

Chapter 1

Opening Up Space for the Study of Religion

Like 'religion', '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. There is a history of thinking about space, place, and location, and there continues to be a lively debate about their meaning. It would be inappropriate to go into these in any detail here, but this dynamic interpretative process does suggest the need for me to clarify my use of these terms. As I hope to show in the discussion that follows, the framework for my analysis emerges from late-twentieth-century conceptions of space, articulated principally by Henri Lefebvre and a group of radical social geographers, that are self-consciously geared to contemporary global circumstances and their interpretation.

My perspective takes its inspiration and much of its method from the project of Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*.¹ I cannot claim to share his personal and intellectual engagement with Marxism,² but I am inspired by his enthusiasm for a spatial analysis and his hope that it offers a transdisciplinary and timely approach to the understanding of social and political relations, as well as the possibility of uniting previously separated fields of enquiry.³ Within the study of religions there has

1. I have focused on this book in particular, with reference to several others, but have not made a complete study of Lefebvre's works, written over a lifetime spanning the twentieth century (1901-91). I have used English translations of his works.

2. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 419-21; Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); Elden, 'Politics, Philosophy, Geography'; Andy Merrifield, 'Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space', in Crang and Thrift (eds.), *Thinking Space*, pp. 167-82; Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, 'Henri Lefebvre in Contexts: An Introduction', *Antipode* 33.5 (2001), pp. 763-68; Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

3. On 'unitary theory' and transdisciplinarity, see Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 11, 413.

long been recognition of the value of a polymethodic approach, irrespective of the underlying conceptualisation of 'religion' itself. What Lefebvre offers is more than a conjoining of methods from different disciplines, however. He proposes a theoretical reunification of the physical, mental, and social dimensions of our lived experience.⁴ The scholar of religions is thus offered a potentially useful analytical approach to material, ideological, and social forms of religion and their embeddedness in a broader network of social and cultural relations.

The discussion that follows, whilst being derived initially from Lefebvre's commentary upon social space and its production, is informed also by a wider, but not exhaustive, reading in social geography and social and cultural theory. This reading no doubt reflects my own interests, the availability of resources and my idiosyncratic route through them.⁵ The purpose of the discussion in this chapter is to explain what I understand by space and to identify the general terms of a spatial approach to religion by briefly reviewing a number of issues, particularly the material and metaphorical uses of spatial terminology, the body, the social nature of space, the relations between space and time, and space and power, and key terms such as place and location, and their relationship to space.

Material and Metaphorical Space

In the majority of polite enquiries about this project it has been important to signal at an early stage the significance of both material and metaphorical understandings of space. Once it is clear that I do not mean *outer space*, the listener often settles for an image of *abstract space*. Yet even that proves difficult to imagine into a meaningful relationship with religion. Abstract space—with its roots in the geometrical space of Euclid and, later, Descartes—conveys a sense of emptiness, of being a passive container for bodies and objects, of being homogeneous. Such a space may contain religion or even be a *tabula rasa* or backdrop against which it is enacted, but how can it illuminate religion, let alone provide the terms for a spatial analysis?⁶

4. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 11: 'The aim is to discover or construct a theoretical unity between "fields" which are apprehended separately...the fields we are concerned with are, first, the *physical*—nature, the cosmos; secondly, the *mental*, including logical and formal abstractions; and, thirdly, the *social*'.

5. I shall return to the issue of my own standpoint in Chapter 3.

6. This view is supported by Edward S. Casey who writes that 'space on the modernist conception ends by failing to locate things or events in any sense other than that of pinpointing positions on a planiform geometric or cartographic grid' (*The Fate of Place: A Philosophical Enquiry* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997], p. 201). See also Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Chapters 4 and 5.

In an effort to unseat this image, which is very far from what I intend in a spatial analysis, my next move is to introduce the idea that space or rather spaces are both material and metaphorical, physical and imagined. A powerful religious example of this comes from the Hindu religious tradition of Vaishnavism in the form of Braja, the land of the young Hindu god Krishna.⁷ Braja is an actual geographical region in north India, noted for its forests, holy rivers, and town of Vrindavan. It is associated with the childhood mythology of Krishna, being the place where he sported with his cowherder friends and wooed Radha. It is the site where, in the sixteenth century, Rupa and Sanatana Goswami, two Vaishnava theologians, theorised about love of God. But Braja has other dimensions too. It is an imagined space, alive in the minds and hearts of devotees, poets, artists, and theologians alike, in which Krishna sports eternally with his followers.⁸

Vrindavan, at the spiritual heart of Braja, is — for servants of Krishna — the place where liberation may be achieved. It is the place to leave the body, to die. It is also the place to live in mind and spirit for, as devotees are fond of saying, 'Wherever you are is Vrindavan!'. The devotee's body, ritually marked with sandalwood paste, becomes the temple of the Lord; Krishna dances on the tongue of the chanting devotee. The pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavan are thus extended beyond its physical boundaries by those who worship him and spread the teachings associated with him elsewhere in India or beyond.⁹ Both material and metaphorical Vrindavans are the spaces of Vaishnava devotional practice. It would be a mistake, however, to dissociate this poetics of Vrindavan from the politics of the town and the religious ideology associated with it, an ideology that may discipline and oppress as often as it liberates.¹⁰

7. Vaishnavism is the name given to the religion of those who worship Vishnu or one of his incarnations, usually Krishna or Rama. For more on Braja and the worship of Krishna, see David L. Haberman, *Journey Through the Twelve Forests: An Encounter with Krishna* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), and David R. Kinsley, *The Sword and the Flute* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

8. Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), reflecting upon Western cities, writes of 'a strange toponymy that is detached from actual places and flies high over the city like a foggy geography of "meanings" ... a second poetic geography on top of the geography of the literal, forbidden or permitted meaning' (pp. 104-105).

9. Related issues on the embodiment and transplantation of Krishna beyond Vrindavan and India are dealt with by Nye in his discussion of the placing of Krishna in rural Hertfordshire, England: Malory Nye, *Multiculturalism and Minority Religions in Britain: Krishna Consciousness, Religious Freedom, and the Politics of Location* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), pp. 51-66.

10. The poetics and politics of sacred space are discussed by David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal in their introduction to *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995). See Chapter 4.

In the case of references to Braja, material and metaphorical spaces are irrevocably linked together by the mythic narrative of Krishna's youth and his pastimes. In other cases, however, a reference to an imagined or cultural space in an intellectual context may bear no obvious relation to a material base. Spatial metaphors may seem to float freely from what were once their moorings, and this may create confusion about what is meant by the spaces to which they refer. In the opening pages of *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre chastises Foucault:

[He] never explains what space it is that he is referring to, nor how it bridges 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.¹¹

This matters for two reasons. First, the failure to interrogate the material roots of theoretical spaces may result in the production of knowledge which itself seems to be extra-ideological.¹² Secondly, a lack of clarity on the relationship between mental and material spaces leads to an inadequate account of the nature of space itself, especially the place of the body in understanding it.¹³ In recent years, some scholars have called for the re-materialisation of social and cultural geography.¹⁴

Others who, like Lefebvre, have pursued a spatial politics or investigated social spatiality have also expressed anxiety about the widespread and often uninformed use of spatial metaphors by social and cultural theorists. Doreen Massey insists that the meaning of spatial terminology remains contested and should not be used naively on the assumption that its meaning is clear.¹⁵ She is joined by other social geographers in her condemnation of the problematic de-politicisation of the spatial brought about by an uncritical use of spatial terminology.¹⁶ Space is often cast in

11. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 4. For Foucault on his use of spatial metaphors in *The Order of Things*, see Michel Foucault, 'Space, Knowledge and Power', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 239-56 (254), and for references to Foucault's spatial terminology in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, see Jeremy R. Carrette, *Foucault and Religion: Spiritual Corporality and Political Spirituality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 105, 173-75.

12. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 6.

13. See discussion of the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson below.

14. In particular, see Peter Jackson, 'Rematerializing Social and Cultural Geography', *Social and Cultural Geography* 1.1 (2000), pp. 9-14, and for a critique, Matthew B. Kearnes, 'Geographies that Matter – The Rhetorical Deployment of Physicality', *Social and Cultural Geography* 4.2 (2003), pp. 139-52.

15. Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', p. 141.

16. Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', p. 142; Keith and Pile (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity*, p. 1; Smith and Katz, 'Grounding Metaphor', p. 68.

the role of an abstract arena or passive container. As Neil Smith and Cindi Katz write, 'the spaces and spatial practices that serve current metaphors in social, cultural and political theory are neither so fixed nor so unproblematic as their employment as metaphor would suggest'.¹⁷ Clarity of meaning and use, awareness of their contested nature, acknowledgment when using them of the active role of space and its relationship to power and ideology, an understanding of the conditions of material as well 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.

Whilst it has been radical geographers who have argued the politics of metaphor and material spaces, it has been the cognitive philosophers, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, who have most successfully established the link between matter (body) and metaphor, through the mind. In their 1980 work, *Metaphors We Live By*, they stressed the pervasiveness of metaphor in our everyday experience and thought processes, and — of orientational metaphors — wrote, 'these spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in their physical environment'.¹⁸ In their more recent work, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, they have argued that it is no longer possible, given developments within cognitive science, to accept a Cartesian view of disembodied reason, and a separation of mind and world.¹⁹ The nature of the physical body, its verticality and sidedness, its neural structures, its cognitive unconscious, all contribute to the shaping of reason, the concepts we use — which are inherently metaphorical — and our understanding of the world around us and our place within it.²⁰

The Body

Although it was severed from the mind by Descartes, the body has been central to Western thinking about space and place since the time of Aristotle. Seen from a contemporary perspective, however, it was the young Kant who mused most fruitfully on their relationship in a short essay

17. Smith and Katz, 'Grounding Metaphor', p. 71. Smith and Katz challenge Foucault for 'occlud[ing] the actual spatial source of such metaphors as domain, field, region' (p. 73), and praise Adrienne Rich for her acknowledgment of the spatial as well as social relationality of the term 'location' in her 'politics of location' (pp. 76-77).

18. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 3 and 14. See also Donald G. Macrae, 'The Body and Social Metaphor', in Jonathan Benthall and Ted Polhemus (eds.), *The Body as a Medium of Expression* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), pp. 59-73 (63-64).

19. Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, pp. 5 and 408-409.

20. This view of embodied reason has implications for the study of religion, see Veikko Anttonen on the notion of the 'sacred', discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 below.

written in 1768, 'Concerning the Ultimate Foundation of the Differentiation of Regions in Space'.²¹ Kant concluded his essay by advocating the approach of the 'geometers', their idea of absolute space, and the dichotomous nature of the body and the mind, all of which, as will become apparent, are unattractive to our current sensibilities. However, he did so by reasoning about space and its regions *through the body*.²² Kant's own purpose, which was to see if he could prove 'that absolute space has its own reality independently of the existence of all matter and that it is itself the ultimate foundation of the possibility of its composition', need not concern us here.²³ Two of his observations are significant, however. First, he noted the way in which the intersection of the surfaces associated with the three spatial dimensions and their relation to the body generated 'the concept of regions in space', notably of 'above and below', 'right and left' and 'front and back'.²⁴ In this sense, the extremities of the body become central to organising positions in the different regions of space. Kant's second observation – to which I shall return in Part II – was of the 'incongruent counterpart'.²⁵ Working with scientific findings from his time, Kant perceived an organic and sensory difference between the two sides of the human body, left and right. Whilst being 'ordered symmetrically with respect to the vertical surface', when the two hands are taken as an example, it is clear that 'the surface that includes the one could not possibly include the other' (as can be seen when we place the left hand over the right hand within the same plane, that is without turning one hand over).²⁶ What can be taken from these observations for understanding the

21. In G.B. Kerferd and D.E. Walford (translation and introduction), *Kant: Selected Pre-Critical Writings and Correspondence with Beck* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), pp. 36–43.

22. It is Kant's Cartesian conclusion regarding imagination, reason and the body that Mark Johnson sought to overturn in his study *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1987), pp. xxvi–xxix. The problem with Kant's position was noted by Edward S. Casey in '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 (21), and Jonathan Z. Smith in *To Take Place: Toward a Theory of Ritual* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 27 and footnote. Bennett, however, pointed out that, as his later work showed in the 1770s and 1780s, Kant himself was ambiguous about the conclusions that could be drawn from his ideas about the body and space (especially on the asymmetry of right and left). Jonathan Bennett, 'The Difference between Right and Left', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 7 (1970), pp. 175–91 (176).

23. Kerferd and Walford, *Kant*, p. 37.

24. Kerferd and Walford, *Kant*, p. 38.

25. Kerferd and Walford, *Kant*, p. 41.

26. Kerferd and Walford, *Kant*, p. 42.

physical, mental, and social nature of space?²⁷ First, the different positions, parts, regions of space are understood relationally by way of our bodies. And, secondly, the way we orient places physically and mentally derives from our asymmetrical bilaterality. In short, our bodies allow us to experience and conceptualise the relationships between things, places, persons (as well as regions), and to identify differences, for 'in the constitution of bodies differences, and real differences at that, can be found'.²⁸

Kant's chief claim, then, was that, without the body, things would be unoriented; it is the body that gives us directions.²⁹ This in itself is of considerable significance for understanding the spatial nature of religion, whether in sacred places, ritual practice, or value systems.³⁰ In so claiming, however, he made a further observation about differences in the body that has become significant for conceptualising space as relational. This idea, further developed by Merleau-Ponty, later emerges particularly strongly in the work of feminist theorists for whom it is not just the universal body but the *sexed* body that organises concepts of space, location, form, size, direction etc.³¹ Differentiation is experienced by the child in relation to the mother's body.³² Furthermore, the maternal body itself becomes seen as a place of pleasure for others – man and child – whilst the woman has no place of her own.³³ Thus, from the sexed body emerges the perception of difference, and also of relations of power. These are significant for space, in the ways it is conceived (in language), represented (e.g. in the built environment), and ultimately reproduced for human identity and becoming.³⁴ To turn to a religious example, this is

27. For a more in depth examination of this issue, see Casey, *The Fate of Place*, Chapter 10, 'By Way of the Body'.

28. Kerferd and Walford, *Kant*, p. 43. See Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, pp. 35-36; J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place*, p. 28.

29. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 205-206.

30. J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place*, Chapter 2, 'Father Place'; Veikko Anttonen, 'Rethinking the Sacred: The Notions of "Human Body" and "Territory" in Conceptualizing Religion', in 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), pp. 36-64.

31. For examples, see Adrienne Rich, 'Notes Towards a Politics of Location', in *idem*, *Blood, Bread and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-85* (London: Virago Press, 1986), pp. 210-31; Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), Chapter 5.

32. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 109-10.

33. Luce Irigaray, whose work on place is discussed by Casey in *The Fate of Place*, pp. 327-28.

34. Lefebvre (*The Production of Space*, pp. 243-44) was aware of the role of the sexed body for space (the paternal and maternal bodies). He discussed, in particular, the phallic formant of abstract space (pp. 286-87). However, as Virginia Blum and Heidi

made explicit by Grace Jantzen, who – drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt – looks forward to a new feminist, pantheist symbolic grounded in ‘natality’ rather than death.

Human beings are not gods who can create *ex nihilo*. The new things that we can begin are begun out of our bodily and material existence; and the capacity for such new possibilities is because we come into the world through birth, that we are ‘natals’... There could be no truck with the ‘view from nowhere’ (Nagel 1986) of disembodied and unsituated minds denying their foundation: it is only from within our gendered embodiment that the source and criteria of religious imagination can be drawn.³⁵

Jantzen, with Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, makes clear the link between the sexed body, relations of power, the emergence of a religious symbolic, and the space for women – as well as men, who already have a ‘divine horizon’ – to flourish and realise their possibilities.³⁶

Whilst the focus here has been on the body as the basis for understanding space in its conceptual and symbolic sense, it is important also to recognise the link between the body and social space, both for small scale, micro relations and for the global and societal.³⁷ In the conclusion to *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre reminds us that,

The whole of (social) space proceeds from the body, even though it so metamorphoses the body that it may forget it altogether – even though it may separate itself so radically from the body as to kill it. The genesis of a far-away order can be accounted for only on the basis of the order that is nearest to us – namely the order of the body. Within the body itself, spatially considered, the successive levels constituted by the senses... prefigure the layers of social space and their interconnections.³⁸

It was the failure of Western thought to remain true to this fact, and instead to sever body from mind, subject from object, and mental from social, that led to ‘the body’s metamorphosis into abstractions, into signs

Nast have shown, he did not pursue its consequences and failed to discuss the counter-strategies and power associated with non-masculinist sites and activities. Virginia Blum and Heidi Nast, ‘Where’s the Difference? The Heterosexualization of Alterity in Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Lacan’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (1996), pp. 559–80.

35. Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 45–46.

36. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine*, pp. 45–46. See particularly Luce Irigaray, ‘Divine Women’, in Morny Joy, Kathleen O’Grady and Judith L. Poxon (eds.), *French Feminists on Religion: A Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 40–48, and Julia Kristeva, ‘Stabat Mater’ in the same volume, pp. 114–38. The concept of a gendered ‘divine horizon’ comes from Irigaray, ‘Divine Women’, p. 41.

37. The relation of the human and social body has been pursued by sociologists and anthropologists alike, notably Robert Hertz, Marcel Mauss, Mary Douglas, and, more recently, Chris Shilling and Bryan Turner.

38. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 405, and Chapter 3, ‘Spatial Architectonics’.

of non-body'.³⁹ This process continues to work its way out, even at a time when the body is reasserting itself in both philosophical and sociological theory.

Bryan Turner, in arguing against the consequences of a contemporary deconstructionist view of the body — that 'the lived body drops from view as the text becomes the all-pervasive topic of research'⁴⁰ — reminds us of those very biological and physiological foundations which Kant far-sightedly noted, but failed to capitalise upon, in 1768:

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.⁴¹

For understanding 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.⁴² This dual strategy has been pursued for forms of religious life in the West by Philip Mellor and Chris Shilling in *Re-Forming the Body*.⁴³ Starting with the sensory body — and argued from a Durkheimian perspective — they focus on the three re-formations, of the Catholic 'mediaeval body', the 'Protestant modern body', and what they call the 'baroque modern body', that contemporary Janus-faced form of embodiment which holds together aspects of the Protestant modern body and a new sensuality.⁴⁴ In thinking about the latter, especially the tension within the contemporary moral order between indifference and violence, they wonder whether modern Western societies are witnessing 'the human body's resilience to cognitive control and [with it] the enduring significance of sacred forms of sociality'.⁴⁵

In this study, the body will be understood to be formative for conceptual development, social relations, and the imagination of both in relation to space: '[it] determines the conditions for the possibility of experience,

39. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 407. See also Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, whose work seeks to overturn this failure and to posit a new philosophy on the basis of embodied realism.

40. Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2nd edn, 1996), p. 28. He has in mind here the work of feminist deconstructionists such as Judith Butler.

41. B.S. Turner, *The Body and Society*, p. 26.

42. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 194: 'The body serves as point of departure and as destination'.

43. Philip A. Mellor and Chris Shilling, *Re-Forming the Body: Religion, Community and Modernity* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1997).

44. Mellor and Shilling, *Re-Forming the Body*, pp. 8-13.

45. Mellor and Shilling, *Re-Forming the Body*, p. 201.

which prefigures the structures of knowledge. The body is not clay to be molded, but instead is effecting the molding'.⁴⁶ It will be seen to be repeatedly reproduced in the sinister examples to be discussed in Part II. Furthermore, it will be vital for making sense of the way in which religion is located in those examples, because the body is not only fundamental to our understanding of space but also to the way in which we account for and theorise religion and the sacred.⁴⁷

The Relational and Dynamic Nature of Space

In a now well-known essay on space and politics, Doreen Massey outlined the chief properties of a contemporary spatiality. As these have proved to be central for my development of a framework for the spatial analysis of religion, I quote them at length here and discuss them below:

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 dominant 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, of solidarity and co-operation.⁴⁸

When Henri Lefebvre wrote about 'space' he meant, first and foremost, *social space* rather than geographical space or geometrical space.⁴⁹ He envisaged those spaces that were the production of human action and interaction. Furthermore, a central question for his project was, 'What is the mode of existence of social relations?'.⁵⁰ He answered this by saying that,

46. Mary Keller (on the work of Lakoff) in *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power, and Spirit Possession* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 67.

47. J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place*; Anttonen, 'Rethinking the Sacred'; see Chapters 4 and 9 for further discussion.

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

49. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 26.

50. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 129, reiterated on p. 401 and p. 404.

social relations, which are concrete abstractions, have no real existence save in and through space. Their underpinning is spatial. In each particular case, the connection between this underpinning and the relations it supports calls for analysis.⁵¹

For Lefebvre, then, this is the starting point for his enquiry — the need to analyse the connections between particular sets of social relations and their spatial embodiment. In taking forward this idea, by social relations I mean actual relations between people, but also between people and things, people and places, people and symbols, and the imagined relations between these.

If we place Lefebvre's question alongside the first point in Massey's quotation, we see the two sides of the connection between the social and the spatial. Social relations exist in and through space, *and* 'the spatial is socially constituted'. Religion, then, which is inherently social, must also exist and express itself in and through space, and must play its part in the constitution of spaces. The spatial underpinning of religion is witnessed at all levels, from the expression of hierarchical relations (divine, clerical, lay) in the physical enactment of the Eucharist in Christianity, to the local, national and global extension of religious structures and institutions by their repeated reproduction in new settings through mission or migration. That spaces themselves may be constituted by socio-religious relations is illustrated not only in the development of places of worship and other sacralised sites, but also by such things as ritual transformations of the human body and the religious production of distinctive narrative and doctrinal spaces (capable of winning the support of individuals and communities and thus engaging in ideological struggles in the public arena).

In the quotation with which I began this section, Doreen Massey went on to make a series of related points about the complexity and dynamism of space and its relation to time that are pertinent to a spatial analysis of religion. They may be summarised as the spatial properties of configuration, simultaneity, extension, and power, properties that were earlier identified, though not discussed at length, by Foucault in his 1967 lecture 'Des espaces autres'.⁵²

51. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 404. We may find a broadly similar view in Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p. 7: Shields writes, 'social spatialisation will be used to designate this social construction of the spatial which is a formation of both discursive and non-discursive elements, practices, and processes'. See also Keith and Pile, *Place and the Politics of Identity*, p. 6; Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1996), p. 46.

52. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 22 ('configuration'), p. 22 ('simultaneity'), p. 23 ('extension'). Foucault refers obliquely to power in space throughout the lecture. Massey does not refer to this earlier discussion by Foucault.

Understanding more about the configuration of religious relations in space is at the heart of this study. Religions—their groups, adherents, practices, beliefs, texts, and artefacts—do not exist independently of their non-religious counterparts. They are particular forms of cultural expression, are fully social, and are as subject to political and economic forces (both within and without) as are other institutions and ideological systems. But what is their place in the configuration of these features of human life? Do they have an identifiable place? And how might these questions be answered from the perspective of a spatial analysis?

According to 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.⁵³

It is in and through space that these very dimensions are brought together.⁵⁴ They become more amenable to analysis by being spatially enveloped, at least, that is a presupposition of this study.⁵⁵ Lefebvre commends his spatiology for enabling disciplines to be united in their examination of this configuration, a view reiterated by Shields: 'social spatialisation is thus a rubric under which currently separated objects of investigation will be brought together to demonstrate their interconnectedness and co-ordinated nature'.⁵⁶ Shields then applies this rubric to a variety of marginal places. Another analyst whose approach revolves around the idea of configuration is Robert Sack. In his geographical study of consumption, he seeks to demonstrate the mutually constitutive character of places, forces, and perspectives.⁵⁷ By way of a useful illustration, he looks at the space of a commodity, stating that,

53. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 410-11. The danger here is that seeing human life as enveloped by space, and thus through a spatial lens, may obliterate other ways of perceiving it. This is a necessary risk for this project.

54. It was Martin Heidegger who suggested that places hold or gather things together (*versammlung*) in his 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in David Farrell Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, rev. edn, 1993), pp. 343-63 (355); see also Casey, *The Fate of Place*, Chapter 11.

55. This spatial envelopment acts as a form of closure which then facilitates understanding (by making material and its complex interrelations amenable to definition, categorisation, comparison and other kinds of analysis). Such 'linguistic closures' have a drawback, however, because they close 'material' in one particular way at the expense of other possible closures. Such closures (or envelopes) then become accepted ideas that are rarely questioned or challenged. See Hilary Lawson's detailed analysis of closure in *Closure: A Story of Everything* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

56. Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p. 31.

57. Robert David Sack, *Place, Modernity, and the Consumer's World: A Relational Framework for Geographical Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 2.

...whether a dress or an automobile, [it] embodies social relations. It is produced and consumed under specific labor conditions and social contexts... A commodity contains elements of the natural world, because it is drawn from raw materials and becomes situated in physical space...[it] also contains elements from the realm of meaning, because cultures attach value or meaning to the objects they use or consume.⁵⁸

This brings us on to simultaneity, which, according to Massey, is what makes social relations spatial, space being 'a moment in the intersection of configured social relations'.⁵⁹ This is further elaborated with reference to the idea of the co-existence of relations (in space) and of the *presence* of such relations, of which Lefebvre says, 'this space is always, now and formerly, a *present* space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in their actuality'.⁶⁰ What is the value of a synchronic examination of religion? There is none if we understand by this *only* the simultaneous occurrence of events. The value of such an examination is only realised through an awareness of the *interconnectedness* of events and *relational nature* of the persons, objects, and places that constitute space. The spaces of religion are synchronically dynamic because at any time they are 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.⁶¹ The complexity of this dynamic will become evident in the second part of this study when simultaneity is considered in relation to the space of the left hand.

Synchronous spaces contain the past within them. An English cathedral may, for example, be situated on an early pre-Christian or Christian site, and may contain within its fabric many phases of building. Its texts, whether monumental, memorial, or manuscript, may add other historical traces, as do its ritual and spatial traditions. Both de Certeau and Lefebvre remark on this, the former writing of 'stratified places', the latter of an 'etymology of locations':

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

58. Sack, *Place, Modernity, and the Consumer's World*, p. 105.

59. Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', p. 155.

60. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 37. For a discussion of 'presence' in the work of Lefebvre, see Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*, pp. 60-62.

61. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 86-87; see also Foucault on relations among sites, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 23. See the discussions of globalisation in Chapter 4 and postcolonialism in Chapter 8.

heterogeneous places. Each one, 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...⁶²

The historical and its consequences, the 'diachronic', the 'etymology' of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it – all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces; time has its own script.⁶³

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. De Certeau writes of place as 'a palimpsest', of which science is only able to know fully the most recent text.⁶⁴ Foucault's example of museums and libraries, 'heterotopias in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit', adds a further interesting dimension to this.⁶⁵ They are modern sites driven by the desire to accumulate and represent everything, 'to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes'.⁶⁶

But the dynamism of space is not restricted to the shimmering simultaneity of the relations that constitute it. It is also, as Massey suggests above, borne out of the movement or flow of people, things, ideas *through* spaces:

Instead of being aware of a point as an infinitely small part of a straight line, we are now too well aware of it as an infinitely small part of an infinite number of lines, as the centre of a star of lines. Such awareness is the result of our constantly having to take into account the simultaneity *and extension* of events and possibilities.⁶⁷

All intersections and configurations are the fluid outworkings of earlier occurrences or causes. They extend from those, in the past, to other events and consequences in the future. Thus, as Lefebvre suggests, 'production process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects'.⁶⁸ Space and time cannot be teased apart. As the centre in a star of lines or 'the articulated moment in networks of social relations' what is needed is 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 the global and the local'.⁶⁹ But the sense of extension expressed here primar-

62. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 201.

63. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 37.

64. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 201.

65. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 26.

66. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p. 26.

67. John Berger, from a 1971 essay on portrait painting, cited in Gregory and Urry, *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, pp. 29-30 (my italics).

68. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 37.

69. Doreen Massey, 'Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place', in Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, George Robertson and Lisa Tickner (eds.), *Mapping*

ily as spatial is also temporal. In their early writings on globalisation, Giddens referred to *distanciation*, the 'conditions under which time and space are organised so as to connect presence and absence',⁷⁰ and Harvey to *time-space compression*, the alteration to our conceptions of space and time that results from our experience of the speeding up of time and collapsing of spatial barriers.⁷¹ Related to these ideas are those of the stretching out of social relations (across space and time), the crossing of spatial and temporal boundaries, and the acceleration of movements and communications. These phenomena have come about as a consequence of the new global order, particularly the opening up of world markets and the rise of the electronic economy. Religions, as embodiments and expressions of social relations and cultural forms, are affected by these processes of compression and stretching.⁷²

That the social consequences of globalisation, especially the process of time-space compression, are uneven is a point made by several later critics, including Stuart Hall, from the perspective of cultural identity, and Doreen Massey from the politics of mobility and access.⁷³ Massey calls for a *power-geometry* of time-space compression in which its implications for various individuals and groups are given serious consideration. It is not capital alone, she suggests, that determines our experience of space/time, but other factors such as gender and ethnicity.⁷⁴

But what is the relationship between space and power? How is power caught up in the spaces occupied and produced by religion? On the one hand, it is the social constitution of space that opens it up to the pursuit and exercise of power; on the other, it is the capacity of space to be shot through with ideology that makes it power-full. 'All spatialities are

the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change (Futures, New Perspectives for Cultural Analysis; London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 59-69 (66).

70. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, p. 14.

71. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 240 and following, though Lefebvre suggests that, in modernity, time is often concealed within space (Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 95-96).

72. Issues of time and space, however, have been largely neglected by the principal writers on religion and globalisation such as Roland Robertson (*Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* [London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1992], and 'Globalization, Politics, and Religion', in R. Beckford and Thomas Luckmann [eds.], *The Changing Face of Religion* [Beverly Hills: Sage, 1989], pp. 10-23), and Peter Beyer (*Religion and Globalization* [London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1994]). See Chapter 4 for further discussion of religion and globalisation.

73. Stuart Hall, 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in S. Hall, D. Held and A. McGrew (eds.), *Modernity and Its Futures* (Cambridge: Polity; Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1992), pp. 300-11; Massey, 'Power-Geometry'.

74. Massey, 'Power-Geometry', p. 66. See also Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993); Gill Valentine, *Social Geographies: Space and Society* (Harlow: Prentice-Hall [Pearson Education], 2001).

political because they are the (covert) medium and (disguised) expression of asymmetrical relations of power'.⁷⁵

The idea of space as full of power was central to the spatial conceptualisations of both Foucault and Lefebvre. Foucault expressed the need for a history of spaces that would 'at the same time be a history of powers... from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat'.⁷⁶ He explored the relationship of space, power, and knowledge in his studies of the asylum, clinic, and panopticon. Lefebvre signalled the spatial penetration of power in his 1973 book, *The Survival of Capitalism*:

Power is everywhere; it is omnipresent, assigned to Being. It is everywhere in space. It is in everyday discourse and commonplace notions, as well as in police batons and armoured cars. It is in *objets d'art*, as well as in missiles...⁷⁷

He too made the connection between knowledge and power in relation to space, in his discussion of hegemony, the exercise of power over both institutions and ideas. There is a form of knowledge that serves power and one that resists it, he asserts.⁷⁸ But how does this affect space? He asks whether it is conceivable that the influence of hegemony might leave space untouched, but answers clearly in the negative.⁷⁹ Space is utilised, often ingeniously, by dominant groups in the exercise of power.⁸⁰ It is used to contain, even to obliterate others.⁸¹ Spaces, through the construction and manipulation of boundaries, are used to include and exclude.⁸²

75. Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 'Introduction, Part 2: The Place of Politics', in *idem* (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 22-40 (38).

76. Michael Foucault, 'The Eye of Power: Conversation with J.-P. Barou and M. Perrot', in Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 146-65 (149).

77. Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism* (London: Allison & Busby, 1976 [French edn 1973]), pp. 86-87.

78. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 10. Lefebvre has been justifiably criticised for his tendency to equate power with dominance, thus with the capitalist order, and his failure to site power in non-capitalist and non-masculinist activities and initiatives. Blum and Nast suggest that he saw 'all struggles to date as consequently subordinated to an overarching telos; ignored are the power of noncapitalist cultural projects, struggles, and differences as well as the activities of those who have no representative status in the capitalist system' (Blum and Nast, 'Where's the Difference?', p. 577).

79. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 11.

80. Lefebvre's detailed account of the hegemonic nature of 'abstract space' demonstrates how a dominant space can appear to be one thing – neutral, homogeneous, and passive – whilst being quite the opposite – masculine, phallogocentric, actively authoritarian, and fragmented (*The Production of Space*, pp. 285-87, 308-11).

81. For example, *women*, see Rose, *Feminism and Geography*, and Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion*; and the *disabled*, see R. Butler and H. Parr (eds.), *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability* (London: Routledge, 1999), and Valentine, *Social Geographies*.

82. See David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Sometimes a group manipulates its space in order to serve the dominant order, at other times it does so in order to resist it, whilst individuals – according to de Certeau – continually subvert the imposed order by their everyday practices which produce cracks in the system and make spaces suitable for habitation.⁸³

Religions are central to the operations of knowledge and power, having historically been both institutionally and ideologically dominant. Even though this dominance has been challenged more recently in many societies, religions remain key players in contemporary ethical, political, and ideological struggles for space, often in supporting roles. Lefebvre uses religion to illustrate the relation between ideology and space:

What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies? What would remain of a religious ideology – the Judaeo-Christian one, say – if it were not based on places and their names: church, confessional, altar, sanctuary, tabernacle? What would remain of the Church if there were no churches? The Christian ideology, carrier of a recognisable if disregarded Judaism..., has created the spaces which guarantee that it endures.⁸⁴

With this last point David Harvey is in agreement. He suggests that the preservation of the Church, its presence in postmodern society, 'has been won in part through the successful creation, protection and nurturing of symbolic places'.⁸⁵ But, in addition to the retention of once dominant forms of religion in the spaces they have carved out for themselves, there are cases of the invocation of religion in the creation of new subversive spaces. I shall illustrate this in the next chapter.

Knowledge, and the wielding of it for reasons of power, is increasingly on the agenda of the study of religions, for example, in studies of religious identity, religious nationalism, and gender and religion. Those who have discussed the nature of religion, however, often in an effort to avoid reductionism, have often failed to give full weight to its social and political dimensions. In order that social difference, gender issues, and political oppression and marginalisation are fully exposed to scrutiny in the

83. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 106, and further, 'The surface of this [imposed] order is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order' (p. 107). See also Blum and Nast, 'Where's the Difference?', p. 579.

84. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 44. See the end of Chapter 3 for a discussion of Lefebvre's position in the field of religious/secular relations.

85. 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. 3-29 (23).

investigation of religion, power needs to be reconceptualised as integral to it.⁸⁶ As power struggles of all kinds are played out in space – whether social, mental or physical space – a spatial analysis of religion cannot avoid confronting them, both directly and through their representations. The spaces that religion occupies and participates in are spaces of power – the challenge will be to discover the relationship between religion and power in any given space. This will require a close examination of the complexity of the social relations which constitute that space and the cultural symbols that represent it.

Another under-investigated aspect of power in the study of religions has been the role of capital,⁸⁷ and, again, I suggest that a spatial analysis can contribute to uncovering this. In late-modernity, under conditions of globalisation, how are religious institutions, communities, ideas, and practices shaped by the flow and accumulation of financial, human, and knowledge capital? What can we learn about religions from the ways in which they attract money and disperse it, and consume, produce and exchange goods? These processes can be witnessed in space. According to Andy Merrifield,

Space, in the apt words of David Harvey, is an 'active moment' in expansion and reproduction of capitalism. It is a phenomenon which is colonized and commodified, bought and sold, created and torn down, used and abused, speculated on and fought over. It all comes together in space: space internalizes the contradictions of modern capitalism...⁸⁸

Harvey himself makes it very clear that this material process has other dimensions too – cultural, affective, and social. In his illustration of the production and cultural reproduction of Times Square, he shows how, '[though] produced and dominated in the mode of political economy, it

86. See the plea by Rosalind Shaw, 'Feminist Anthropology and the Gendering of Religious Studies', in Ursula King (ed.), *Religion and Gender* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995), pp. 65-76 (73). See also Carrette on the place of power in the post-Foucauldian analysis of religion (*Foucault and Religion*, pp. 147-49), and Talal Asad, on the problematic separation of religion from power in post-Reformation Western thought, in *Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 28-29.

87. Exceptions to this include, of course, Marx, Engels, and Weber in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and, latterly, Bryan Turner whose work on religion, society, and the body has been strongly materialist in orientation. Peter Berger in the late 1960s and, more recently, rational choice theorists in the sociology of religion have adopted a market model for their investigation of the currency of religion in late-modernity. For discussions of the contemporary relationships between religion and capitalism, see Richard H. Roberts (ed.), *Religion and the Transformations of Capitalism: Comparative Approaches* (London: Routledge, 1995), and forthcoming work by Jeremy Carrette.

88. Merrifield, 'Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space', p. 173.

was appropriated by the populace in an entirely different fashion' as a symbolic place of social and cultural plurality.⁸⁹ Conversely, reflecting on the cultic creation of Rajneeshpuram in Oregon, he notes that the search for authentic community was subsequently co-opted in the pursuit of financial gain.⁹⁰

Harvey's understanding of the dynamic production and reproduction of these places and their complexity – as material, discursive, and symbolic – is enriched by the conceptual triad proposed by Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*.⁹¹ Having discussed the properties of space – with reference to social relations, configuration, simultaneity, extension, and power – and the relevance of these aspects for the study of religion, it is to this triad that I shall turn in the next chapter in order to illustrate one of the ways in which spatial theory can be used to illuminate religion and its social and geographical location. Before that, however, I must complete my examination of the spatial terms to be invoked in this study: place and location.

Place and the Spatial Location of Religion

In so far as it is the long-term intention of this project to employ a spatial analysis to investigate the location of religion in the places of the body, artefacts, events, communities, localities and institutions, it is important that I say what I mean by both 'place' and 'location'. Of necessity, this must be a relatively short account, which therefore cannot do justice to their many meanings and uses, or the range of debates surrounding them.⁹²

Let me say at the outset that I see places as parts of dynamic and relational space, and locations as situated positions vis-à-vis others.⁹³ Both place and location are conceived in social, mental, and physical terms, and, as concepts, are used to identify hierarchical and political positions

89. Harvey, 'From Space to Place and Back Again', pp. 17-19.

90. Harvey, 'From Space to Place and Back Again', pp. 19-21.

91. Harvey discusses what he calls 'the Lefebvrian matrix' in *The Conditions of Postmodernity*, pp. 220-21, and in 'From Space to Place and Back Again', p. 17.

92. For a different purpose, I have provided another account of place and location (and locality) in 'Religion and Locality: Issues and Methods', in Kim Knott, Kevin Ward, Alistair Mason and Haddon Willmer (eds.), *Religion and Locality* (Leeds: Community Religions Project, University of Leeds, forthcoming). See also Chapter 4, below, on religion and locality.

93. Properly speaking, 'location' in geometric terms may refer simply to either a 'zero-dimensional space' or a point fixed by two or more lines, see Smith and Katz, 'Grounding Metaphor', p. 1. I am imbuing it with a relational sense, given that in cultural theory since the 1980s it has been a keyword for situating social and political positions and identities.

and stances.⁹⁴ As such, they correspond not only to the view of space that I outlined above, but to my intended purpose, to use a spatial analysis to look closely at certain domains (places) in order to see more clearly what religion is and how it relates to other aspects of the physical world, society, and culture (that is, *to locate religion*).⁹⁵

The terms 'place' and 'location', along with 'community', 'locality', and the 'local' itself, were variously in or out of favour in the last century among sociologists and anthropologists. They were used from the 1930s to the 1960s in studies of small-scale societies, generally far away, but increasingly near to home, often rural, but increasingly urban, working class. As such, they became associated with a static, bounded, settled view of encapsulated geographical areas, social organisation and identity, and an insular view of culture as place- and group-bound. Such conceptions were strongly criticised from the late-1960s onwards.⁹⁶ But there was still life to be found in the old terms. 'Place' was revisited by humanistic geographers and philosophers influenced by the phenomenological school, in particular by the work of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty;⁹⁷ and the 'local' and its semantic derivatives (along with 'place') were revitalised more recently by social geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists working on globalisation,⁹⁸ and by feminist and other cultural

94. See J.Z. Smith, *To Take Place*, on place as a social position within a hierarchical system, p. 45.

95. Hastrup and Fog Olwig discuss a similar process in the introduction to *Siting Culture* in which they seek to examine 'the role of place in the conceptualisation and practice of culture'. Karen Fog Olwig and Kirsten Hastrup (eds.), *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 2.

96. See, for example, Colin Bell and Howard Newby, *Community Studies* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971); Massey, 'The Political Place of Locality Studies'; Doreen Massey and Pat Jess (eds.), *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization* (London: Oxford University Press and The Open University, 1995); Kim Knott, 'The Sense and Nonsense of Community', in Steven Sutcliffe (ed.), *Religion: Empirical Studies* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 67-90.

97. For example, E.C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Christopher Tilley, *The Phenomenology of Landscape* (London: Berg, 1994); Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place'.

98. For example, Massey, 'Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place', and Harvey, 'From Space to Place and Back Again'; Massey and Jess (eds.), *A Place in the World?*; Michael Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism, and Identity* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage, 1995); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); John Eade (ed.), *Living the Global City: Globalization as a Local Process* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London and New York: Verso, 1995 [French edn 1992]); see Chapter 4.

theorists eager to formulate a new terminology for the politics of location.⁹⁹

'Place' has been reconceptualised as 'progressive' by Doreen Massey,¹⁰⁰ and brought out of hiding by Edward Casey as an open event rather than an entity.¹⁰¹ Though working from different assumptions, these two scholars, in particular, have been responsible for ensuring that it has been 'the fate of place' to be revived and renewed rather than overlooked or left to become irrelevant. In the most complete enquiry yet, Casey enables place to fight back from beneath the overwhelming abstraction and universalisation of space in a critical, historical examination from Aristotle to Irigaray. After charting its disappearance and disempowerment (its overdetermination as a mere position on geometrical axes), he rediscovers the virtues of place from Kant's work on the body (to exist as a sensible body is to have a place), through the phenomenologists Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (on the primacy of place), Heidegger (the gathered place as the scene of the disclosure of Being), and the late-modern theorists, Bachelard, Foucault, Guattari and Deleuze, and Derrida, to Irigaray and Nancy (on the divine as being-in-place). He concludes by surmising that,

If 'it is granted to us to see the limitless openness of that space', we shall see it most surely in the undelimited localities of our concrete bodily movements, that is to say, in our most engaged experiences of being-in-place – in many different ways and in many different places.¹⁰²

Although Casey and Massey might well argue over the issue of the primacy of place,¹⁰³ they would agree that places are both open and dynamic.¹⁰⁴ Massey's famous example of this is of the Kilburn High Road in north-west London.¹⁰⁵ Before opening her accounts of Kilburn, she takes the reader out to an imaginary satellite beyond existing satellites

99. For example, Rich, *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*; Rose, *Feminism and Geography*; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*; Heidi J. Nast and Steve Pile (eds.), *Places Through the Body* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

100. Massey, 'Power-Geometry', pp. 66-68.

101. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 339.

102. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 342.

103. Casey offers 'a polyvalent primacy', denying that this could form the basis of a new foundationalism (*The Fate of Place*, p. 337). Massey argues that her progressive view of place runs counter to a Heideggerian view of embounded and singular, essentialised places ('Power-Geometry', p. 64). Kennedy sees this (and Harvey's critique in the same volume) as a misreading of Heidegger (Andrew Kennedy, 'Place and Space in an Age of Immanence', in Knott, Ward, Mason and Willmer [eds.], *Religion and Locality*, n.p. [forthcoming]).

104. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, pp. 339 and 342; Massey, 'Power-Geometry', pp. 66-68; see also Massey and Jess, *A Place in the World?*, pp. 59-61.

105. Massey, 'Power-Geometry', pp. 64-66, and *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), pp. 152-54.

and asks her to look back at the earth at various scales, from the 'movement and tune' of communications to a woman in sub-Saharan Africa. It is in the context of this journey that the reader is introduced to Kilburn as an example of a real place. Not only is it a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural place in itself, but it is also connected outwards to other parts of Britain and beyond,¹⁰⁶ 'while Kilburn may have a character of its own, it is absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares'.¹⁰⁷ It is only when one sees Kilburn vis-à-vis other places, and acknowledges all of them to be socially constituted, full of power, and interconnected from the local to the global that its real character begins to be understood: 'In this interpretation, what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus'.¹⁰⁸

In their book on place, culture, and globalisation, Massey and Jess make it clear that such places are set within the context of a wider space of stretched-out social relations. In this sense, they are 'meeting places', in social space, 'of connections and interrelations, of influences and movements'.¹⁰⁹ Another theorist who investigates this interrelationship of place and space, and in doing so returns us to Lefebvre, is Andrew Merrifield.¹¹⁰ He sees Lefebvre's triad—which I shall discuss in detail in the next chapter—as offering a dialectical method for 'reconciling the way in which experience is lived and acted out in place, and how this relates to, and is embedded in, political and economic practices that are operative over broader spatial scales'.¹¹¹ It is thus a means of overcoming the dualistic Cartesian thinking that dominates geographical accounts of place. In this view, place is the nexus where Lefebvre's three spatial moments—conceived, lived, and perceived—meet, and where they attain 'a structured coherence'.¹¹² If space, according to Merrifield, is set to a particular dominant *conceived* representation, then place is oriented more

106. See also Massey and Jess, 'The Global in the Local', in their *A Place in the World?*, pp. 53-59.

107. Massey, 'Power-Geometry', p. 65.

108. Massey, 'Power-Geometry', p. 66. There is a debate about the uniqueness of places. Massey seems to be ambiguous about this, first affirming their uniqueness in 'Power-Geometry' (p. 65), then seeming to deny it (p. 66). She and Jess clearly affirm it in *A Place in the World?* (pp. 221-24). In Chapter 2 of *To Take Place*, Jonathan Z. Smith, using Durkheim, Dumezil, and Lévi-Strauss, builds an argument *against* the uniqueness of places to counter that generally put forward by geographers.

109. Massey and Jess, *A Place in the World?*, pp. 59 and 218.

110. Merrifield, 'Place and Space'.

111. Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 517.

112. Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 525. See Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Chapter 1, 'The Plan of the Present Work'), and my Chapter 2, below.

to the *lived* moment, being the arena where daily life practices are embedded, and from which challenges to the dominant order arise.¹¹³ Spatial practices, which constitute *perceived* space, 'are dialectically implicated in both conceived space and lived space', and thus have a mediating role between place and space.¹¹⁴ For Merrifield, as for Massey, place and space are 'different aspects of a unity'.¹¹⁵

Between them, Casey, Massey, and Merrifield identify those characteristics of place most relevant to this study, and describe the relationship of place to space. Later, I will be focusing on the place of the left hand and its representations in search of religion. Speaking generally, all places — including a body part such as the left hand — are gathered, produced and reproduced by spatial practice, configured and also openly extended by social relations, constrained by the dominant order, but the living expression of everyday practices and dynamic local interpretations (local knowledge) of that place. They are repeatedly bounded and settled in common discourse only to be punched through and unsettled by alternative accounts. The particularity of a place arises from the complexity of its social relations and the sum of the stories told about it. Being a progressive part of space, or a moment in space, it is open to a spatial analysis.

In Part II, in which my attention turns to the place of the left hand, the work will involve *locating* religion within the dimensions of space, which, following Lefebvre, we conveniently label physical, mental, and social, and in relation to those properties and aspects I discuss in Part I. After looking in more detail at the theoretical implications of Lefebvre's triad for religion in the next chapter, in Chapter 3 I shall turn to 'religion' itself and the difficulties of establishing, defining, isolating, or identifying that very entity that, later in the book, I will be seeking to locate. Even at this point, however, I can say with some certainty that the process of operationalising 'religion' is unlikely to produce a category suitable for precise location on a geometric grid. Were that the only meaning that could be given to the term 'location', then I would have to confess my use of it to be purely metaphorical. Taking my lead from scholars of identity politics, I adopt a more dynamic view that sees location as the outworking — but not the end-point — of a process of considering things, people, and events in relation to one another, both geographically and socially.¹¹⁶ This does

113. Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 525.

114. Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 525.

115. Merrifield, 'Place and Space', p. 525.

116. See Gupta and Ferguson's 'ongoing project' of location, in 'Discipline and Practice: "The Field" as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology', in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds.), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 1-40 (37).

not so much fix things — ‘religion’ in my case — as situate them vis-à-vis others. In Chapter 3, the interconnections between the ‘religious’ and the ‘secular’, and their mutual constitution in a field of force relations will be discussed. Situating them in this way requires, as we saw earlier in the discussion on space and power, discerning the *uneven relations between them* as well as the *difference in their positions*.

In this chapter I have sought to identify the centrality of the body for space and the dimensions and properties of physical, mental, and social space in order to be able to undertake a spatial analysis of religion. The terms of this analysis will be finalised towards the end of Part I. Using the work of Lefebvre and of other social and geographical theorists, I have provided a dynamic perspective on space which I see as appropriate for locating religion in everyday, non-religious places as well as ostensibly religious ones. As a final word, we should remind ourselves that space is more than some mere container or backdrop for the antics of religions and religious people. It is the means and the outcome as well as the medium of social and cultural activity. Furthermore, in this account, it provides the method for illuminating religion and people’s experience of it.