.1 Dec. 2003, pp. 19-33

⁸³ Murray, “Michel de Certeau’s Language Theory”, p. 22

⁸⁴ de Certeau, “The Black Sun of Language” in *Heterologies*, p. 172.

⁸⁵ Murray, “Michel de Certeau’s Language Theory”, p. 22.

in that unlimited reserve of 'intentions' buried beneath words, in that inexhaustible capital of words richer than the thoughts that assembled them.⁸⁶

The 'inexhaustible capital of words richer than the thoughts that assembled them' implies a historical texture to language itself that cannot be simply arbitrary. Murray concludes: 'In short, Certeau is pointing to the limits of discursive language and the power of non-discursive language: that within words themselves are layers of ambiguities full of non-discursive meaning.'⁸⁷

It is possible to draw an immediate analogical parallel between discursive and non-discursive language forms and the spatial operations. Discursive language presumes both a will and a power to communicate meaning. Overlaying this with the spatial terminology, a parallel with strategic operations and *lieu* is clear, as a system of meaning-making discursive writing is a powerful apparatus for the production of place. Non-discursive furtive means of communication can be strongly associated with the tactical operations and the lived-in expressions of *espace*. Meaning in *espace* includes the use of word and symbol, but it is through the layers of ambiguities taken advantage of by a will and power that operates in a field that is not its own. De Certeau's view of language facilitates a means of interpreting the function of the practices within these vastly different places. Strategic practices as discursive language operate under the constraints of their forms. Strategic practices as discursive communication assume that the word, written and spoken, is the means to articulate thought, and consequently, anything that cannot be so indicated, i.e. anything unsayable or ineffable, cannot be seriously studied or assessed for its veracity. However, tactics are these unsayable and ineffable practices. They possess an 'inexhaustible capital', using Murray's words, 'richer than the thoughts that assembled them' and the strategies that constrain them.

⁸⁶ de Certeau, 'Black Sun', *Heterologies*, pp. 174-175.

⁸⁷ Murray, "Michel de Certeau's Language Theory", p. 22.

Discovering them, their function and meaning, however, is difficult. De Certeau maintains that the true meaning of a symbol is elusive. If meaning is not obscured by the constraining forces of a strategic system and its structures, it may be obscured by a veil of distance between non-discursive symbols and our ability to listen.

This gap between word and meaning, symbol and symbolization, is represented in de Certeau's spatial approach as an ambiguity that allows for alterity to reside implicitly in the strategic system. It also allows for a creative space within which tactical operations can work. But this raises a question from the perspective of the cultural analyst: How then can the meaning that lies both within and beyond the symbol ever be seen, knowing that in the recording something will be lost? Highmore suggests that it was an awareness of the difficulty to overcome the gap in our ability to understand each other that informed part of de Certeau's insistence on avoiding an application of normative theories – even such theories as counter-culture (subcultures) or popular culture.⁸⁸ Tactics are not simply counter-cultural practices of resistance. Counter-culture is, for de Certeau, part of *lieu* and the practices are strategic not tactical. Whether macro (protests) or micro (individual's rejecting conformity) resistance, these practices are not necessarily tactics. According to Haenfler, through their resistance, subcultures undermine hegemonic social meanings and power relationships that influence our actions in many ways.⁸⁹ They are open opposition to dominant systems.⁹⁰ Tactics cannot be located by identifying resistance and counter-cultures. Instead, it is from

⁸⁸ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xii A helpful discussion on de Certeau's understanding of popular culture is Tony Schirato, 'My space or yours? de Certeau, Frow and the meanings of popular culture' *Cultural Studies* 7.2 (1993), pp. 282-291. See also, John Frow, 'Michel de Certeau and the practice of representation', *Post-Colonial Literature and Advanced Literary Theory: English Department Study Guide* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland, 1991).

⁸⁹ Ross Haenfler, *Subcultures: The Basics*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 2014)

⁹⁰ Rebecca Raby, 'What is Resistance?' in *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8.2., (2005), pp. 151-172

psychoanalytic clinical practices that de Certeau draws a principle for identifying tactics.⁹¹ Highmore writes:

it is the more clinical side of Lacanianism that feeds into its cultural potential, precisely because it isn't interpretation that is to the fore, but the possibility of communicating differently ... this context, whereby the clinical becomes the model for the study of culture, precisely because it is where interpretation is not established in advance, and because it is an experimental art of communication, is the one that has most to offer for an understanding of Michel de Certeau's work.⁹²

The principle that informs de Certeau's 'possibility of communicating differently' is dialogical, a deep listening that is a reversal of the standard relationship between the analyst with the patient. The dialogical engagement is not that of 'sessions interrupted by dogmatic statements' of the analyst or strategist as 'a subject supposed to have knowledge'.⁹³ Instead, tactics can only be 'heard' through a deep listening; they must be individually heard, not substituted by a common subject.

What exactly is the form of this deep listening? It is a dialogical practice that involves a disclosure of both the speaking subject and the listening subject. This idea resonates in de Certeau's opening construction of the question.

The question at hand concerns modes of operation or schemata of action, and not directly the subjects (or persons) who are their authors or vehicles. It concerns an operational logic whose models may go as far back as the age-old ruses of fishes and insects that disguise or transform themselves in order to survive, and which has in any case been concealed by the form of rationality currently dominant in Western culture.⁹⁴

The essence of the statement is that de Certeau's cultural study goes much deeper than a sociopolitical question of power structures or institutions; neither is it a question of rationalities and communications. It is not even a matter of categorizing and codifying language, text, and practice. The subject of his cultural study is a question of anthropology, questioning the essence of humankind and its expression of meaning in the life of the body (practices, language, and stories). For de Certeau, the operational logic is not an indicator primarily linked to conditions such as context, status, gender,

⁹¹ Highmore, *Analysing Culture*, p. 64.

⁹² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 67.

⁹³ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 28.

⁹⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xi.

power, or any necessary institutional or societal structure, even as they have inevitable impact. Instead, de Certeau identifies these operations as philosophical acts, or ways of being embedded in the practices of everyday life. The way of discovering the tactical practices is through the establishment of ‘dialogical spaces’; the image de Certeau uses is that of the mystics in their desire to hear from the divine: ‘of course, this is not dictated by a political “will to persuade,” but has to do instead with a spiritual “will to hear”’.⁹⁵

6.4. Subjectivity and the meaning of practice

De Certeau’s search for the effective power and potential of everyday practices places emphasis on subjectivity as the basis of agency. Tom Conley writes, de Certeau observes that communities find their bearings through frames of reference that do not need to obsess about clarity, that ambiguity in expression does not disprove meaning. That even as symbols are vital and necessary, De Certeau argues that social cohesion and meaning are not limited to common language and practices; they are also in unnameable areas ‘where contradiction is felt outside of the languages typifying its limits and functions’.⁹⁶ He locates the virtue of subjectivity in everyday practices and the meaning they embody, identifying how they operate alongside the collective foundation of knowledge and the general insignificance of meaning and content of ‘certified’ speech. Critical of Foucault and Bourdieu, perceiving their agency as *response*, de Certeau situates tactical action as independent of socially derived subjectivity. For de Certeau, subjectivity is rooted in a more fundamental sense of human nature – ‘the question at hand concerns modes of operation or schemata of

⁹⁵ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, p. 91.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

action', which are an 'operational logic whose models may go as far back as the age-old ruses of fishes and insects'.⁹⁷ He writes:

I am trying to hear these fragile ways in which the body makes itself heard in the language, the multiple voices set aside by the triumphal *conquista* of the economy that has, since the beginning of the 'modern age' (i.e., since the seventeenth or eighteenth century), given itself the name of writing ... The installation of the scriptural apparatus of modern 'discipline', a process that is inseparable from the 'reproduction' made possible by the development of printing, was accompanied by a double isolation from the 'people' (in opposition to the 'bourgeoisie') and from the 'voice' (in opposition to the written).⁹⁸

De Certeau aims for a sense that people are connected within a dynamic web of plurality. He argues that the web of plurality is clearly seen in the myriad ways that people create meaning by weaving together the resources of the present (everyday items) with the meanings of the past. Therein, identity is not equivalent to thought, nor is it determined by circumstance, but it is a story that is made as it is told through word and deed; and that it is common human belief that functions as the key to the activation of agency. De Certeau urges that the meaningfulness of action, though immanent in the action itself, has a connection to something beyond the subject.

Many everyday practices ... are tactical in character. And so are, more generally, many 'ways of operating': victories of the 'weak' over the 'strong' ... clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, 'hunter's cunning', maneuvers, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries, poetic as well as warlike. The Greeks called these 'ways of operating' *metis*. But they go much further back, to the immemorial intelligence displayed in the tricks and imitations of plants and fishes. From the depths of the ocean to the streets of modern megalopolises, there is a continuity and permanence of these tactics.⁹⁹

This description encapsulates those tactical subjects that de Certeau hopes to identify by their practices, marked by a fluid sense of time (past and present) and meaning (symbol and symbolization) within a field acting within, beside, and against a strategic structure.

De Certeau's analysis, however, raises some challenges when the aim is to contribute to a specific question related to the space of religion in the public sphere. What does it add to the analytical or empirical knowledge? De Certeau leaves unclear various points that

⁹⁷ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xi.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 131-2.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. xix-xx.

would help to make his case. For example, de Certeau explains, ‘as one explores the terrain of these practices, something is constantly slipping away, something that can neither be said nor “taught” but must be “practiced”’. He continues:

if one maintains that this “art” can only be practiced, and that outside of this practice it has no statement, language must also be involved in this practice. It is an art of speaking, then, which exercises precisely that art of operating in which Kant discerned an art of thinking. In other words, it is a narration.¹⁰⁰

The statement itself seems to undermine the possibility of tactics as an effective analytical category. He writes that it ‘disappears into its own action, as though lost in the what it does, without any mirror that re-presents it: it has no image of itself’.¹⁰¹ This is the difficulty in trying to access strategy and tactics as registers for normative and empirical study; how to study and apply something that ‘has no image of itself’. This, though, seems to bolster his point rather than undermine it. *The Practice of Everyday Life* was intended as a means to create a way of speaking and not to formulate a new structural outline. This is why it has been so important to take time to assess the underlying hermeneutical logic of de Certeau’s spatial approach. Those resources provide a field within which de Certeau’s strategy and tactics may be situated, but not as coordinates on a grid; more like dynamics within the field.

Several points can be made to suggest the value of de Certeau’s theory of practice. Practice is the means by which individuals struggle for individual and communal realization within the taxonomy of strategy, and tactics make the vitality of that struggle more acute than Foucault and Bourdieu show. Further, by noting the independence of tactics from strategy in terms of originating thought and power, while maintaining the sense of tactics as relying on the products of strategy, de Certeau is better able to imagine the hiddenness, responsiveness, and potentially socially critical possibilities of

¹⁰⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 77.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 82.

the practices of individuals or groups that are not identified or clearly identifiable in strategic systems. De Certeau's theorizing of practices and their function within spatiality also clearly shows how physical locations are not merely background aspects of society; they are symbolic, but that symbolism may be changed and appropriated. Further, it shows that spatial practice is lent meaning through social and cultural context; therefore, scrutinizing these practices is a means to uncovering the spatial system present within society. One other point is that the spatial practices are connected to time. While strategic practices order and maintain a structure of meaning they suppose as objective and, in a sense, infinite, tactics are furtive appropriates of time intended, making the most of the present. In this way, they cannot be, in a sense, anticipated by the system that strategies aim to maintain, even as they are expected by the social and cultural context from which they extend.¹⁰² Tactical practices are not something that can be empirically measured or marked out by a political act. Anticipating the conclusion of the thesis argument, the dominant approaches to religion in the public sphere look to identify a place for religion but what we see here is that codifying that results in a failure to see religion as it is expressed in the meaning-making practices that cannot be reduced to private and public.

6.5. Conclusion

The close of this chapter offers a good opportunity to summarize the conceptual frame of de Certeau's spatial theory. Understanding de Certeau requires having an awareness of a fundamental tension that operates in and through his work. Buchanan summarizes the tension as the philosophical question of the Same and Other and de Certeau's

¹⁰² On this point I think of the questioning of the secularisation thesis and the idea of the re-emergence of religion. The secularization model was not able to conceive of the possibility of continued and even increasing religious influence and presence in the world. de Certeau's spatial approach provides a new vantage point that contributes to the New Visibility theory of religion, that the visibility of religion is something that is more complex and nuanced than the secularization model could predict.

concern with it as heterology, his great unfinished project.¹⁰³ Chapters 4–6 have addressed this heterological concern in different ways. In Chapter 4, it was discussed in the context of his historiographic critique and the influence it had upon his writing method, providing me with a hermeneutical principle through which to read his other works. In that chapter, it was also argued that de Certeau is motivated by a theological dialogical principle aiming at what Ortner calls a point of ‘critical encounter’ between Same and Other.¹⁰⁴ The particular difficulty that de Certeau aims to address in producing this sort of critical encounter arises from the methods that are generally applied towards understanding the subject within heterology. De Certeau uses the oppositional terms of *lieu* and *espace* to demarcate the differences in cultural locations that result, on the one hand, from strategic operations and creating a sense of order and principles for that encounter; and, on the other hand, from the creative and furtive practices of individuals or groups as they move in and through that normative landscape.

The distinction of strategy and tactics moves towards this end, aiming to show that

This culturally/religiously produced subject is defined not only by a particular position in a social, economic and religious matrix, but by a complex subjectivity, a complex set of feelings and fears, which are central to a whole argument.¹⁰⁵

De Certeau provides a methodology that Napolitano and Pratten say is able

to grasp subjectivity in its fragmented forms, since he unsettles models of internalised subjectivity (and therefore its confinement to a cognitive/psychological level) by constantly connecting internalisation to modes of political, historical critique and the production of narratives.¹⁰⁶

They continue by saying that this subjectivity de Certeau describes ‘includes multiple forms that proliferate at the margins of legitimate readings’.¹⁰⁷ De Certeau does not

¹⁰³ Ian Buchanan, ‘What is heterology’, *New Black Friars* 77.909 (1996), pp. 483-493 [483-4].

¹⁰⁴ Sherry Ortner, ‘Subjectivity and Cultural Critique’, *Anthropological Theory* 5 (2005), pp. 31-52 [45] Valentina Napolitano and David Pratten, ‘Michel de Certeau: Ethnology and challenge of plurality’, *Social Anthropology* 15.1 (2007), pp. 1-12 [4].

¹⁰⁵ Ortner, ‘Subjectivity and Cultural Critique’, p. 35.

¹⁰⁶ Napolitano and Pratten, ‘Michel de Certeau’, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

situate his method in the ideal-social or the phenomenological field, but within the interstices that emerge in a process of appropriation of different registers of society, history, and everyday practice.

In her yet unpublished ethnographic study of British Gujurati Christians (BGC) Usha Reifsnider relates an event that can be used here to give clarity to de Certeau's terms.¹⁰⁸ The event allows for an identification of meaning-making *lieu* and *espace* as well as strategy and tactic. The framing of the event is the difference between the Hinduism of British Gujurati (BG) and the Christianity of British Gujurait Evangelical Christians (BGC). The event refers to a memorial held for woman from the BG community and the participation in that memorial of BGC's, specifically the woman's daughter. After the traditional BG cremation, a memorial was arranged by the broader BG community. As part of the memorial a photo of the deceased, a light, and a box of sweets was placed on a table on a raised platform. In this instance, the memorial could be identified with Hindu *lieu* as it was arranged by the BG community. In BG practice such displays of photos are important, for example photos of deceased relatives are often displayed in a similar manner alongside the icons of Hindu gods in a home *mandir* (a shrine or temple, a symbolic house where the divine and the human meet). In this, these photos become as religious icons and part of worship. At the memorial the arrangement was taken by the BG community as an affirmation of its religious *lieu*, it was a strategic practice and symbol affirming the BG order, i.e. the community's belief about life, death, the divine and its embeddedness in human life. The significant point of contrast is the interpretation of the arrangement by the daughter. For the BGC community the *mandir* and any associated rituals and action connecting a person to the divine is considered

¹⁰⁸ Usha Reifsnider, 'Reclaiming British Gujurati (Hindu) Culture for British Gujurati Converts to Evangelical Christianity', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and Middlesex University, 2021) The example was originally shared with me during a private conversation. I was later provided access to the unpublished material.

idolatry, this includes the practice of iconizing photos of deceased relatives. Tactically the daughter, therefore, appropriated the arrangement as a way to practice the Christian command to honour her mother and commit her spirit to divine grace. In this, the daughter and other BGC in attendance were able to create a religious *espace* that affirmed a Christian theology of God, of humanity, life and death. Applying de Certeau's terms allows us to see how in one site, the memorial, strategic practices ordered a Hindu *lieu* while at the same time a tactical practice appropriated that order to create a Christian *espace*. This event allows us to also highlight the substantial furtive nature of *espace*. Past interactions between BGC and BG communities were often marked by a tension resulting from the BG families feeling of being dishonoured by the conversion from Hinduism of those BGC's. In this instance, however, as the *espace* of the BGC was an unseen subjective tactical appropriation, the BG community felt no such dishonour since they were unaware of the different meaning-making taking place. This illustrates what the spatial approach allows, a means to see and articulate the multiple forms that thrive within the scope and at the margins of authorized readings. As Reifsnider points out, such tactical appropriations by BGC's are making it possible to mend tensions caused by their open conversion without their abandoning their Christianity.

Having thus described and illustrated de Certeau's spatial terms, the following chapter aims to bring together the theoretical material from the last several chapters to re-engage Knott on the question of the location of religion and religious spatiality. The primary focus will be to explore how Knott's framing of the spatial field as one of force-power relations ultimately constrains religion within a strategic system that, among other things, requires Knott to appeal to postsecularity as a means of explaining the presence of the sacred. It will be explained how de Certeau's spatiality offers a

better theoretical basis for a spatial exploration of religion. Alongside this re-engagement, the question of the space of religion in the public sphere will be addressed; this analysis will identify how the discourse between Habermas and Taylor needs to be strengthened by the application of a spatial theory of religion in relation to the strategic system of the public sphere.

Chapter Seven

7. Religious Spaces: Their location and meaning

I contend that de Certeau's spatial theory contributes to identifying where and how religion can be made visible in the public places of society, including the public sphere; not by denying the potential benefits of Habermas' and Taylor's formulation, nor by wholly replacing Knott's locating of religion but instead by providing a deeper and more robust conceptual frame. This relies on three prior conclusions, which I phrase here as questions: What is the value of a spatial approach to the study of religion in the public sphere? How does de Certeau's theory provide a framework that avoids weighting towards a secular intellectual orientation? In what way does he make the phenomena of religion more visible? This will not be a retelling of previous conclusions but will contain critical statements of its contributions in light of the following: (1) identifying the value of a spatial approach to making religion visible to sociocultural discourse; (2) conceiving religion spatially; and (3) indicating where and how the presence of religion may be seen. Throughout, I will draw from de Certeau's enquiry into spaces and practices of meaning for analysis of religious space.

7.1. The value of a spatial approach

The first aim of this thesis was to demonstrate the need for a spatial approach to religion. I have argued through the previous chapters that approaches to the public presence of religion, such as Habermas' postsecular and Taylor's (new) secular positions, while contributing to an optimism regarding religion and the possibility of its role in collective discourse are unable to perceive the religion in its capacity as an embodied and living tradition. It is this capacity that is made visible by a spatial approach and its self-reflexive awareness of the plurality and polysemy of lived

experience. de Certeau's spatial approach inherently contrasts with normative approaches to religion. This is, in part, because it genuinely considers religious locations of meaning and practices for the production of culture as part of a narrative tradition.

The second aim was to demonstrate the need for a reformulation of the spatial approach to religion. An approach to religion that rests on a secular philosophical frame, such as Knott's formulation of a spatial approach to religion, is unable to account for religious spaces as examples of a distinct way of being-in-the-world. An application of de Certeau's spatial terms allows the reformulation of the spatial approach in order to conceive of religious space in a way that not only accounts for religion in its relation to non-religion, differentiating between their phenomena, but also accounts for religion as a reflexively subjective way of operating within the world. Additionally, de Certeau's vision of space and practice takes seriously a creative potential of practitioners of religion that genuinely recognizes both the social production of spaces of meaning and also a reflexivity at the centre of that social production. The result is that the spatial approach provides a methodology that can assess religion in those places where it is not obviously present or even where it may appear to be entirely absent. That Knott's spatiality is unable to account for the full range of religious spaces is not unexpected. In order to identify her Religious/Secular Field, Knott accepts a limited view of both religion and secularity.¹ The result of such an operation is the formation of unspoken forms of constraint resulting from the organizing impulses at work within her interpretation. One unspoken constraint resulting from Knott's strategic operation is the

¹ Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion*, (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]) p. 83. When Knott calls for a strategic application of religion, she is appealing to Jeremy R. Carrette's call for a Foucauldian functional use of the term. See Jeremy R. Carrette, 'Foucault, Strategic Knowledge and the Study of Religion: A Response to McCutcheon, Fitzgerald, King, and Alles' (Review Symposium on Jeremy Carrette's *Foucault and Religion and Religion and Culture*), *Culture and Religion* 2.1 (2001), pp. 127-40 [128].

explicit focus on the ‘boundary disputes’ between the religious and the secular as limits for their identification.² The other unspoken constraint is the perception of secularity and religion as ideological constructs, denying any essential difference between the two. This is seen in her conceptualization of the sacred. In contrast, I argue that religion and secularity are not wholly conflicting perceptions within a common culture, but instead different ways of being-in-the-world, resulting in society being a plurality of culture. This will show the third determination, that de Certeau’s spatial approach is an appropriate starting point and underestimated framework for the study of religion in that it (a) contributes to understanding the differences between religious and non-religious phenomena; (b) allows for a means of seeing these phenomena; and, (c) identifies where these phenomena are to be seen.³

7.1.2 A spatial view of religious phenomena

In giving an account of the spatial view of religious phenomena, Knott’s *The Location of Religion* is informative, even if her conceptual basis is lacking. Knott highlights that we may expect a spatial analysis of religion to provide knowledge of some or all of the following (the list has been modified to reflect de Certeau’s spatiality):⁴

- the everyday spatial practices of religious people;
- the infusion of *lieu* with religion;
- the religious production of locations of meaning;
- varied forms of religious and secular relations (contentious, dialogical, and hidden);
- the distinctiveness of religious practices and language;
- the politics of religious identity;

² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 84.

³ Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, ‘Introduction’ in Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 1-11 [5].

⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 6 I have adjusted the language of the list to account for de Certeau’s take on spatiality.

- the consumption and use by religions of social products and capital and their conduct with this production and the flow of capital.

While I do not intend to conduct a case study of a spatial analysis, I do think it is helpful to consider an example by which critical questions may be asked in order to consider the value of the spatial approach. This is a macro example in the sense that it treats not individuals but governments, dominant practices that shape our behaviour, and value systems. Even though de Certeau's theory is more applicable to a micro level of analysis I use this example because (a) we generally think of macro examples when we question the public presence of religion, and (b) because it provides a good contrast for showing the potential contribution of spatial approach.

On 16th June 2019, the *Assemblée Nationale du Québec* assented to Bill 21, entitled 'An act respecting the laicity of the State'.⁵ The bill is intended to maintain principles of the impartiality of the state. It prohibits persons performing state functions from wearing religious symbols. The bill provides that laicity is based on four principles: the separation of state and religions, the religious neutrality of the state, the equality of all citizens, and the freedom of conscience and religion. In the Bill, a religious symbol is defined as 'any object, including clothing, a symbol, jewellery (sic), an adornment, an accessory or headwear, that (i) is worn in connection with a religious conviction or belief; or (ii) is reasonably considered as referring to a religious affiliation'.⁶

⁵ Bill No. 21 'An Act respecting the laicity of the State' 1st Session, 42nd Legislature, Québec, 2019 (Assented, 16th June 2019), SQ2019, c. 12 [Hereafter Bill 21] This bill is the product of a long series of political actions in Québec that can be traced back to the *Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences* or what is more popularly referred to as the Bouchard-Taylor Commission of 2007. There is much similarity between Bill 21 and the inaugural findings of the *Commission on Accommodation*. In 2017 Charles Taylor stated that he no longer held to the findings of the *Commission*.

⁶ Chapter 6, 'Bill 21, An act respecting the laicity of the State'.

If the case of Bill 21 is considered through the lens of the classical liberal-democratic distinctions between private and public, belief and reason, sacred and secular, the lines can be drawn directly. The state as a public, neutral and secular institution can only fulfil its function of treating all citizens equally if religious symbols are not publicly visible. Bill 21 has been thoroughly discussed in government, the courts, academia, and news media. The bill has frequently been criticized as being a form of or even a guise for institutional discrimination.⁷ The dominant narrative has centred on striking a balance between religious freedom and state neutrality, framed as the relationship between personal identity and public neutrality, presuming that identity can only be free and equal in a neutral environment. Maintaining the neutral environment requires that people who work in that environment must be a symbol of that neutrality.⁸ On this view, religion is an individual and private phenomenon that can be ‘put on’ and ‘taken off’ depending on the context. Is that appropriate? Also, on this view religious symbols are seen as fashion choices. But are the religious symbols someone wears an aesthetic or an ethical consideration? Further, the concepts that ground these questions have a correlative effect of challenging the presumed neutrality of secularism or the secular state.⁹ If religion and secularity are each a tradition addressing ultimate problems or fundamental meanings, then debates like Bill 21 cannot be seen as questions of respecting neutrality. All of these are important considerations, but they are not spatial considerations.

⁷ Concertation Table against Systemic Racism, ‘Bill 21 is a case of systemic racism’ 13 June, 2019; <https://ricochet.media/en/2654/bill-21-is-a-case-of-systemic-racism>. Last accessed 10th August 2019. Ricochet media is described as ‘public interest journalism’ that is ‘crowd funded and serving the public interest.’

⁸ Curiously, that neutrality includes appropriately diverse levels of culture, race and gender representation but not diverse religious representation.

⁹ Margaretta Patrick, W. Y. Alice Chan, Hicham Tiflati, and Erin Reid, ‘Religion and Secularism: Four Myths and Bill 21’ in *Directions Journal* an online publication of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, December 19, 2019; https://issuu.com/crrf-fcrr/docs/directions9dec_ccrl_fourmythsbill21, accessed November 10, 2020.

What if we consider Bill 21 from the perspective of Knott's spatial method, situating the debate in the Religious/Secular Field as a site of struggle? The themes of Bill 21 are recognizable in discussions on traditional religious symbols and their encounter with secular and other new contexts. An example is the *hijab*. The *hijab* has been at the centre of multiple national debates about religious identity, gender politics, religious and racial discrimination, Westernization, and social and educational inclusion (or better exclusion). As Knott details, the *hijab* may be a sign of wealth, protection, oppression, modesty, exclusion, community, defiance, power, or rejection of Western society and its influence. She notes that it is most interesting how it has the capacity in non-Islamic states to be a symbol of difference – the wearer is in but not of the West – and for those who choose to wear it, the *hijab* may be appropriated as a positive symbol of identity and unity.¹⁰ It is in this sort of context that Knott locates her spatial analysis. The wearing of the *hijab* in Western secular nations is an example of religious practice and representation that produces a religious space differentiated from secular sites. Therefore, '*Hijab* is a religious space.'¹¹ Here, the question is one of identity and representation within a broader public. Knott's spatial approach frames the wearing of religious symbols as more than a question of neutrality and equality but as a struggle between ideologies and social orders by taking into account the embodied and socially produced meaning of *hijab*.

Applying the broader conceptual framework of de Certeau's spatiality raises two difficulties of Knott's appraisal. Firstly, Knott identifies the effective aspect of religious practice only when reified as a point of difference. Are we to think that hijab is no

¹⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 57.

¹¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 57, on this page Knott notes (n. 100) 'for some women, the *hijab* and the body within it are one. Removing the *hijab* is tantamount to peeling of the skin.' She cites, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, 'Sartorial Fabric-ations: Enlightenment and Western Feminism', in *Postcolonialism, Feminism, and Religious Discourse*, ed. Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 82-99.

longer a religious space when worn within the Mosque? Secondly, the identification of the relationship between religious and secular spaces only as contested does not account for situations where they are complementary, collaborative or even indifferent. Are we to discount these and suppose all contacts between religion and secularity are sites of struggle. This is exactly what Knott does. Knott's spatial approach is centred within her concept of the Religious/Secular Field. It is via this field that Knott proposes to give account for the differences between religious and non-religious phenomena. Her conception of the field also goes to answer the question of identifying how these phenomena are to be seen. Knott suggests that religious and non-religious spaces are visible when viewed as within an epistemological field of force–power relations, i.e. the space of the modern West. This epistemological field is manifest in physical, social, and cultural arenas where boundary disputes take place.¹² She characterizes this as a site of struggle, although the relationship is dialectic and not merely oppositional. Religious and non-religious phenomena are identifiable at points of contact (both materially and ideologically) where that struggle manifests as reflexive self-identification in contrast with and against other positions.

The value in applying de Certeau's concept of spatiality is that it makes visible sites of struggle as Knott's does, but can also locate religious spaces *within* non-religious systems or sites of meaning. It does this by showing the religious *espace* are not solely manifestations of an epistemological site of struggle. Let us test the idea using his spatial terms *lieu* and *espace* and applying them to Bill 21. In doing so, we can associate *lieu* with the public sector, defined and ordered to respect the laicity of the state. The legislation is part of a strategy to generate relations (an exclusion) with an *other* distinct from it, religious symbols. According to de Certeau's model, these religious symbols

¹² Knott, *The Location of Religion.*, p. 1.
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may be read as another *lieu*, where the place circumscribed is religious identity and the purpose is self-identification. The practice of wearing symbols is a strategy defining who and how religious identity is experienced and expressed. Consequently, the question of Bill 21 is limited to *lieu*. But, the differentiation between *lieu* and *espace* suggests another site for identifying the expression and experience of religion. In de Certeau's model, *espace* is a social production of meaning resulting from tactics. The tactical practice is the insinuation of meaning into the other's place, fragmentarily and furtively, 'without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance'. Where we look for religious *espace* is with how these physical, material, and social instances have been appropriated towards the ends of producing religious meaning. De Certeau's spatial approach endeavours to make possible seeing the hidden religious *espace* that takes shape and contributes meaning by manipulating events and turning them into opportunities. In the previous chapter I indicated how seeing these *espace* require a form of deep listening, exploration, to make them visible and I have done no such work regarding the public places addressed by Bill 21. However, indications of where such *espace* may be found could be drawn out of considering an example of this sort of hidden religious practice which has been explored by Joseph Chadwin in a case study of overt and covert Buddhist student societies. Therein, Chadwin relates how covert student groups make use of technology such as WeChat for communication as well as empty university spaces, in order to study religious texts, practice group meditation, and engage in religious training. By any outward appearance the meetings would appear as little more than social gatherings in a place that disallows the public practice of Buddhism.¹³

¹³ James Chadwin, 'Overt and Covert Buddhism: The two faces of University-based Buddhism in China', in *Religions*, 11.3.131 (2020), available online at <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/11/3/131/html>

This brief statement points towards the value of a spatial approach and gives some direction as to how we understand these religious symbols or where religious *espace* will be located. On the principle of appropriation and the possibility of plural meanings for a given site, where Bill 21 interprets the symbols as essentially religious a spatial analysis considers how these symbols are being used. It is possible that for some the wearing of a religious symbol is not a subjective religious expression but an important socially constructed marker of identity and belonging. Perhaps the woman wearing the *hijab* or the man wearing the turban does so only to express belonging to a national or social community with not religious connotation. In this case, Bill 21 has wrongfully essentialized such garments as religious symbols. A similar problem emerges with the essentializing of the buildings as religiously neutral. Bill 21 attempts to order a *lieu* in the public buildings but this leaves open the possibility of religious *espace* created through the way staff or patrons utilize the place; for example, rarely visited rooms could be used for prayer by staff; open gardens or corridors could become sites for other religious practices. A more furtive possibility for the presence of a religious *espace* could emerge through the use of language in such public places. Seeing this this would require close study to reveal. It is possible that people of a religious tradition have a learned conversational language where specific words carry particular socially produced meanings. The use of such words can in situations be the symbols which form the *espace*, consider as an example Passing the Peace, which may be as simple as saying God Bless, or *in sha'Allah* (if God wills) which are both a colloquial greetings but may also declarations of belief. The meaning-making that functions within the particular use of language may produce the effect orienting the place within to religious *espace* not part of the order attempting to be produced by Bill 21.

7.2. Considering religion for a religious spatiality

A book edited by Mendieta and VanAntwerpen called *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* was used in Chapter 2 as part of the introduction to Habermas and Taylor's line on the relationship between religion and society. The book considers the relation of religion to the public sphere, acknowledging that the question is situated in the rethinking of secularism and religion of recent decades.¹⁴ Similarly, Knott recognizes that one of the central tasks of developing a spatial approach to religion requires not only conceiving of space in ways that opens it up for a study of religion but also the reverse. The example below can allow us to once again think about religious space. The purpose of the example is to exemplify that the idea of religious *espace* is not solely a matter of self-identification, phenomenology, and the body. The example suggests the variety of places where a spatial analysis of religion can be viable, but it also leads to a problematization of religion and religious phenomena, questioning how they are to be conceived for the purpose of a spatial analysis.

Three years prior to the Commission that informed Bill 21, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) made a judgment regarding *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* (2004).¹⁵ The situation involved a luxury condominium in Montreal, Québec. Four divided co-owners of apartment units constructed sukkahs on the balconies of their individual units for the purpose of fulfilling the ritual obligation of dwelling in a temporary place for the nine-day Jewish religious festival of Sukkot. There was no external indication that the items on the balconies were religious in nature. Building management, *Syndicat Northcrest*, requested the removal of the sukkahs, proposing instead a common garden

¹⁴ Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (ed.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere: Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Cornel West*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), p. 1.

¹⁵ Supreme Court of Canada, *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551, 30 June 2004. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/2161/index.do>. Last accessed 12th November 2020.

area as an approved location for a shared sukkah. They cited by-laws in the declaration of co-ownership forbidding decoration, alteration, and construction on the balconies. The co-owners claimed not to have read the declaration of co-ownership prior to purchase, noted the temporary nature of the construction, and rejected the communal sukkah proposal, explaining that it would cause extreme hardship to the religious observance and be contrary to personal religious beliefs that required individual sukkahs. Ultimately, *Syndicat Northcrest* sought an injunction against the co-owners, which ultimately ended in a Supreme Court judgment for the appellants (the co-owners), *Amselem*.

The SCC decision was based upon a legal definition of religion as a thorough set of beliefs regarding a higher power, tied with a person's view of themselves and their need to realize a spiritual completeness.¹⁶ This was supported with a broad definition of the freedom of religion emphasizing an individual over institutional view of religion and belief. In other words, religion and its freedom are centrally individual and not necessarily inclusive of but extending to religious community.¹⁷ One central consideration of the judgment was the comparative question on the degree of limitation of freedoms associated with court or government authority;¹⁸ that is, which party would be more severely limited by the court's decision. Dissent contested the emphasis on individual beliefs over those of an established religious authority, arguing that the freedom of religion applied only to beliefs and practices resulting from those beliefs reasonably attributable to a religious authority. Further, dissent was attributed to the

¹⁶ *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551, para 39 The majority decision was written by Justice Frank Iacobucci.

¹⁷ *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551, para 43-44, 47 An important consideration of the judgement was how to determine sincere belief. On this point it was determined that the court need only determine whether the claim to religious belief and practice was made in good faith (para. 52).

¹⁸ The Court observed *Syndicat Northcrest* argued that the resident's freedom of religion became limited by their agreement to any rights to enjoy property and to personal security of all residents. However, the Court found the rights of *Amselem* would be severely infringed, while *Syndicat Northcrest's* rights were not.

idea of sincerity of belief, suggesting that the individual sincerity of belief should not be able to overcome a proper regard for the democratic values, public order, and the general well-being of the citizens of Québec.¹⁹

In what way does the example allow us to think on religion and its space? I will mention some particular parallels from the view of the postsecular, (new) secular, and (Knott's) spatial approach, indicating what they contribute. Something that was never questioned in the SCC case was the idea that a religious space should be adequate to encompass the full range of religious meaning required by the space. In the example, this idea was framed in the language of private and public rights, the nature of religious belief, and principles of citizenship under the law. Habermas' model remakes religious and secular space, embedding them in a postsecular consciousness and the need for a state apparatus to balance competing positions. In this case, that consciousness includes accepting the court as the apparatus where decisions regarding religion and the public opinion can be formed.²⁰ Therein, the process of locating religious space is a 'learning process' recognizing the 'polyphonic complexity of the diverse' hierarchically registered under a public authority.²¹ This is the process *Northcrest Syndicat* and *Amselem* submitted to in the legal process. The SCC discerned the boundaries of religion, its representation, and practice in that particular circumstance. The themes of Taylor's (new) secularity are less obviously present. They are recognizable in the disagreement among the SCC justices on the definition of religious belief. Is it sufficient to define religious belief as a sincerely held belief regarding a higher power and an individual's need for spiritual completeness? How is this to be measured? That the SCC justices cannot agree on how

¹⁹ *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem* [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551, para 179.

²⁰ Jürgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere' in Chandra Mukerji, Michael Schudson (eds.), *Rethinking Popular Culture. Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 398-404 [398].

²¹ Jürgen Habermas, 'Notes on a Post-Secular Society', *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25.3 (2008), pp. 17-29 [28-29].

to define belief is a result of explosion of different ways of believing that Taylor argues marks present secularity. This problem is compounded as the SCC must deliberate not only on the religious belief of *Amselem* but also the secular belief of *Northcrest Syndicat*. Their deliberations are an expression of the ‘modern moral order’, i.e. the organization of society for the benefit of people, rather than an obligation to a universalistic norm, questioning how to uphold freedom and equality.²² It is important to recognize that my argument is not that these considerations and what they allow for analysis of the case is incorrect and unhelpful. Rather, that there are elements to the case than can be highlighted through approach that focus on understanding religion in terms of freedom of belief and expression.

What can a spatial approach to religion contribute to this case? It has been argued that such an approach can account for other dynamics of religious phenomena. If I were to use a spatial analysis to conduct the sort of analysis that Knott does in *The Location of Religion*, I could look at the physical, mental, and social dimensions of the balcony as a site of struggle. This would reveal how the various actors in the SCC case (appellant, respondent, and the court), through their interpretation of the balcony, contest for various worldviews. It would reveal how their practices are aimed towards forming a sense of identity encompassed and within a given place. In the case above, the court evaluated the sukkahs as representations of sincerely held belief and whether they impacted upon the identification and representation of the non-religious residents and management. The spatial context could allow for a discourse to go towards seeing location as more than a symbol of belief but as an expression of identity, rooted in an epistemology and social imagination. This could be true not only of the physical space of the balcony but also of the sukkahs, the building as a whole, and even residents’

²² Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 159-171.

bodies. It could be questioned to what extent the building of the sukkah can be seen as a site of resistance or liberation, a sacred space in an ostensibly non-religious place, or a rebellion against common values.

To complete the example, I want to take it forward, pushing the analysis of the sukkah forward through de Certeau's spatiality. Here the way that the spatial theory I put forward complicates the question, adding complexity to what has been thus far conceived as linear and hierarchical. On its face, the question of the sukkah poses the need for a definition of religious belief and freedom of expression. This began at the moment the presence of the sukkah was questioned. This situates the whole of the incident within a *lieu*, ordered by secular strategies by framing the presence of the sukkah as a point of contention (as Knott does) with the need for defining belief and freedom (epistemological and political aspects of secularism per Habermas and Taylor). What is being practiced from the point of questioning of the sukkah to its affirmation by the court are strategic spatial practices constructing a *lieu* (the order in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence). As de Certeau defines the proper rules of *lieu*, the elements taken into consideration are beside one another - as the court clarified who would suffer the greatest limitation with a ruling - each situated in a distinct and proper location, a location it defines. Thus, the sukkah affirmed by the court is given a proper location within the condominium, thus it is part of the authorized narrative and order. The ordering systems and definitional strategies of the legal system constrain the possibilities of the sukkah as a religious space, as a form of alterity, enfolding them into the *un propre*. From the point of view of de Certeau's spatiality the sukkah begins as the object of strategic practice and ends as the subject of strategic practice as their alterity, first challenged and then affirmed, is ordered within *lieu*. Therefore, even as the sukkah functions as a place of religious practice it is made part of

the broader secular narrative of diverse belief and freedom of expression. This is the open side of the analysis.

Introducing *espace* as an aspect of the analysis complicates the seemingly clear-cut principles laid out by the SCC. de Certeau's heterological principle guides analysis towards considering alterities, the other not visible within the order. This would lead towards questioning the SCC definition of sincerely held belief and freedom of expression in the case. The SCC decision was aimed at balancing competing interests and by ordering the competing visibilities of the appellants religious practice and the respondents building aesthetics. A spatial consideration complicates the underlying definitions of belief, freedom, balancing interests and social order and looks to identify where and how other religious practice may be seen. This would require first exploring the differing ways religious participants define belief and free expression within their tradition. This would also lead to challenging the application of the values of balancing interests and social order. But most significantly, the SCC case drew the religious practice of the sukkah into the determination of *lieu* by ordering the competing visibilities of the appellants religious practice and the respondents building aesthetics. However, an abiding element of *espace* is its unseen nature, appropriating what is visible and creating meaning through specific practices. The method of identifying an *espace*, as it was discussed, is a form of deep listening with special interest into how the condominium was appropriated by religious participants.

de Certeau focusses on locations, symbols, and language as primary possibilities for this appropriation. For example, taking these as starting points, a spatial analysis would look to the ways other residents used the balconies or the common garden space or even a public exercise room for religious practices such as contemplation and mediation, or

other spiritual exercises such as prayer or traditional yoga. Such tactical practices, not having the obvious visibility of the sukkah, would not be drawn into the order of *lieu*. The problem of the sukkah arose from its obvious visibility on the balcony. But not all religious practices are as visible. A Hindu home may have a home shrine called a *mandir* where worship is practiced. According to Hindu practice the home *mandir* is identical to the full-size *mandir* (temple) in the sense that there is no essential differentiation between the ceremony conducted at either location. From the view of meaning-making practice, worship at either is essentially the same. In all likelihood the construction of a Puja on the balcony would not be visible. In that instance the balcony would be a religious *espace*.

Obviously, the terms of the case limit the opportunity to draw inferences, but nonetheless it can be seen how a spatial approach to religion forces a reconsideration of categories used to identify and confine the public presence of religion. And as important as discerning practical ways to apply the spatial approach is to the question of the space of religion in the public sphere, exploring the reconsideration of religion must be central. So, I want to focus on the idea of how a spatial approach *sees* religious phenomena.

7.2.1. Knott's conception of religion in the Religious/Secular Field

One point I argue is that de Certeau's theory is a better basis for a spatial approach than is Knott's. Knott employs a good empirical application of a spatial approach, at least to the extent that she is able to locate religion. It is based on a social differentiation that confines religion, relying on strong dichotomies between the religious and non-religious, the sacred and profane. Consequently, Knott locates religion as one set of contested points in a Religious/Secular Field, a Western epistemological site of struggle.

This raises two significant questions for Knott: What account can be given for religious spaces outside sites of struggle? And, how does Knott conceive of the sacred as an aspect of religion? Bringing Knott into dialogue with de Certeau will allow us to show how his vision expands upon and improves Knott's spatial analysis. De Certeau's spatial approach is able to demonstrate the limitation of Knott's concept of spatiality and also represents an approach to locating religious spaces that demonstrates religion as a practice of everyday life.

The strategic operation of Knott's spatiality

In order to conceptualize religion and spatiality, Knott conducts a series of 'strategic operations' upon both, but especially religion.²³ I am not sure if her use of strategic language was an intentional allusion to de Certeau, but I think not. We can see, by applying de Certeau's idea of the function of strategic operations to a reading of Knott some striking challenges to her approach.

Knott argues for a spatial approaches ability to show the dynamism of religious space, noting its presence in a plurality of locations such as places of worship, objects, and natural sites or associated with particular religious events or symbols, private places, and the body.²⁴ Knott writes, "Space" is a concept which allows us to talk, write and share ideas about an aspect of human and social experience, in this case the experience of our situatedness vis-à-vis the body, others, and the world about us'; yet, it is 'a concept with a contested history.'²⁵ Knott anticipates that some structure is needed for

²³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 83. When Knott calls for a strategic application of religion, she is appealing to and cites Jeremy R. Carrette's idea of a Foucauldian functional use of the term. See Jeremy R. Carrette, 'Foucault, Strategic Knowledge and the Study of Religion: A Response to McCutcheon, Fitzgerald, King, and Alles' (Review Symposium on Jeremy Carrette's *Foucault and Religion and Religion and Culture*), *Culture and Religion* 2.1 (2001), pp. 127-40 [128].

²⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 60.

²⁵ Knott, 'Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion', p.156 n.7.

her to conceive the space of religion beyond its conventional forms to fulfil the potential of the spatial approach. This structure is her Religious/Secular Field.

The purpose of the field is to answer the question of how religion may be seen as an object without the usual ‘predication upon religion ... as an essential aspect of human experience or the [cultural] landscape or as a condition of the domain to be studied.’²⁶

To avoid what she takes as a ‘misappropriation’ that ‘religion is nowhere, or else it is everywhere’, Knott advocates confining religion to a time and place to be studied.²⁷

This time and place Knott interprets through a social constructivism viewing religion in relation to non-religion, although she concedes the difficulty of resolving where the line between the two can be applied.²⁸ Appealing to James Beckford, Knott describes the relationship as a tension between ideologies.²⁹ Taking this as a base, and influenced by Foucault, Knott equates religious and non-religious spaces as expressions of knowledge–power.³⁰ This is the basis for the method of her approach. Knott elects to focus explicitly on ‘boundary disputes’ between religion and non-religion or between religion and itself, accepting that these must be limits for their identification;³¹ that is, religion is not non-religion. While the boundary between the two is dynamic, Knott defines this category as a socially differentiated epistemological site of struggle as an

²⁶ Knott, ‘Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion’, p. 154.

²⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 81; Knott cites Daniel Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p. 38; and Talal Asad, ‘The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category’ in *Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

²⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 85.

²⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 84, 124; also, James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 2, 13; and, James A. Beckford, ‘The Politics of Defining Religion in Secular Society: From a Taken-for-Granted Institution to a Contested Resource’, in Jan G. Platvoet and Arie L. Molendijk (eds.), *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion, Contexts, Concepts, and Contests* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), pp. 23-40.

³⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 26. Knott builds upon and cites Foucault and Lefebvre.

³¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 84 also p. 63. Making this same point Knott cites Michel Foucault, ‘The Subject and Power’, in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed. 1983), pp. 208-26 [225].

essential element of modernity.³² That is to say, the modern age is marked by contesting options of belief and meaning that are visible in the way groups or individuals imagine themselves and society. In this way Knott resonates with Taylor's view of the secular age. This field, is supposed to allow her to locate religion within 'apparently non-religious (spaces) as well as ostensibly religious ones, and everyday spaces as well as spaces set apart or special'.³³ The key marker in the is sites of struggle over how to understand the physical, mental, and social.

De Certeau constantly sought to uncover the unspoken forms of constraint and organizing impulses at work in the strategic operations of interpretations. He set out to explicate these implicit instances, showing how they function to reproduce an interpretive system, not to give voice to otherness. De Certeau's identified how interpretive operations are structurally directed towards their own reproduction.³⁴ Knott, while aiming to conceptualize religious space for analysis, applies a constraint upon religious spaces. In de Certeau's language, while Knott aims to create an order for generating ideas on religious space, instead she makes religion an Other.³⁵ This issue is of especial importance for showing the particular value of de Certeau's spatial approach. They will be more fully described here.

³² One of the major themes of secularization is that of differentiation, the tendency for areas of life to become more distinct and specialized as a society becomes modernized. Talcott Parsons applied the idea on society as a system immersed in a constant state of differentiation; see David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), p. 20. To what extent this differentiation has led to the separation of religion from the secular is debated, but the general principle of a strong differentiation is presumed to be the case. See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 19.

³³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 61. I use (spaces) instead of Knott's use of places. The reason for this has been explored in Chapter 5 on *lieu* and *espace*. Knott adopts a reversal of de Certeau's formula of space as practice place and she adopts a view of spaces as constructed locations and places as locations of meaning. For ease in contrasting Knott with de Certeau, I have chosen to retain the de Certeau's formula and substitute the terms where necessary.

³⁴ This is part of the central thesis of Jeremy Ahearne in *Michel de Certeau* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

³⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1988), p. xix.

The spatial field as a site of struggle

When listing the justifications for her spatial theory, Knott relates how its development and application evolved from within a local research methodology. She attests that her spatial theory expresses a desire for religion to be studied in localities and particular places.³⁶ The method she applies provides no mechanism for questioning, let alone identifying, religious spaces that are not contested.

Knott is dependent upon Foucault and Lefebvre, as has already been discussed. One particular quote is meaningful here. Lefebvre writes:

Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena, be they raw materials or the most finished of products, be they businesses or 'culture'. Rather, it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself for each factor separately by enveloping it.³⁷

It is the last clause that carries the conceptual thrust. The claim is that it is 'in and through space that these dimensions (physical, mental, and social) are brought together'.³⁸ Spaces for Knott are synonymous with the whole of sociopolitics. Every physical, mental, and social aspect of society is drawn together and then 'substituted' within a space that envelops it. Consequently, the whole sociopolitical spatial field is equated with force–power struggles.³⁹ Therefore, the Religious/Secular Field composed of contests between religious and secular spaces, which do not dissolve into one another, meaning that at all times the physical, mental, and social of religion and secularity are altogether contestable and contested.

³⁶ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 3.

³⁷ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 22.

³⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 22; Knott appeals to Martin Heidegger for the suggestion that places hold or gather things together (*versammlung*) in his 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 343-363 [355].

³⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 3 [original emphasis]; following Lefebvre, 'Is space indeed a medium? A milieu? An intermediary? It is doubtless all of these, but its role is less and less neutral, more and more active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end.' *The Production of Space* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 411.

What is the implication of this conclusion? Knott provides no measure to understand subjective practice outside these sociocultural spaces. Knott adopts the position that space is the aspect of a society and culture that people experience; it is sensed, thought, and practised.⁴⁰ Space is sensed in the way it is conceived. It is public, influential, authoritarian, and invasive in its mastery over the body and the everyday.⁴¹ Space is thought through the use of associated images and symbols. It is dominant, although only passively experienced, and overlays everyday life making symbolic use of its objects, which is culture.⁴² Space is practised in that it is lived as the vital area of struggle towards individual and communal realization.⁴³ In this final idea of space as practised, Knott denotes the way people generate and use perceived space as a means of created places of meaning.⁴⁴ In all of these things the essence is the struggle against the other. If the physical, mental, and social of religion and secularity are altogether contested, then in Knott's model there is simply no independent reflexive subjective religious space. Also, if religion is only lent meaning by this social and cultural context, then there is no frame for understanding uncontested religion. Knott reveals herself clearly at this point when she writes:

There is nothing intrinsically religious or secular about spatial practice. Religious meaning or purpose may be attributed to it; it may acquire a sense of sacrality from being enacted in religiously meaningful space, or may be transformed by ritual process. However, a gesture or walking practice, even as a genuflection or pilgrimage, is not *essentially* religious, for the same actions, directions, and co-ordinates might equally be denoted as having some other meaning – with reference to social rather than religious hierarchy, to tourism rather than a spiritual journey.⁴⁵

Every practice is one of identification against an other. Accordingly, even the everyday practices of religious gestures or walking practice are not only denoted as referring to some social meaning but must also be perceived as reactions and responses to social

⁴⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 36.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 38; also, Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 164.

⁴⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 39; also, Lynn Stewart, 'Bodies, Visions, and Spatial Politics: A Review Essay on Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*', in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13 (1995), pp. 609-618 [610].

⁴⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 39.

tensions and power structures.⁴⁶ But there is another problem, as Knott's method allows for locating elements of religion within the epistemological domain of the Religious/Secular Field, it excludes and makes invisible forms of religion outside that field. Perhaps the most striking example of this is that as a site of struggle between religion, secularity, and post-secularity the Religious/Secular Field does not frame religious spaces that do not share that element of modernity, i.e. religious spaces from other cultures or with other histories.⁴⁷ For example, if Rajeev Bhargava is correct and Indian secularism is an uncontested part of religious and spiritual belonging in India, then Knott's spatial methodology cannot be properly applied in Indian context.⁴⁸

The sacred and religious space

Knott frames religion in a way that is indicative of a weighting towards a secular intellectual tradition that limits the extent to which religious spaces can be identified. This is not the result of a particular definition of religion, since Knott avoids a specific definition preferring to see how religion is 'used', as she says, in her case study.⁴⁹ Instead, it is her materialist and social constructivist methodology that denies any intrinsic meaning to religious spaces and practices. There is for Knott, neither religion nor non-religion but only their use makes them so. There is in this a contradiction. On

⁴⁶ This is very much the conclusion that Knott draws. She writes of places that seem wholly religious or secular, 'they are no less interesting in having successfully excluded the other. This very exclusion is of value in what it can tell us about religion in the late-modern West', she quotes Russell McCutcheon to the effect that such places are the result of ideological and rhetorical mechanisms going unnoticed, that no such place exists without holding power over the other. Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 84; see, Russell McCutcheon, 'The Economics of Spiritual Luxury: The Glittering Lobby and the Parliament of Religions', *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 13.1 (1998), pp. 51-64.

⁴⁷ One of the major themes of secularization is that of differentiation, the tendency for areas of life to become more distinct and specialized as a society becomes modernized. Talcott Parsons applied the idea on society as a system immersed in a constant state of differentiation; see David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), p. 20. To what extent this differentiation has led to the separation of religion from the secular is debated, but the general principle of a strong differentiation is presumed to be the case. See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 19.

⁴⁸ Rajeev Bhargava, 'The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism', in T.N. Srinivasan (ed.), *The Future of Secularism*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 20-53

⁴⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 81

the one hand, Knott positions secularism as non-religion and on the same plane of the Religious/Secular Field with religion. On the other hand, Knott adopts a secular way of seeing religion and therefore as the tacit background of her analysis. To explore this, one particular conceptual move will be addressed; this is Knott's handling of spirituality or the sacred.

Midway through the theoretical portion of her *The Location of Religion*, Knott adds a section called 'Terminology and Standpoint'.⁵⁰ There are two parts to this section.⁵¹ Part one questions how the sacred is to be identified in the spatial theory. Before considering how Knott answers this, I want to look at part two, as it helps us to frame the earlier part. Part two contributes to what Knott later signifies as her 'Critical Reflexive Approach'.⁵² The purpose of this section is to address where Knott personally situates herself in the field of the religious and the secular. Knott is trying to be appropriately reflexive.⁵³ Knott introduces the reflection on her standpoint, writing, 'there is no neutral ground from which to view the field of struggle between the "religious" and the

⁵⁰ This initial comment at this point is a reflection on a tonal shift in the language and structure of *The Location of Religion*. It is not only the content of this sub-section that draws attention, rather it is the framing and language which treats the subjects as loose ends, quick thoughts that don't fit into the broader conceptual schema of the work, but as ideas to be cleared up. This might give rise to thinking that the two ideas are minor points set together at chapters close. This is not the case. In fact, this eight-page portion of text bears significant conceptual weight within the project specifically because of the distinction of the sacred in the section on terminology returns as a point in the penultimate chapter of the work. But perhaps it is that the sacred is treated as something wholly distinct from religion that is the significant point. In every other section Knott's chapter and sub-section titles are clear references to the subject matter to be addressed. For example, Chapter 1 – Opening Up Space for the Study of Religion (p. 11), with sub-sections on 'Material and Metaphorical Space' (p. 12) and 'The Body' (p. 15) among others. Again, Chapter 3 – Opening Up Religion for a Spatial Analysis (p. 59) with sub-sections on 'A Game of Two Halves? Evaluating the Shifting Fortunes of the "Religious" and the Secular"' (p. 61) and also 'Choosing and Approach to the "Religious" and the "Secular"' (p. 77). The titles are clear and indicative of the matter to be considered. Yet, the section dealing with the important theme of the sacred is joined to Knott's self-reflective commentary under a section titled 'Terminology and Standpoint' (p. 85). In note 107 (p. 85) Knott comments that the genesis of these observations occurred during a seminar discussion in 2002 which I initially took to mean that these thoughts occurred later in her research and writing and was perhaps added later in her research. However, she notes in the Acknowledgments that the book began to formally take shape in 2001-2002 (p. vi). Where Knott otherwise gives great energy to commenting on the contested areas between religion and secularity when it comes to the sacred her commentary seems like an afterthought.

⁵¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 85, 89.

⁵² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 85ff, 126ff.

⁵³ See Hubert Dreyfus, *Being in the World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991); and, John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

“secular”, no position to take which is not implicated in its force relationships’.⁵⁴ As a corrective, she advocates for the importance of the critical reflexive approach, a ‘late modern strategy of identity’ that strives to balance an ‘openness to one’s own and others’ standpoints.⁵⁵ In this self-assessment, Knott accepts that the body of theory on space and place for a spatial study of religion relies on interpretations that frame religion in historical, empirical, and humanist terms. She recognizes a thoroughgoing secularism in herself, and in the theorists on whom she relies.⁵⁶ Even as Knott acknowledges the possibility that her framework is weighted against religion, she responds that in her formulation this is not the case.⁵⁷ As evidence, she appeals to her analysis of Lefebvre’s spatial structure, indicating how it is sufficiently open to religion. Ultimately, however, I think Knott is incorrect.

The weighting of the spatial field is not specifically a result of the theorists she accepts or of her own standpoint. There are two points that support my contention. One is that Knott concludes religion and secularity to essentially be in opposition or in a contested relationship. There is no frame of reference for Knott in which religion and secularity may function in mutuality or collaboratively. This position is, as Graeme Smith argues, a particularly Western secular notion and which Taylor articulates as an essential element of the dominant idea of modern secularity.⁵⁸ As Smith continues, this is not necessarily the default position of, at least Christian, religion although in the West the

⁵⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 89.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 92.

⁵⁶ Of her own position, she concludes that she is firmly secular humanist and that her religious affiliation is simply another expression of that secularity. Particular attention is given to Henri Lefebvre, Doreen Massey, Edward Soja, David Shields, Peter Berger, and Richard King. Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 89-91.

⁵⁷ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 89-93, [p. 91, n. 128].

⁵⁸ Graeme Smith, *A Short History of Secularism*, (London: I.B. Taurus, 2010), p. 1-2; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, p. 1ff

opposition to secularism has become a fixture of religious thought as well but this is really only an opposition to moral norms and not secularity as a way of believing.⁵⁹

There is another way that Knott's treatment is weighted against seeing religious space as it is for its practitioners. This is her treatment of the sacred. Knott aims to avoid a dogmatism of a religious essentialism that views the sacred as a special transcendent of religion, while secularity is marked by the absence of God. Knott takes sacredness as socially constructed. In this, Knott conceives of the sacred as a *sui generis* category. This is introduced in the section 'Terminology', where Knott explains how she intends to engage with the ideas of spirituality and the sacred, clarifying how she understands religious belief as distinct from the sacred.⁶⁰ Her exploration of the sacred begins with Danièle Hervieu-Léger.⁶¹ Hervieu-Léger distinguished between religious belief and the sacred by examining the processes that contribute to the formation of religious belief from general belief. General belief is a classification of any set of claims ascribed to truth unique to a particular context. These beliefs emerge as religious, Hervieu-Léger suggests, when they take on permanence and are sought to be legitimized beyond the original experience. Knott accepts this distinction as particularly salient. Religious belief draws legitimacy from reference to a traditionary process and capability of supporting an institution or community.⁶² This is differentiated from non-religious belief, for which an awareness of the past and the presence of a community are not required, which is informed and reasoned by what is accepted as fact. In arriving at this conclusion, Hervieu-Léger differentiates between two types of belief, contextual or

⁵⁹ Smith, *A Short History of Secularism*, pp. 183-205

⁶⁰ These conclusions are reiterated in the penultimate chapter of *The Location of Religion*, pp. 219-222

⁶¹ Hervieu-Léger's perspective on belief is developed in *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000). There she distinguishes between the sacred and religion or the religious and also the non-religious. The specific aspect of religious activity and their institutions, per Hervieu-Léger, is their focus on 'production, management, and distribution of the particular form of believing which draws its legitimacy from reference to a tradition.', p. 101 For the connection Knott makes to Hervieu-Léger, see *The Location of Religion*, pp. 87, 220ff.

⁶² Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p. 101.

reasoned. These are distinguished from the sacred or spirituality as an experience of encountering a force that is stronger than the self or religion.⁶³ The sacred is a normative experience that may occur in any context.⁶⁴

Another scholar to which Knott appeals is Veikko Anttonen. Again, showing a distinction between belief and the sacred, Knott explains that Anttonen's approach comes from an effort to develop 'a general and empirically tractable theory of the "sacred" on the basis of which varieties of attributions can be approached and explained'.⁶⁵ Anttonen clarifies a difference between the sacred as an etic category and an emic term.⁶⁶ This clarification extends to a difference between the sacred as an ontological category such as that employed by twentieth-century phenomenologists of religion and the sacred as a 'situationally' and 'culturally dependent cognitive category'.⁶⁷ Through this process, Anttonen attributes a transformative character to the 'sacred' and to 'sacred-making activities' that imbue situations of 'category transformation' with special meaning.⁶⁸ Using this distinction allows for a dissimilarity to be ascribed in reference to the relationship between the sacred and religion. Making a similar claim of religion as Hervieu-Léger, Anttonen suggests religion, and other systems, are paradigmatic systems of belief within which people may participate in sacred-making activities. The sacred is ambivalent in the sense that people participate in sacred-making activities and processes of representation according to paradigms given

⁶³ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 220; also, Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p. 152.

⁶⁴ Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p. 106.

⁶⁵ Veikko Anttonen, 'Sacred Sites and Markers of Difference: Exploring Cognitive Foundations of Territoriality', in Lotte Tarkka (ed.), *Dynamics of Tradition: Perspectives on Oral Poetry and Folk Belief* (Helsinki: Studia Fennica Folkloristica, Finnish Library Society, 2003), pp. 291-305 [293].

⁶⁶ Veikko Anttonen, 'Rethinking the Sacred: The Notions of "Human Body" and "Territory" in Conceptualizing Religion', in T. A. Idinopolous and E.A Yonan (eds.), *The Sacred and Its Scholars: Comparative Methodologies for the Study of Primary Religious Data* (Leiden: E.J Brill, 1996), p. 40. For the connection that Knott draws with Anttonen; see, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 88, 221ff.

⁶⁷ Anttonen, 'Rethinking the Sacred', p. 43, 57; and, 'Sacred', pp. 272-274; also, Knott, *The Location of Religion*, pp. 36-64 [88].

⁶⁸ Veikko Anttonen, 'Rethinking the Sacred', p. 40.

by a belief system. The sacred is a subjective transformational experience, though it becomes embedded in social contexts. For Knott this means that religious, secular, and postsecular may each appeal to experiences or values that can become sacred.⁶⁹

Hervieu-Léger and Antonnen, followed by Knott, accept the idea that the sacred has been separated from religion, the idea being that something occurred in modernity that changed the conditions of belief and practice in Western society enabling non-religious forms to emerge alongside religious forms of symbol, belief, practices, and experiences. This is the account Taylor gives of modern secularism. Aiming to conceive of religion for a spatial analysis in the time and place to be studied, Knott accepts this narrative as a normative categorization of religion and does not justify why it is that religious space need be defined by this change. The consequence is that Knott's enquiry into religion is reductive. Religion is, for Knott, categorized sociologically as functional and part of a social differentiation. The sacred is a type of symbolic interaction accessible to non-religion as well. Knott does not seem to consider the possibility that the accessibility of the sacred or the spirituality of non-religious contexts may be an indication of the hidden presence of religion in those contexts, or of an uncertain boundary between the two.

The sacred need not be dealt with in this way as is shown in the work of Richard Kierney, whose diacritical hermeneutics charts a middle path between the essentialist sacred of theology and the relativist sacred of postmodernism. In his recent *Anatheism: Returning to God After God*, Kierney proposes a unique role of the sacred in human life and letters. This role is both an absence and presence of the transcendent in concrete

⁶⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 222.
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lived experience.⁷⁰ The potential of such a middle-way will be viewed below as I respond to Knott via de Certeau.

7.2.2. Responding to Knott via de Certeau

The questions that need to be asked at this point are: How does de Certeau's spatial approach frame religious space to answer these difficulties?

An open field

To begin, let us consider the first of the two oppositional terms, *lieu* and *espace*. De Certeau's distinction anticipates and identifies the problems Knott's theory encounters. Knott attempts to locate a plurality of spaces within a closed modern field defined by sites of struggle between religion, secularity, and postsecularity. Knott takes any open dynamism of the idea and experience of society and encloses it. In contrast, De Certeau recognizes the necessity to adopt an analytical principle of society as a creative and open field.⁷¹ 'Culture is *soft*', he writes; 'what can be measured everywhere meets this mobile element along its borders'.⁷² Knott's closed field misses the mobile elements, those non-contested and furtive sites, where religion and non-religion can both be found in modes other than in contentious force-power relationships.

De Certeau's notion of *lieu* demonstrates that any strategic operation aimed towards the isolation of an object is inherently limited. The isolation of *lieu* as a site of order creates what de Certeau calls 'an economy of the proper place' [*un économie du lieu propre*]

⁷⁰ Richard Kierney, 'God After God' in Richard Kierney and Jens Zimmerman (eds.), *Reimagining the Sacred*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. 6-18; and Richard Kierney, *Anatheism: Returning to God after God*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

⁷¹ Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural* (ed.), Luce Giard, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 139; originally, Michel de Certeau, *La culture au pluriel* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1974).

⁷² de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. 133.

within which alterities operate without being identified.⁷³ Recalling the important passage where *lieu* is described from Chapter 5, de Certeau distinguishes *lieu* as a delimitation of a field. It is an order in which elements are distributed in relationships of co-existence that excludes the possibility of two things being in the same *lieu*. Knott recognizes that religion and secularity are frequently in opposition, each with their own substantive ordering that eliminates the significance of the other.⁷⁴ She recognizes that, on this model, there is an inherent limiting of the scope of a spatial analysis to exclusively religious and non-religious sites, limiting the possibility of locating the relationship between religion and secularity. In its place she proposes her field as way of putting religion and secularity on the same plane, whereby their relationship and the limits of these elements can be explored.⁷⁵ Yet, in doing so, Knott formulates a *lieu* leading into its own delimitations. Reifying the Religious/Secular Field as a site of struggle totalizes religion as a contested site.⁷⁶ By framing the location of religion within ‘boundary disputes’, a particular narrative of it is writ into every location of religion.⁷⁷ The consequence is that Knott’s introduces limits to her analysis. For example, she consistently takes everyday practices, what she (following Lefebvre) calls ‘gestural systems’, only as leaving points for discussing systemic or structural points of group identification.⁷⁸

⁷³ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 55.

⁷⁴ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 78. Knott identifies outspoken confessional secularist and religious views (pp. 78-79). She also notes exclusive/substantive and inclusive/functional views, which, despite attempting to make sense of the relationship between religion and secularity, treat religion and non-religion as essentially different.

⁷⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 125.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 36.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 84. For an example see Knott’s handling of gender boundaries and homosexuality, p. 226ff. While it is true that that issue is a point of tension and contention between and even within religious and non-religious groups because it drives to the root of the boundaries of the social self by challenging norms of identification, it is not helpful to prejudice a whole study of religion towards a similar type of tension.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 39, 40, 136-139.

In contrast, de Certeau recognizes that every *lieu*, despite every effort, is open, and that often what goes on within them ‘produces movements or stagnations that a mere analysis of signifiers can never grasp’.⁷⁹ De Certeau suggests closely observing and probing everyday practices and their experience as a means to identify *espace* in the ‘ebb and flow of muffled voices’ that are the embodied location of meaning.⁸⁰ This close observation can essentially provide a view from below that is missed in normative takes on religion. This does not discount that there are boundary disputes endemic to discourse on the relation; the tacit law of place, as de Certeau refers to it, predicts that such boundary disputes will occur. He suggests that whenever differing practices, or rather differing ways of being, attempt to delimit a *lieu* from which they can circumscribe what exchange of matters of culture is possible, a struggle is inevitable.⁸¹ He is simply arguing that delimiting interpretations are not sufficient for an analysis of practices and their meaning. He maintains that there is a sense of ‘strangeness’ to ordinary practices in relation to the *lieu* for which such normative interpretations do not account.⁸² Knott takes her Religious/Secular Field as representative of the whole of the dynamic relationship between religion and secularity. De Certeau’s spatial theory recognizes this as one aspect and offers another.

Therein, the notion of *espace* and its attendant emphasis on tactical practices provides the conceptual framework necessary to build upon the analysis of *lieu*, extending the usefulness of the spatial approach. *Espace* is a means of articulating a relation to *lieu*, a move from definitions and delineations of the orders of society to the practices or the use of the products of society. ‘*Espace* is like the word when it is spoken.’⁸³ Religious

⁷⁹ de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, p. 133.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 134.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 123.

⁸² de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 93.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 117.

or non-religious *espaces* are in relation to the *lieu*; instead of appropriations of productive power they emerge from reflective subjectivity. They are caught up in the ambiguity of actualization, situated as the act of a present (or of a time) and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts, alternative locations, or diverse practitioners. *Espace* has none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper’ like *lieu*. *Espace* is, as it will be remembered, *practised place*.⁸⁴ Ways of being emerge as ‘shape to spaces’, which remain a blind spot in a strategically ordered site.⁸⁵

De Certeau’s theory equips us to see the tactics of religious *espace* as reflexive subjective religion, or as meaning and action in the strange world.⁸⁶ An example of this found in de Certeau’s work is his studies of the mystic speech of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By mystic speech de Certeau refers to how Christian mysticism borrowed the language of reformation, i.e. wound, schism, etc., and the philosophy of emerging modernity, applying to it a biographical context to give meaning to spiritual practice. In his historical study, de Certeau traces two trajectories of practice and the sites they produced. He contrasts the boundary disputes and contested sites of declining Christendom and emerging modernity in the new literary and epistemological ‘forms’ (products) of modernity and a mystical ‘spiritual poetry’.⁸⁷ In this study, de Certeau acknowledges the sociopolitical *lieu* of the time, but then he investigates the establishment of a seemingly hidden *espace* that contrasted and occasionally contradicted that visible field. Christendom was being shattered by the rising of secularity. The period was very much one that Knott could characterize as a site of struggle between positions where knowledge–power was expressed and contested; the

⁸⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 117.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 97.

⁸⁶ This is the subtitle of Gavin Flood’s *The Importance of Religion Meaning and Action in our Strange World* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2012).

⁸⁷ Michel de Certeau, ‘Mystic Speech’ in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, 2010), pp. 82-90.

end result being the demise of Christendom and the rise of the secular age. Yet, alongside and underneath this, de Certeau traces a different trajectory. This was not a shattering of Christendom but an appropriation of language and thought and the tactical use of speech and practice to form a social body. This social body did not reject the ruins of Christendom around them, they remained in them, going to them.⁸⁸ Reappropriating language and epistemological ‘form’, mystic practice created an *espace* of religious meaning through a different treatment of Christian tradition using the language of modernity.⁸⁹

In Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the place of Christianity was eroded. One way to look at this is that the products and forms of that society displaced the Christian ones that preceded it and imposed an order upon Christianity. This order is reflected in the distinctions of private and public, belief and reason, sacred and secular. Often this is interpreted as either a substitution or a shattering of Christianity. The period is a trope for the beginning of the disappearance of religion and its replacement by modern epistemology. Knott interprets this period as the beginning of the remoulding of religion in immanent terms. On this is a perceived substitution of the previous ordering of the cosmos with a new one. The past order identified this world (immanent) and the other world (transcendent), then further separated this world into the religious and the secular spheres, distinguishable in terms of vocation and authority.⁹⁰ The new order increasingly rejected the other world as a thing, bringing it into this world as a phenomenological experience, and imposed a structural system on human experience and knowledge.

⁸⁸ de Certeau, ‘Mystic Speech’, p. 86.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 100.

⁹⁰ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 15.

There is another way of looking at this. As De Certeau writes of that time:

The project of constructing an order amid the contingencies of history (the problem of the reason of State) and the quest to discern in our earthly, fallen language the now inaudible Word of God (the problem of the spiritual subject) arose simultaneously from the dissociation of cosmic language from the Divine Speaker.⁹¹

The Word of God had become inaudible with the removal of the ecclesial authority, but it had not become silent. In the words of Julia Kristeva, what resulted was a ‘new humanism’ that invested its ‘need to believe in a desire to know.’⁹² Elsewhere, de Certeau writes, ‘Normally, the uncanny circulates discretely below street level ... but a crisis will suffice to bring it flooding up everywhere.’⁹³ Even as, just as Taylor shows, the revolutionary idea of the secular age that non-belief in transcendence as the basis for a society came to be possible through an appropriation and dismantling of Christendom and its ideology, de Certeau shows that the mystics reconstructed the ontological relation and (if I may be allowed a poetic turn) took it to the streets. In the context of the loss of Christian authority, de Certeau traces the flourishing of mysticism and the production of a mystic *espace*. He calls this sort of creative making a *poiēsis*, a hidden consumption of products scattered over areas defined and occupied by a new modern system of production.⁹⁴ Or, more simply, he identifies the religious *espace* with the exemplar the mystics applied to it, mystic practices of everyday life as evidenced by St. Theresa and John of the Cross among others.

The significance of this to the discussion of the space of religion is that it challenges Knott’s idea, which limits religion to representational and symbolically contested locations. Instead, it raises the question of where religious phenomena are expected to

⁹¹ de Certeau, ‘Mystic Speech’, in *Heterologies*, p. 87.

⁹² Julia Kristeva, ‘New Humanism and the need to believe’, an interview with Richard Kierney in Richard Kierney and Jens Zimmerman (eds.) *Reimagining the Sacred*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. 100

⁹³ Michel de Certeau, ‘History is Never Sure’, trans. Michael B. Smith, *Social Semiotics* 6.1 (1996), pp. 7-16; originally the introduction to Michel de Certeau, *La possession de Loudun*, (Paris: Julliard, 1970).

⁹⁴ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xii.

be seen and how they are seen. Religion as a form of everyday practice takes on a significant relevance in sociocultural discourse. It goes towards showing that religion is not merely responses to questions or drives for identification within a social structure, it is a creative human practice of daily life. It is by taking seriously the ways that users engage the social products around them, embodying them in their daily language and practice, that the secret of what they are and their impact can be seen and measured.

Sacredness in social context

The value of de Certeau's spatiality extends beyond identifying where religious phenomena are to be seen and how they are seen. De Certeau's spatiality, rooted in his critique of modernity, contributes to the question of the presence of the sacred or spirituality in the social context. It argues that both religion and secularity are 'hybrid constructs that embrace simultaneously the sacred and profane'.⁹⁵ Instead of reifying a religious–secular dichotomy, de Certeau's theory of practice indicates that we should recognize religion and secularity as artefacts of human action that encompass both the sacred and profane, both transcendent and disenchantment, as Taylor might have it. The way forward is de Certeau's theory of practice. This includes de Certeau's vision of practice as inclusive of contextual belief and reasoned belief as well as the immanent and transcendent, even when the latter is hidden. For de Certeau, there is an element of the sacred in all belief and practice leading to the constitution of the sacred and its embeddedness in social context.

In Chapter 5, de Certeau's idea of belief was explored. In that chapter it was argued that belief and believing for de Certeau includes an appeal to an ontological referent, even if that referent is absent in the sense that true knowledge of it cannot be had, as Kierney

⁹⁵ Junxi Qian and Lily Kong, 'Buddhism Co. Ltd? Epistemology of religiosity, and the re-invention of a Buddhist monastery in Hong Kong' in *Society and Space* 36.1 (2018), pp.159-177 [159].

has it, an ‘anatheism’.⁹⁶ Consequently, for de Certeau, there is an element of the sacred to all belief, it is the act of belief as a practice that gives real meaning to actions and artefacts such as places and symbols. This is to say nothing of de Certeau’s Ignatian spirituality. Philip Sheldrake has shown that the Ignatian paradigm of ‘finding God in all things’ may be understood as a palimpsest for de Certeau’s theory of everyday practices.⁹⁷ De Certeau was preoccupied with the way all of our relationships, human and divine, are shaped by and are manifest in history and in location. There are spiritual values in his social scientific work that contrast with the strong differentiation between religion and non-religion and the generalizing of the sacred as distinct from the two. Following Sheldrake, some of these values will be noted here as they allow us to see the more nuanced and fluid approach that de Certeau’s spatiality lends to the question of locating religious *espace*.

Sheldrake identifies the concept of journeying both as a geographical concept and as a spiritual value, suggesting that for de Certeau spirituality is identified particular places. For example, de Certeau regularly uses the image of Jesus’ empty tomb, connecting the aim of spirituality as always seeking after something elusive.⁹⁸ Elsewhere, from Ignatian mysticism, de Certeau draws on the idea of everyday practices as always an expression of a human desire for meaning and an evocative rather than normative or logical discourse, what John Caputo calls ‘poetics of the impossible’.⁹⁹ Sheldrake identifies these as the basis for de Certeau’s impulse to transgress boundaries, and with

⁹⁶ Kierney, ‘God after God’, *Reimagining the Sacred*, p. 7. Kierney uses the term anatheism as a ‘returning to God after God’, it is not a regression to an enchanted past but a reseeing of the transcendent after a moment of absence, and in this reseeing there is still that absence in the midst of the presence.

⁹⁷ Philip Sheldrake, ‘Michel de Certeau: Spirituality and Practice of Everyday Life’, *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 12.2 (Fall 2012), pp. 207-216.

⁹⁸ Michel de Certeau, ‘The Weakness of Believing: From the Body to Writing, a Christian Transit,’ in Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), p. 214-234.

⁹⁹ Sheldrake, ‘Michel de Certeau’, p. 209-210; see John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event*, (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2006)

his scholarly practices as ‘ways of proceeding’.¹⁰⁰ It is an echo of practices as transgressing boundaries that emerges in the idea of tactics as a contrast to the totalizing strategies of *lieu*. According to Sheldrake, for de Certeau, tactics are the way ‘[o]rdinary people construct their identities by the everyday practices of continually encountering otherness.’¹⁰¹ Sheldrake continues, noting that in *The Practice of Everyday Life* and *Culture in the Plural* de Certeau attributes to the everyday a ‘transcendent, mystical quality’.¹⁰² The transcendent quality, however, is not so much God as a thing out there to be experienced in some essentialist way, but rather to be met our own and other voices, especially as they blend in the creation of meaning in the landscape of the everyday. All of this is to say that in de Certeau all things come together in a ‘mutually dependent dimension of the human engagement with God’.¹⁰³

What is the value of this to a spatial study of religion? It does not mean that religion is everywhere and in everything, since we understand religion as a particular way of making sense of human experience whose intent is to embody transformational experiences of the sacred (salvation, enlightenment, shalom, etc.) into everyday practices. The sacred is essential to religion; it is, as Flood argues, ‘a dimension ... that points to their possessing of something transcendent to human communities’.¹⁰⁴ De Certeau’s identification of the sacred and spirituality as the creative capacity of practices to make meaning retains the view of religion as ‘ways in which the human encounter with mystery, transcendence, or what we might call the invisible are mediated’.¹⁰⁵ It does so regardless of whether or not this creative capacity is intentionally directed towards embodying spirituality (in the case of religion) or not (in

¹⁰⁰ Sheldrake, ‘Michel de Certeau’, p. 210.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 213.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, p. 210, citing de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. ix, xiv.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁰⁴ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 6.

the case of non-religion). Knott's excision of the sacred from religion in order to explain its potential presence in non-religion is not necessary.

I anticipate that Knott would respond that this view of religion is incompatible with a spatial analysis, because there is no way in her spatial perspective to empirically measure the spiritual.¹⁰⁶ But that is precisely the problem. While Knott's spatial approach is able to trace the physical, mental, and social dimensions of religion, at least in terms of its contested borders, it does not locate the unique dimension of the transformational intent of religious *espace*. In contrast, de Certeau's invests all human action with sacred potential. This framing of practice explains the potential of spirituality and the sacred to be applicable to both religion and non-religion, without having to posit a separation of the sacred from religion,¹⁰⁷ or locating the sacred within particular symbols of belief systems,¹⁰⁸ even as it is the stories embedded in the practices that give them their meaning.

7.3. Returning to the public sphere

The starting assumption for the thesis was a determination that the way that religion is framed in discussions of its public place reflects an approach to religion that does not account for its embodied presence in the life of adherents. This approach is rooted in a perception of the relationship between religion and secularity and the normative functions each can undertake for the making of a society. The discussion about issues linked to religion in the public sphere emerge in a highly politicized context in Canada and elsewhere in the world today. This raises a number of questions that go beyond the study of religion and the nature of public spaces like the public sphere. Throughout this

¹⁰⁶ This was confirmed to me by Kim Knott in an email dated 31 December 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Hervieu-Léger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p. 108

¹⁰⁸ Wouter Hanegraaf, 'New Age Spiritualities as Secular Religion: A Historian's Perspective', *Social Compass*, 46.2 (1999), pp. 145-60; and, Antonninen, 'Rethinking the Sacred', p. 281

thesis, while I have sought to add appropriate examples to illustrate ideas, I have tried to avoid specific structures and social contexts in an effort to allow me to focus on a conceptual framework for exploring the visibility of religion. One implication for my study is that I have dealt with the texts and deep ideas of Habermas, Taylor, and Knott rather than any particular cases.

Already in this chapter I responded to Knott via my study of de Certeau. I have yet to do that with Habermas and Taylor and while the focus of the thesis is not particularly to do so, a response is important even if it be tentative. The nodal points of the criticism of Habermas and Taylor are: firstly, the framing of the debate over religion in terms of the cultural and philosophical legacy of the Western secularity; secondly, the repercussions of this framing for the terminology and agenda of contemporary philosophical debates; and thirdly, the implications for a politically loaded context for debates on the status of religion in issues of identity, education, healthcare, and even technological, socio-economic, or geo-political issues.

The public sphere, for Habermas, is to mediate between public and private spheres and constitute a means for bridging the state with private areas of work, home, and family allowing ‘privatized individuals and subjectivities’ to ‘take shape’.¹⁰⁹ The normative ideal of a problem solving public sphere has not come to pass, instead there is now a plurality of competing publics each articulating a different group or identity defined by gender, class, ethnicity, or some other status.¹¹⁰ In response, Habermas has crafted a vision of a postsecular public society as an effort to draw together the political tradition

¹⁰⁹ John Michael Roberts and Nick Crossley, ‘Introduction’ in Nick Crossley and John M. Roberts (eds.), *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 1-27 [3].

¹¹⁰ Ken Hirschkop, ‘Justice and Drama: on Bakhtin as a complement to Habermas’, in Nick Crossley and John M. Roberts (eds.), *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 49-66 [49-50].

of the Enlightenment and the values of democracy and freedom of conscience with modern religion, religious plurality, and reflexive faith.¹¹¹ But, as Braidotti accounts, Habermas defines the postsecular in narrow terms, universalizing society as a ‘specific brand and historical manifestation of secularism’, continuing to miss that religion is embedded and incorporated in everyday practices whose empirical presence in the public sphere cannot be accounted for nor accommodated through normative or institutional means.¹¹²

Differently, Taylor situates the public sphere as an informal institution of the modern moral order whose function is to contribute to the mutual benefit of society through adopting a multicultural communitarian ethic. Tariq Modood reads this as suggesting multicultural citizenship as ‘the presence of ideas, ethos, and politics of “difference”’ allowing for the articulation and legitimacy of differing kinds of claims.¹¹³ However, Modood argues that at the base of this is a presumption of a European liberalism that may coincide with Christianity, but not with Islam, especially when it comes to the way that multicultural citizenship is embodied in social practices. Whether or not Modood is accurate in this claim, what it shows is that Taylor’s (new) secularism does not provide an accounting of the presence of religion.

Habermas and Taylor appeal to Western philosophical legacy that has framed the discussion of religion. Each dismisses the idea that there is an incompatibility between secularity and religion and appeal to particular principles underlying values to mediate

¹¹¹ Camil Ungureanu and Paolo Monti, ‘Habermas on Religion and Democracy: Critical Perspectives’ *The European Legacy* 22:5, (2017), pp. 521-527.

¹¹² Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden, ‘Introductory Notes’ in Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 1-13 [2].

¹¹³ Tariq Modood, ‘Is there a crisis of “Postsecularism” in Western Europe?’ in Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular politics*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 14-34 [18-19].

the relationship between the two. Habermas appeals to a general democratic principles and Taylor appeals to a sense of morality couched in the human pursuit of ‘the good life’. This framing, using the spatial terms, can be seen as a strategic practice of, emerging from and reinforcing, *lieu*. In acknowledging the importance of religion and while trying to avoid anything that might lead to cultural relativism each adopts an ordering principle. Unfortunately, as Braidotti and Modood point out, these principles are rooted in a Western secular legacy that does not account or cannot see the nuanced complexity of the varying religious beliefs and practices with Western nations.

For example, let me consider Habermas and Taylor on the reasons and language of the public sphere. In Chapter 2 it was shown how Habermas advocates for the necessity of neutral public reason and language in the public sphere. This requires the translation of religious reasons and language and the openness of non-religious citizens to learning to mediate between religious and non-religious citizens in social public discourse and political discourse. Taylor, though, argues that the appeal to a public reason and language is misplaced as it places an unnecessary burden on religious citizens. He argues that a new secularity must learn to incorporate the reasons of religion alongside those of non-religion, as each is historically connected with the development of the liberal state. Habermas counters that neither religion nor non-religion can claim proprietorship over the foundations of democracy or its moral imagination; whether the language of practical reasoning, means of public justification, or symbolic resources for civic and moral motivation.¹¹⁴ Moreover, as neither is able to claim to be the source of democracy, the function of the state and political discourse must be seen as separate and neutral. It is the function of neutral public reason to be the vehicle through which any religious or non-religious position is able to contribute to deliberative democracy. In

¹¹⁴ Ungureanu and Monti, ‘Habermas on Religion and Democracy’, p. 523.

response, Taylor suggests that Habermas' system organizes society such that all citizens must recognize a norm that overrides commitment to religion. Instead, Taylor puts the onus on the public sphere and on the state to become adaptive to the inclusion of religious reason alongside non-religious reason. In either case, the question of the presence of religious reason and language is one of its strategic presence in the *lieu* of public discourse; either translated (but known to be translated) or untranslated (and accommodated).

As I am not sufficiently able to comment on the possibility of neutral language, I will leave that to others to debate. Rather, I want to focus on the idea that *espace* are in part produced through the appropriation of cultural products to ends different than they were intended and that these uses are often hidden. This sort of tactical practice in relation to language may function like children whose use of their parents' clichés in an ironic subversion of their parents' meaning. What we can see here is the distinction between the authoritative language, what de Certeau calls artificial because it has been established as *propre*, and the lived language.¹¹⁵ Habermas and Taylor's debate is on the structure and composition of the authoritative language (neutral, translated, or polysemic). But, what a spatial approach highlights is that present within the social or public discourse the authoritative language can be reappropriated, creating an *espace* within the discourse. This reappropriation of language begins in the everyday practice of these groups, in their social settings and communication. Consequently, the discourse on the space of religion in the public sphere can be strengthened through a recognition of the particular significance of the everyday use of language.

¹¹⁵ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 6
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Here Taylor can help to elucidate. Taylor suggests that reason is entwined with language and perception within a social imaginary. These are different from intellectual systems. They are ‘broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode’; a social imaginary is ‘the way ordinary people “imagine” their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, etc.’¹¹⁶ It is the social imaginary that is expressed through the use of language. It is not sufficient to note the way that religious reasons can be translated or accommodated in public to account for space of religion.

Finally, it is for these reasons that the question of the public space of religion must be framed in a way that allows not only for normative frameworks but also empirical study. This is what de Certeau’s spatial approach provides through its identification of *lieu* and *espace* as distinct social spaces, with distinct forms of practices. de Certeau contributes to the broadly philosophical and anthropological perspectives of Habermas and Taylor by adding to the discourse a practical framework. Eschewing the strictly philosophical, his spatial theory identifies the field within which the sociological empirical data is sown and provides a framework for its analysis.

7.4. Conclusion

How can de Certeau’s spatial approach applied to religion situate the discourse on the place of religion in the public sphere? I introduced the public sphere in order to question that ways that the public presence of religion is conceived. I acknowledged that while the public sphere is not equivalent with the public space, questions of the public presence of religion are often present in the public sphere. The idea of the space of

¹¹⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007) pp. 171-172.

religion in the public and in the public sphere are necessarily entangled. I focussed on the public sphere in part because that discourse is strongly informed by the political dimension, which is the dominant sphere of public life in the modern West.¹¹⁷ Consequently, relating everyday religion to the public sphere can begin with locating everyday religion in the public space. The question of locating religion in the public space a spatial location for the consideration of religion. A spatial approach to religion requires that we move beyond viewing religion as normative beliefs and conventional institutions. These beliefs and institutional forms, while representative of religion, do not sufficiently locate the presence of religion in the lives of individuals or society. As Flood writes, ‘religions are central to human subjectivity, to the meaning of our lives and the stories we tell about ourselves’.¹¹⁸ Any approach to analysing religion in the public space and the public sphere must accept that for its practitioner’s religion is a story that organizes their engagement in the public prior to their performing it. Moreover, in the performance of religion, belief is indivisible from embodiment, the public is bound to the private, and everyday life is as much if not more of an indicator of religion than is institutional practice.

Challenges in discussing the space of religion in the public sphere result from the questions of the nature of religion, as well as where religion is located in human life and society. It also has to do with the question of who is making these determinations. This raises a particular challenge of how to locate human activities such as religion.

Any approach that is predicated on the modern need to define the concept of ‘religion’ in order to study it encounters problems. Asad has observed:

¹¹⁷ Neil Smith and Setha Low, ‘The imperative of public space’ in Neil Smith and Setha Low (eds.), *The Politics of Public Space* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-16.

¹¹⁸ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 190.

It may be a happy accident that this effort of defining religion converges with the liberal demand in our time that it be kept quite separate from politics, law, and science – spaces in which varieties of power and reason articulate our distinctively modern life. This definition is at once part of a strategy (for secular liberals) of the confinement, and (for liberal Christians) of the defense of religion.¹¹⁹

This definitional approach will end up giving a very limited answer to the question of the location of religion, as was seen in the case of the province of Québec and *Anselem*.

The distinctions between private and public, belief and reason, and sacred and secular do not account for the dynamic of religious being, specifically the ongoing presence and power of religion.

Writing on de Certeau's 'The Weakness of Believing', Ward begins his conclusion with the statement that:

Saying *Credo* today (whether as part of a Jewish, Christian, Islamic, or Hindu confession) is not the same as saying *Credo* in the 1970s. That is the point. On de Certeau's analysis of believing, this new saying will operate in transformed structural organisations of belief and new languages.¹²⁰

As Ward indicates, the point de Certeau argues is that 'saying *credo*' or practising belief is different depending upon the place in which belief is to be practised. The implication to draw from this is that even as Flood writes that what is called religion is 'the way the human encounter with mystery' or the invisible 'is mediated', the *espace* of religion is the situations or locations where and activities by which such human encounters are actually taking place.¹²¹ This means that the particularity of the local needs to be part of any conversation on the space of religion in the public sphere.

The difficulty in making this particularity and locality present is evident in Knott's spatial approach. Knott attends elements of religion as a lived experience but does so without considering the uniqueness of religion and its logic of belief that operates

¹¹⁹ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 28.

¹²⁰ Graham Ward, 2011 'The Weakness of Believing: A Dialogue with de Certeau' *Culture, Theory and Critique* 52:2-3, pp. 233-246 [245]; citing Michel de Certeau, 'The Weakness of Belief: From the Body to Writing a Christian Transit', trans. S. Brown in Graham Ward (ed.), *The Certeau Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000) pp. 214-243.

¹²¹ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, p. 6.

within the texts and actions she analyses. This results from her reification of the Religious/Secular Field as an epistemological site of struggle and her adoption of the idea of sacred as purely social. It is the former of these that causes the greater problem for a spatial approach to religion as it directs Knott's analysis towards 'contested sites'.¹²² While, in many circumstances, a focus on the 'contested sites' between the religious and the secular will give understanding of people's experience of them, such a focus can also act as limits for the identification of the location of religion. In contrast, de Certeau's spatial theory is particularly rooted in his philosophy of religion and a concern for heterology, and moves towards dialogical interstices in which differences in ways of being can be seen as they are.

¹²² Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 84.
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Chapter Eight

8. Conclusion

The thesis began with the question: How do we understand religion and its relationship to the public sphere? The purpose of the question was not to reconcile that relationship, but to introduce the way religion is apprehended and perceived within the debate. It was concluded that the dominant narrative approaches religion normatively and speaks of it primarily in terms of private belief and ethics connected to traditions and institutions. I argued that the normative, private, and institutional view of religion fails to recognize the significance of religion as a practice of everyday life.¹ I proposed a spatial approach to the study of religion as one way to redress this problem. Kim Knott has proposed a spatial approach that endeavours to explore religion in the physical, mental, and social arenas in which it is situated as way of enlightening how we understand the nature and characteristics of religious phenomena. Knott's method is primarily sociological and empirical, and it was argued that there are problems with her framing of religion and secularity.² Without abandoning the potential of a spatial approach, I argued that a philosophical and therefore more broadly applicable model for locating religious spaces can be developed out of the Michel de Certeau's distinction between strategy and tactics as practices, and between *lieu* and *espace*. I concluded that de Certeau's spatial theory allows us to account for religion in a way that challenges the dominant narrative in the conversation of religion and the public sphere, helping us to understand the enduring presence and influence of religion.

¹ Michael Hoelzl, 'The New Visibility of Religion and Its Impact on Populist Politics' *Religion* 11, 292 (2020), pp. 1-16 [11]; and, Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, 'Introduction' in Graham Ward and Michael Hoelzl (eds.), *The New Visibility of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 1-11.

² Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion* (Durham: Acumen, 2013 [2005]), p. 124.

8.1. Main thesis conclusions

The thesis presented builds on the premise of the New Visibility of religion. That premise is that modern secular theories of religion do not properly account for the presence of religion in Western society where empirical data supports the idea of an increase in non-religion, even as the social and political influence of religion is on the rise. To this end it has been argued that Michel de Certeau's spatial theory is an appropriate starting point and applicable framework for study of religion that allows for us to account for the public presence of religion. Far from being mundane and meaningless activities in the background of society, everyday skills turn ideas, words, and cultural products into a practice of belief. They are fundamental practices in which *lieu*, dominant institutional or systemic orders of meaning, are organized in a network of history and relationship to make a separate way of being-in-the-world, *espace*. The *espace* are sometimes in contest with and sometimes hidden within *lieu*, even as they are always shifting in response to the social order. In the case of religion, then, what needs to be recognized that even as it is always set within particular cultures, embodied in particular communities, and engender particular social practices sometimes that will take of the form of religious communities transforming to be part of or resistantly persisting within the dominant social order, as has been the case of Masshadi's in Iran, but it may also take the form of a religious communities turning cultural and social practices towards maintaining a consistent though hidden religious identity.³ A conclusion of this argument is that religions must be conceived of as embedded and incorporated in everyday practices whose empirical presence in society cannot be accounted for nor accommodated through normative or institutional means.

³ Hilda Nissimi, 'Religious Conversion, Covert Defiance, and Social Identity: A Comparative Review', *Numen: International Review for the History of Religion*, 51.4 (2004), pp. 367-406

Searching the debate on the space of religion in the public sphere highlights that the public sphere is a contested ideal, and this not only from the perspective of its form and function but also of its validity and the extent to which it is an institution of social discipline. Historically, the principles of the public sphere emerge out of European politics and the emergence of both political liberalism and humanism as a value system. In this, the public sphere has been characterized by classic liberal distinctions between private and public and belief and reason, as well as commitments to liberal ideas of equality and independence. As a product of that European history, however, the public sphere is also implicated with notions of modernity and secularism and everything that entails. Consequently, the present question of the space of religion in the public sphere engenders numerous potential avenues for exploration, including but not limited to philosophical discussions on religion and secularity, sociological investigations on identity, empirical explorations of incidences of religion in the public sphere, and even theorizing on the nature of public and private realms.

Taken in its basic form the public sphere is a ‘theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk’.⁴ According to Habermas, this idea of the public sphere is that of a body of private persons assembled to discuss matters of public concern or common interest.⁵ But, the highly politicized contexts in which issues linked to religion and public sphere are discussed, goes beyond the public sphere as a discursive sphere. Spohn notes that Habermas has repeatedly returned to the problematization of the public sphere and in recent years in an attempt to recognize this

⁴ Nancy Fraser, ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy’ *Social Text* 25/26, pp. 56-80, [58]; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas. Burger with Frederik Lawrence, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989).

⁵ Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, pp. 3-4.

fact.⁶ Similarly, Taylor's 'approach aims at making conceptions of public space more plural so that religious citizens with Western as well as non-Western cultural backgrounds are given their fair share in determining the future moral trajectory of Western societies'.⁷

Habermas and Taylor approach the question from different philosophical perspectives of modernity, resulting in their different positions on whether there are epistemic differences between religious and secular reasoning. Despite the difference, each upholds that expressions of secularity like the state, public sphere, and citizenship are distillations of Judeo-Christian precepts, including the intrinsic worth of individual persons, autonomy of the self, moral conscience, rationality, and an ethics of love.⁸ This reveals that each holds to some view of a unified public sphere, a position critiqued by Calhoun.⁹ Also, by being embedded in the modern need to define 'religion', Habermas and Taylor privilege 'traditional' forms of religious expression.¹⁰ This also reveals that each holds to some substantive view of religion, defining it with reference to specific attributes of belief and practice, or alternatively as functional and having to do with ultimate problems, and in either case rooted in the structure and language of modernity. While each maintains some idea of the potential positive place of religion in society, this does raise a particular problem. This substantive and functional view of religion is a partial and limited view of religion, overlooking the physical and social dimensions and interactions of both religion and the public sphere. This evidences what Adut calls the

⁶ Ulrike Spohn, 'A Difference in Kind? Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor on Post-secularism', *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms*, 20.2 (2015), pp. 120-135 [120].

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸ Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden, 'Introductory Notes' in Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw, and Eva Midden (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular politics*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp.1-13 [2].

⁹ Craig Calhoun, 'Facets of the Public Sphere: Dewey, Arendt, Habermas', in Fredrik Engelstad, Håkon Larsen, Jon Rogstad, and Kari Steen-Johnsen (eds.), *Institutional Changes in the Public Sphere. Views on the Nordic Model*, pp. 23-35 (Warzawa: De Gruyter Open. <https://www.degruyter.com/viewbook-toc/product/488999>).

¹⁰ Braidotti, 'Introductory notes', pp. 3-4.

‘dominant approach’ to the public sphere ‘emphasizing civic-minded or civil discourse’ that has ‘difficulty dealing with consequential public events and neglects the spatial core of the public sphere and the effects of visibility’.¹¹ The analysis of Habermas and Taylor concluded that is required is an approach that is able to *see* religion in its dynamic, collaborative, and sometimes conflictual relationship with secularity and the public sphere. This approach needed to be conceptual so that it could accommodate so-called ‘traditional’ religion while also studying the variety of religious movements and some ‘quasi-religions’ and humanist or atheistic systems that cross the ‘boundary’ between the religious and non-religious.¹²

Facilitating all of this is the spatial approach to religion. Hervieu-Léger writes that ‘ever since they were constituted as such, the social sciences of the religious – history, historical anthropology, ethnology, and sociology – have accorded major importance to the question of the relationship between religion and space’.¹³ This questioning of this relationship is situated within some broad ‘registers’. Kim Knott’s novel approach tries to draw these registers together, blending together social constructivism with phenomenology. According to Knott:

Recent social and cultural theory has reconceived space as dynamic, in terms of its relationship to power, his- tory, and time, its condition of simultaneity and the various ways in which it is experienced and represented. No longer a mere theater for other action, it is enmeshed in embodiment and practice, knowledge and discourse, and in religion.¹⁴

She has applied her spatial methodology to cases where ‘competing religious, secular, and postsecular beliefs and values are evident’.¹⁵ This allows for religion to be located

¹¹ Ari Adut, ‘A Theory of the Public Sphere’ *Sociological Theory* 30.4, (2012), pp. 238-262 [abstract].

¹² Kim Knott, ‘Inside, Outside, and the Space Between: Territories and Boundaries in the Study of Religion’ *Temenos* 44.1, 2008, pp. 41-66 [53].

¹³ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, ‘Space and Religion: New Approaches to Religious Spatiality in Modernity’, trans. Karen George, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26.1 (2002), pp. 99-105 [99].

¹⁴ Kim Knott, ‘Religion, Space, and Place’ *The Spatial Turn in Research on Religion’ Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 1, (2010), pp. 29-43 [37].

¹⁵ *ibid.*

and described giving attention to the concept itself, while also emphasizing its situatedness in relation to other beliefs and values, recognizing that situatedness is not static but dynamic.¹⁶ Furseth calls this sort of dynamic ‘religious complexity’ writing; it ‘refers to a broader set of phenomena, namely the coexistence of religious decline, growth, and change at macro-, meso-, and individual levels, and the multiple religious forms at each level’.¹⁷ Importantly, giving attention to the concept of religion and its particular situatedness in relation to other beliefs and values, provides a broad enough conceptual structure to accommodate traditional and non-traditional religion, as well as religion and non-religion.

In positive ways, Knott’s approach succeeds by providing a way to contrast the tendency to locate religion in normative and institutional categories, especially through her emphasis on the body and practices alongside belief as the logic for the production of culture.¹⁸ As Lefebvre and Beaman suggest, ‘who we are shapes and is shaped by social relations’ forming the ‘space that religion occupies’.¹⁹ To situate her study, Knott posits a Religious/Secular Field as the object of study within which religion and the secular may be found. This is to facilitate an approach to religion that overcomes what Knott sees as the modern need to ‘define the concept’ and avoid, borrowing from Asad, the potential of creating an abstract religion that does not reflect reality.²⁰ The analysis of Knott concluded that her conceptual frame does exactly what she hopes to avoid and reveals her tacit secularism in framing the Religious/Secular Field as an epistemological

¹⁶ Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 81, 85; also, Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, especially Chapter 1 ‘The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category’.

¹⁷ Inger Furseth, ‘Introduction’, in Inger Furseth (ed.), *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017) pp. 1-30 [16].

¹⁸ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 235.

¹⁹ Lori G. Beaman and Solange Lefebvre, ‘Introduction’ in Solange Lefebvre and Lori G. Beaman (eds.), *Religion in the Public Sphere: Canadian Case Studies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), p. 11, 13.

²⁰ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 80; Asad talks of the secular tendency of defining ‘abstract citizens’, see Talal Asad, *Formations of Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity*, (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 169.

site of force–power relations, a site of struggle over ‘boundary disputes’, and focuses on these contested spaces.²¹ Knott’s view of contested religion overlooks contexts where religion may co-exist with other belief systems, for example when religion contributes to generally considered secular aims such as good citizenship and national cohesion,²² or when it is furtive or hidden, such as the digital spaces studied by Lurs and Ponzanesi.²³ So even as the spatial theory was put forward as a way of making religion visible it was concluded that the theory of Knott’s formulation needs strengthening.

It is here that the argument turned to Michel de Certeau’s spatial theory. I argued that de Certeau’s argument allows for us to account for religion in contested and uncontested sites, when hidden and in the open, when part of a dominant order and when evading or opposing that order. Over the course of three chapters, two main conclusions are drawn. Summarily, these are: (1) that de Certeau’s spatial theory, as with his other work, emerges from his philosophy of religion that frames religion with an idea of subjectivity that is not bound to normative ideas of religion; (2) the spatial concepts of *lieu* and *espace*, and strategy and tactics, provide a way of understanding that subjectivity and its relation to social and cultural contexts, thus allowing us to talk about the myriad expressions of religion, thus making them visible. To elaborate, in contrast with some English-speaking social scientists and interpreters of de Certeau, I find that de Certeau’s philosophy of religion and theology informs his methodology and the major themes of his projects including his spatial theory. Much is made of de Certeau’s ‘personal

²¹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 84; citing James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 13.

²² Patrick Eisenlohr, ‘Religious Aspiration, Public Religion, and the Secularity of Pluralism’, in Braidotti et al. (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular Publics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 195-209.

²³ Koen Lurs and Sandra Ponzanesi, ‘Remediating Religion as Everyday Practice: Postsecularism, Postcolonialism, and Digital Culture’, in Braidotti et al. (eds.), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular Publics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 152-174.

awakening'²⁴ and what Ahearne calls a 'founding rupture' in which his work broke from the 'restricted networks' of religious scholarship and turned towards a more 'common life'.²⁵ Instead, I conclude with Bocken that de Certeau is concerned with locating religious spirituality within modern culture, asking in which spaces humans are able to encounter God.²⁶ This means that de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* is not an exercise showing how aesthetic forms struggle to cope with the multiplicities of society,²⁷ but it is an attempt at using social and cultural theory to create a method for locating spiritual spaces, to locate religion within ostensibly non-religious places.²⁸

Engaging with de Certeau's notions of *lieu* and *espace*, I argued that these technical terms are best understood as artefacts of meaning in the sense that they are, as Knott puts it, 'material and metaphorical', but that their meaning is fixed within a particular cultural imagination and set of practices, or 'ways of operating'.²⁹ De Certeau makes a distinction between *lieu* and *espace* as differing types of artefacts, but notes that each is socially produced, and the difference between the two hinges on their relationship to the practices, strategies, and tactics of which they are functions. The significance of de Certeau's spatial theory and what sets it apart from Knott is that it turns on practices as the indices of belief. Moreover, these are not expressions of a society defined by force–power relations; rather, while recognizing the significance that power dynamics play, de Certeau's spatial theory proposes an alternative to power as an organizing model for

²⁴ Mike Crang, 'Michel de Certeau', in Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchem (eds.) *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2011), pp. 106-111 [106].

²⁵ Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 5.

²⁶ Inigo Bocken, 'Nomad and Layman: Spiritual Spaces in Modernity', in Inigo Bocken (ed.), *Spiritual Spaces: History and Mysticism in Michel de Certeau*, Studies in Spirituality Supplement 24, Leuven: Peeters, pp. 111-123 [111].

²⁷ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift eds., *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 16, citing Michael Sheringham ed., *Parisien Fields* (London: Reaktion, 1996) (no page reference given).

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 123.

²⁹ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 14-15; and, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life Vol .1*, trans. Steven Rendall, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. xiv; originally published as *L'invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire*, (Paris: Union Générale des éditions, 1974).

understanding society, a hermeneutical philosophy he calls story. Practices are, for de Certeau, creative acts at the root of the structures of life with the story. They embrace social and moral acts; they are cultural knowledge forms through which individuals become aware of the world. These acts, which are always situated in time, combine with the human desire for meaning to facilitate individual interaction with otherness. Such spatial practices denote the ways that people generate, perceive or use language and objects, distributing them into an order (of whatever kind) of elements that instantiate their story. According to de Certeau, it is these practices that offer themselves for deciphering subjectivity within local and general frameworks.

8.2. Contribution to knowledge

My contribution to knowledge comes from my analysis of de Certeau's spatial approach for religion within the context of the question of the space of religion in the public sphere. The academic discourse on the public sphere is vast. With that, there are numbers of studies that have as their subject the question of religion in the public sphere. I mention several of these in this thesis. Those I have mentioned can be generally categorized in one of three ways: (1) There are approaches that look at the structure and function of the public sphere in contrast with religion on ideas of politics, society, values and language primarily from a normative framework. Two projects that I have mentioned that fall into this category are *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*³⁰ and *Religion in the Public Sphere*.³¹ (2) In contrast, there are approaches that focus on particular instances of contact between religion and the public sphere. These approaches often have at their base concerns over diversity, representation, identity, and

³⁰ Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.), *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere: Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor and Cornel West*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

³¹ Nick Brunsveld and Roger Trigg (eds.), *Religion in the Public Sphere: Proceedings of the 2010 Conference of the European Society for Philosophy of Religion*, Ars Disputandi Supplement Series 2011, vol. 5 (Narcis: Open Access).

accommodation. Two volumes mentioned here are *Religion and Diversity in Canada*³² and *Religion in the Public Sphere: Canadian Case Studies*.³³ Each of these come to the question from the modern secular framework. (3) Then, there are the already referenced volumes edited by Furseth and Braidotti et al. that actively strive to approach religion in a way that problematizes secularism; the former through a sociological frame called religious complexity and the latter from their own take on postsecular subjectivity. It is in this final category that I would situate my approach. Furseth situates the issue: the difficulty of the question of the space of religion in the public sphere is that we have difficulty conceiving of ‘the simultaneous presence of several, and sometimes contradictory, religious trends that may coexist at different levels in society’.³⁴ I agree with Furseth and Braidotti that what is needed is an way to view religion that is not bound within the terms of the modern epistemological project. In answering this challenge, I contribute a reading of de Certeau’s spatial theory.

This also leads to a second contribution to knowledge, building upon the concept of a spatial approach to religion. The idea of religious spatiality as explored here is relatively recent. In fact, Knott indicated in 2005 that her proposed spatial methodology was a novel combination of various disciplines within social and cultural theory.³⁵ For example, 2011 *Religious Studies: The Key Concepts* refers to ‘space’ using Durkheim and Eliade and the distinction of sacred and profane, missing the important nuances presented here.³⁶ The spatial approach that I have gleaned from my reading of de Certeau and the application that I have made of it here presents a new conceptual framework for a recently proposed approach to locating religion in ostensibly religious

³² Lori G. Beaman and Peter Beyer (eds.), *Religion and Diversity in Canada*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

³³ Lefebvre and Beaman, *Religion in the Public Sphere* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

³⁴ Furseth, *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere*, p. 16.

³⁵ Knott, *The Location of Religion*, p. 1.

³⁶ Carl Olson, *Religious Studies: The Key Concepts*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 210-213.

and non-religious places. This contributes to a critical study of secularist approaches to religion in the public sphere and contributes to exploring the nature of religious complexity in present social contexts, accomplishing the aim laid out by the New Visibility thesis as described in the introduction. As an indication of the potential of this contribution to knowledge I have just recently had accepted a proposal for a chapter on the spatial turn in the study of religion in the upcoming *Routledge International Handbook for Sociology and Christianity* in the section on sociological theory.

Finally, by making this contribution through an application of de Certeau's spatial theory, I contribute to a growing body of literature on his work. Specifically, my work adds to that of Buchanan and Highmore, who have each utilized de Certeau as a basis for cultural analysis. In this area, though, there is a point that I do wish to make. Originally, I intended to approach my question using Taylor as my primary subject. One of my primary reason for this was that I saw in Taylor the idea of the embeddedness of religion in the present age and an advocacy for the place of religious reasons in the public sphere. For reasons that should seem evident now I came to later see that there were limitations to Taylor. It was not until I was registered for my study that my supervisor recommended to me de Certeau. Originally, I had concerns because of the way that I found de Certeau represented in the secondary literature on cultural studies. But, the more I engaged with de Certeau and moreso when I came across the work of theologians Graham Ward, Philip Sheldrake, Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt and especially Inigo Bocken I came to see de Certeau's deep religious philosophy operating within his work. This is a novel contribution to de Certeau studies by connecting his theological thought to his cultural studies.

8.3. Further research

The spatial approach to religion provides numerous venues for further research. I began initial research on this question in 2015. Since then, I have come across ideas like that of Religious Complexity, which would pose an interesting point of intersection with religious spatiality. In a 2003 paper presented to the British Sociological Association, Sylvia Walby noted the potential for ‘complexity theory’ to ‘address the tension between general theory and explanation of specific phenomena’.³⁷ The trends of growing secularization and continued religious presence require theorizing that can consider multiple religious trends taking place simultaneously. The complexity frame challenges theories that stress linearity and hierarchical views of social change. The religious complexity approach is a meta-theoretical attempt to refer to the simultaneous presence of several, sometimes complimentary, independent or contradictory, religious trends coexist at different places within society. Furseth notes religious complexity is different from religious deprivatization and diversity, referring to a broader set of phenomena, naming the coexistence of religious decline, growth, and change at micro-, meso-, and macro-, levels, including multiple religious forms at each level.³⁸ In adapting the complexity frame for religious study Furseth and the contributors to her project accept as key principles a rejection of reductionism, reciprocal development, nonlinearity, and a focus on changing dynamics focus on predications for assessing religion. Notably, there is no significant consideration of spatiality in her study. I believe that there is sufficient ground in the accepted principles for me to argue that the spatial approach could provide add significantly to the complexity framework.

³⁷ Sylvia Walby, ‘Complexity Theory, Globalization, and Diversity’, *Paper presented to conference of the British Sociological Association*, 2003, pp. 1-22 [1, 16-17].

³⁸ Furseth, *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere*, p. 16

At the time of writing, the world is anticipating the end of restrictions, lockdowns, and social distancing stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. This time of intense governmental presence in the private lives of individuals has raised many questions. In the midst of this, the space of religion has been a significant element of concern. The ability of individuals to meet publicly has been a long-standing premise of the values employed in Western democracies. When this ability is constrained for what the government deems are appropriate purposes, religious rites such as the Christian celebration of Easter and the Islamic observance of Ramadan are put into question. When the practice of a religious rite requires a social assembly, how do religious practitioners mediate between civic duty and religious observance? Similarly, how does a government ensure the freedom of conscience and worship while at the same time protecting social structures? These are questions that get to the heart of the relationship between religion and politics. Often, our concern is to focus on models of that relationship that respect the distinctiveness of both while not collapsing the two into one another. This is often premised on the idea that religion and politics are distinct from one another, autonomous and independent of one another. How might an application of a spatial model to the relationship alter this perception? What does it say about the relationship between religion and politics and the way we understand religious citizens?

One of the distinctives of de Certeau's methodology is the idea of practices as a use of products. When we consider the way that products may be used towards particular ends, one of the most readily available examples is technology. Gavin Flood makes the observation that the future is technological and that the challenge of humanity is to understand the essence and impact of technology.³⁹ Religions have been adept at using

³⁹ Flood, *The Importance of Religion*, Epilogue.
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technology. Podcasts that utilize subscriber registry data are able to create maps that allow users to locate other listeners. This makes it possible to create a sense of community by facilitating contact among like-minded individuals over great distances.⁴⁰ During the lockdown, video conferencing programs such as Zoom and Google Hangouts and social media companies such as Facebook and YouTube have facilitated religious groups meeting for rites and services while at the same time observing lockdown protocols. Catholics around the world were able to view Pope Francis conduct the Easter Mass in St. Peter's Basilica from the comfort of their homes.⁴¹ Muslims were able to attend a virtual celebration of Eid by the Council of American-Islamic Relations.⁴² Although these opportunities are significant in allowing religions to expand their reach as global phenomena and though they facilitate a virtual expression of religious rites, this raised the question as to whether and how such practices may be considered properly religious. This kind of virtual activity may always be considered secondary to living communities exercising traditions that enact practices. If the essence of religions lies in their being ways of life, practised stories, embodied within specific conditions, how are such changes to be understood?

Many of these considerations are the intersection of media and religion. Media saturation is a common phenomenon. The scale and use of new technology based and stationary or traditional media is very high. As Nick Couldry points out,

[f]irst, if, as we so often claim, our life worlds are media saturated, then we need to look at processes of media saturation through a wider angled lens. A media-saturated world is a world where actions oriented to media are precisely not limited to production, direct consumption, and further circulation.

⁴⁰ See *Nomad Podcast Listener Map*, <https://www.nomadpodcast.co.uk/listeners/>.

⁴¹ See 'Pope Francis oversees Easter Mass from Vatican City amid coronavirus lockdown', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ja7Y8A19o24>.

⁴² See Council on American-Islamic Relations, 'CAIR-NY Plus 20 Muslim Organizations Unite for Virtual Eid Celebration', May 2020, accessed at: https://www.cair.com/press_releases/cair-ny-plus-20-muslim-organizations-unite-for-virtual-eid-celebration/.

Media norms are internalised and embodied; media resources become part of the infrastructure of many types of activity⁴³

The level of media saturation impacts religion in multiple ways. As with general trends regarding media use, religious imaginations, practices, and institutions will be impacted by transformations in media production and consumption. In 2008 Stig Hjarvard argued that through mediatization religion is increasingly being subsumed under the logic of the media.

As conduits of communication, the media have become the primary source of religious ideas, in particular in the form of 'banal religion'. As a language the media mould religious imagination in accordance with the genres of popular culture, and as cultural environments the media have taken over many of the social functions of the institutionalized religions, providing both moral and spiritual guidance and a sense of community.⁴⁴

In framing my thesis conceptually, I did not take the opportunity to engage with this important intersection between religion and media. Partly, this was due to a lack of ability in the area of media studies. However, *lieu* and *espace* can be effective analytical terms for considering the ways the media is influencing the open and hidden representations and awareness of religion but also, for considering where and how the visibility of religion can be viewed as an occurrence of public religion.

de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* endeavoured to make possible investigations into the ways that people made use of cultural products in everyday life. The aim was to make it possible to see practices as ways in which social *lieu* were organized and then how they were reorganized to produce *espace* in a network of story and relationship. As a theoretical framework the number of locations and ways that the terms may be applied are numerous. Above I have listed a few that I believe worth pursuing, but it is my hope that others find in my argument ideas that they can apply towards their questions.

⁴³ Nick Couldry, 'My media studies: Thoughts from Nick Couldry', *Television & New Media* 10.1 (2009), pp. 40–42. It is worth noting that Nick Couldry is currently one of the leading researchers of mediatization.

⁴⁴ Stig Hjarvard, 'The mediatization of religion: A theory of the media as agents of religious change.' *Nordic Journal of Media Studies*, 6 (2008), pp. 9-26

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