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I INTRODUCTION

In geographies of religion there has sometimes been a tension between radical critique and nuanced analysis. Some geographers - exasperated by the seeming imperviousness of certain religious subjects to reason - have employed broad brush strokes in the portrayal of religious cultures in order to instate a moral divide, as noted by Holloway (2013) and Megoran (2013). This mode of analysis at its worst places large swathes of religious traditions and theologies into 'progressive' and 'regressive' blocs. This masks religious ways of being that confound both of these generalising monikers and depicts religious subjects within impenetrable structures, negating their capacity for subversion.

There is a move within geographies of religion away from these simplistic categorisations, towards interpreting the construction of religious meanings and processes (Ley and Tse, 2013). Religion is increasingly perceived as a malleable phenomenon (Ivakhiv, 2006), composed of "systems of meaning derived from cultural resources by active agents, who come to affectively embody those meanings" (Dittmer, 2007, p.738). One of the foci of this shift has been the religious *subject* (Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009; Olson et al., 2013a; Vincett, 2013), emphasising the ways in which subjects struggle with various power relations in order to understand and perform their religious identity. A concern emerging from these subject-focussed religious geographies is that deficient understandings of theology have undermined attempts to generate nuanced knowledges regarding religious subjects (Korf, 2006; Pabst, 2011). This paper seeks to advance religious geographies of the subject by unpacking the relation of the religious subject to theology through praxis. Firstly, by drawing the connections between disparate notions of what theology is into a complex concept that disperses more of the power to define theology away from hegemonies. Secondly, by unpacking how - through praxis - the subject redefines theology and its relevance to spatial imaginations. Working through these issues will indicate the theoretical space into which I will introduce the concept of *theography* as a tool which can help geographers to analyse subjective interactions with theology, and how this process engenders difference and change, creating hybrid religious subjectivities.

In the rest of the paper I will illustrate that theography is an important concept for geographies of religion by reviewing various strands of thought relating to the subject and theology. These expositions will highlight how theography draws on and extends existing thought on religious subjectivities before going on to illustrate what it can help geographers of religion to better understand. I will explore two models of subjectivity, drawn from Badiou (1997; 2009) and Levinas (1952; 1969; 1978) in order to demonstrate the connections between theology and praxis that theography brings together. Attention to these models will highlight the important analytical practice of recognising variance between the subjective framings of transcendence inherent in theology due to these variations' distinct influence on spatial imagination and praxis. I will follow this with a discussion of how theography can begin to reframe the way in which geographers imagine space shaping and being shaped by religious subjects. This will draw on examples from the geography of religion and related disciplines to illustrate how the subjective reproduction of theology is deployed as a technique of self that enables the subject to both dissent from and conform to religious hegemonies. Hence, theography presents itself as a concept which can help geographers of religion to make sense of the fluidity of marginal and mainstream religious practices by advancing a coherent understanding of how subjects produce theology instead of recourse to crude analysis that consigns subjects to 'progressive' or 'regressive' blocs.

II THE RELIGIOUS SUBJECT, THEOLOGY AS PRACTIS, AND THEOGRAPHY

Olson et al. (2013a) have pointed out that religious geographies have been moving away from explaining broad religious categorisation towards greater exploration of what it is to be religious through the everyday practices of religious people. They argue that postcolonial, poststructural, feminist, and postsecular critiques have begun to deconstruct “systematic means” (Olson et al., 2013a, p.5) of studying religion that utilise broad categories (e.g. Evangelical/Muslim/Hindu) to produce undifferentiated explanations about the performances of diverse groups of people (Devine et al., 2015). The effect of these critiques has been to reinsert subaltern religious practice into geographic analyses, reframing monolithic categories of religion as multiple, contextual, partial, dynamic, and scalar, thus re-infusing religious geographies with the notion that religious spaces and subjects are sites of struggle. Both Ivakhiv (2006) and Dittmer (2007) have argued that in order to understand religion more clearly there needs to be a shift in “focus from the object of religion to the subjects who contextualise it” (Dittmer, 2007, p.737). As Kong (2001) points out, studying religious subjects helps geographers to attend to the flaky edges of communities, highlighting how subjects construct their religious identity in the day-to-day through processes that break from hegemonies, embodying difference and change.

Subjects make religious meanings by deconstructing, splicing, and reproducing cross-currents of mainstream and marginal religious affects and discourses. An example of this kind of change can be drawn from Megoran’s (2010) work on an evangelical “Reconciliation Walk” (p.382) along the route of the First Crusade. During the walk, public apologies were offered by Christians for the actions of 11th Century Crusaders with the intention of healing relations between middle-eastern Muslims and the Church and opening up the possibility of proselytisation. However, Megoran reports that in encountering the suffering of Palestinians under Israeli oppression, the leaders of the walk experienced a troubling clash between their cognitive assent to Zionism and an affective solidarity that they felt with oppressed Palestinians. Megoran writes that this forced the walk’s organisers to reflect “on the consequences of the premillennial Christian Zionist position” (p.390). This reflection prompted them to reframe their theology, adopting a different view of the Christian God from which Zionism was cut off. After changing their theology, some of these people continued to work with the organisation that promoted the walk - continuing to identify as evangelicals - but by using their subjective agency, reconfiguring their theological outlook. They subverted the dominant Zionist discourses that they had previously taken for granted, generating a hybrid religious identity by splicing mainstream evangelicalism and anti-Zionism.

Concurrent with the emergence of small-scale and subject-focussed modes of knowledge production has been an increase in the number of geographers generating theory regarding the nature of theology. Korf (2006) identifies this as a welcome trend because many geographers have tried to understand religion without understanding its theological underpinnings (see Pabst, 2011). Ley and Tse (2013) suggest that analysts have often done “categorical violence” (p.156) to religious communities by constraining explanation of theologically inspired performances to include only socioeconomic factors (Holloway, 2006; Kong, 2010). However, conceptualising theology is not straightforward because there are competing notions about what it is. So far, in geographies of religion there exists a vague sense across the board that theology is about framing ‘the transcendent’ (Tse, 2014). ‘The transcendent’ is referred to in the broadest sense here; as something that

exceeds the subject's comprehension and accentuates the limits of their perception and ability to control things (Luckmann, 1990). But there are different theories as to how the subject comes to frame transcendence, which form two loose epistemologies - both of which have given geographers of religion new lenses through which to examine subjective interactions with theology.

Firstly, there are those who focus on what Olson (2006) calls the "power of ideas" (p.885) in religious geographies and how "place-making [is] informed by understandings of the transcendent" (Tse, 2014, p.202). Much of this work has focussed on how hegemonic religious ideals and discourse are transmitted by institutional technologies (hierarchies/creeds/traditions - purportedly rooted in foundational texts) to subjects who go on to manifest an embodied response to these top-down religious imaginations (Olson et al., 2013b; Sturm, 2013). This approach to theology has allowed geographers of religion to explore the ways in which different representations of transcendence - conceived of largely in hegemonic or institutional terms - clash in the subject's life (Tse, 2014). This draws attention to the reproduction and "reanimation" (Olson, 2013, p.149) of different discursive framings of transcendence and the ways in which their competing narratives converge upon the subject's embodiment. Gökarıksel and Secor (2009) illustrate this by examining the clashing Islamic narratives regarding women's veiling fashion (the development of hair-covering fabrics, colours, and designs for women) in Turkey. On one hand, Islamist critics argue that veiling fashion is incompatible with Islamic values because it resonates with hedonism and consumerism. On the other hand, those who promote the garments claim that they enable wearers to remain distinctively Muslim whilst simultaneously making Islamic ways of life relevant to an increasingly modern Turkey. Turkish women are caught up in these clashing narratives about Islam which means that the choices that they make about their clothing also say something about what kind of Muslim they are; how they frame transcendence. This infuses their decision making about clothes with a tension between the complex religious identity that they are trying to project and the stifling categories that are presented to them by Islamic conservatives and the fashion industry.

Secondly, there are those who focus on the affective presence of the transcendent as the realm of theology. In this second sense, theology is not doctrinal knowledge but the ability to sense the transcendent in the body; the ability to recognise the presence of the sacred. This work has focussed on how embodied sensations are entangled with belief (Holloway 2003; 2006), suggesting that belief is more of a felt preference for certain tenets rather than cognitive assent to them. This brand of theory posits that believing in a particular set of religious tenets is bolstered most effectively by them being associated with a numinous affective experience. There is a cycle of mutual reinforcement between affect, ritual, and discourse - each often triggering the other and creating the conditions for belief (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009). However, central to this way of framing theology is the idea that without a notable affective experience, the cycle of mutual reinforcement would falter. For example, Holloway's (2003) work with New Age practitioners highlights that "the body makes (belief) as much as or possibly more than, it is made (to believe)" (p.1967). Through crafting affect via ritual, and being open to the possibility of serendipitous encounters with the transcendent, New Age subjects define the sacred through "an embodied labour of differentiation with the nominally profane" (Holloway, 2003, p.1967). Sacred space is identified as that which enables an embodied sensation of the transcendent and profane space is that which does not (see Buttimer, 2006; Lane, 2002). Therefore, theology is the embodied process of making this differentiation, not worrying over which doctrines most accurately represent the will or nature of the divine.

I acknowledge that these two epistemologies are often theoretically open-ended. When they recommend their take on theological discourse or affect they are sensitive to the gaps in knowledge creation that the other 'camp' could help to fill in. For instance when Holloway (2013) writes about religious hopefulness, although he wants to underscore the nonrepresentational aspects of religious hope, he does not present hope as purely pre-cognitively constituted; doctrine is frequently intermingled with affect in a dynamic, co-productive relationship. However, two problems emerge if things are just left at the stage of each 'camp' tipping its hat to the other.

Firstly, little work has tried to imagine how these two very different conceptualisations of theology might imbricate in subject's lives. Many religious subject's consider both affect *and* discourse to be legitimate sources of knowledge about the transcendent, drawing the subject into a process of negotiating between the two. For example, studies of charismatic Christians reveal that their theological imaginations convene a delicate balance between the embodied sensing of the Holy Spirit and regulation of this affective openness by stringent doctrine (Guest et al, 2012; Harvey and Vincett, 2012). Moreover, these affective and discursive elements do not always complement one another. Work done in churches in Glasgow has illustrated the tension that subjects encounter between a transcendent presence that they feel when working alongside the marginalised and the predominant conservative theology in the church communities they identify with (Sutherland, 2014). This theology engendered suspicion of religious expressions that were oriented towards social justice practices and less towards generating opportunities to preach to people (see also Cloke et al. 2012). This example illustrates that subjects might struggle to fully commit to either a purely discursive or affective guiding of their religiosity and are caught in a balancing act between the two factors, sparking a recursive process of review and reconsideration of their religious expression (see Dittmer, 2010; Jamoul and Wills, 2008; Megoran, 2010). Furthermore, the example highlights that religious subjects are produced by their movement between spaces. Many religious ways of life are characterised by a mixture of experiences convened in different spaces. There are spaces of ritual, conviviality, duty, and decision-making. All of these spaces are of religious import to the subject and yet constitute a variegated network of affective experiences and discursive framings. How do religious subjects make decisions about what affects and discourses are of religious import when they constitute such a wide scope of difference? Surely reducing theology to either discursive or embodied knowledge acquired in one particular space eschews the ability to analyse the networked complexity of religious subjects?

Recognising this reduction highlights a second problem. Both affective and discursive approaches to theology frame a particular factor that affects the subject's religious practice. However, they do little to outline how the subject might respond to these factors apart from acquiescence or simply to be plagued by tension. Both emphasise the structure side of the struggle between structure and agency (Faier, 2011). If we view theology from a primarily discursive or affective perspective, it is framed as a structure that is out of the subject's hands. But this is out of line with the new literatures on religion which stress that it is through the subjective agency of religious people that theology is reproduced in increasingly hybrid forms (Dittmer, 2007; Holloway and Valins, 2002; Olson et al., 2013a). Theology is not solely a top-down matter, but something that the subject can interact with in the day-to-day in order to make sense of and formulate a response to their circumstances, interacting with both the affective and the discursive resources of religion.

This frames the subject as a decision-maker regarding theology as they encounter a plethora of differing qualities of affect and discourse relating to the transcendent.

In response to these two problems, how can theology be conceptualised as (i) responding to both discursive and affective material between spaces, and (ii) something that the subject negotiates and makes decisions about in the everyday? Citing Freire (1970), kinpaisby-hill (2011) points out that a useful way to think about subjects negotiating both affect and discourse and making choices about how best to practice in response to this negotiation is through the concept of praxis; practice under reflection. The concept of praxis emphasises that subjects have ideals about their circumstances and how they should respond to them, and they have experiences of trying to implement these ideals. The ideal and the implementation often misalign, and subjects reflect upon how best to solve these misalignments, which may involve changing their ideals and/or practices. Deciding on how much to change ideals or practices and to commit to acting upon these changes is facilitated by reflexivity (Bonnington, 2015). In the context of politics, kinpaisby-hill (2011), argue that subjects are actively reflexive, retheorising their political ideals and practices, negotiating between discourse, affect and emotion generated during practice, and the efficacy of practice in manifesting ideals and desirable affect. A similar reflexive retheorisation as part of praxis can be identified in religious subjects' lives as they attempt to frame transcendence in the tension between discursive and affective registers and make choices about effective practice. Religious reflexivity is a theme in the work of both Connolly (1999) and Foucault (2005; see Martin et al., 1988), who foreground it as a politically relevant technique for transforming the self; refining the subject's ideals and desires. Religious subjects apply reflexive effort to their frame of transcendence in response to tensions between discourse and affect so as to practice with reference to transcendence in a way that aligns with their emerging theorisation of it. They generate performances that are a result of a recursive relationship between action and reflection. I argue that this is a better way of conceptualising the relation between the subject and theology in the geography of religion; theology as praxis.

Framing theology as praxis underscores the importance of reflexivity so that religious subjects can negotiate a theory of transcendence from a contradictory and variegated cocktail of religious affect and discourse, making choices about how to practice in response to it. Moreover, Foucault's (2005) work on religious reflexivity highlights the religious subject better preparing themselves to put their ideals into practice, using religious practices as 'techniques of self' to transform themselves (e.g. contemplation, confession, solitude, endurance), resisting contrary desires and ways of being. As Connolly (1999) puts it, Foucault's work on religious reflexivity examines "experiments in the art of self... these practices are about shifting... sensibilities", disciplining the self so as to perform in a way that better represents allegiance to a particular frame of transcendence. I call the process by which religious subjects reflexively negotiate between affective and discursive framings of the transcendent and then work upon the self to reflect that framing through practice, *theography*.

Theography is a reorientation of the subject's reflexivity towards transcendence; it is a partial and deliberate form of reflexivity practiced by religious subjects that I identify to emphasise that subjects cannot read their theology - their framing of transcendence - off of a particular discursive or affective grid. It is framed by theographic work; negotiation between different potential sources of knowledge about the transcendent. It is distinct from a more general reflexivity as it refers specifically to the subject making choices about how

to frame transcendence and working upon the self - writing this frame *into* the self - in order to carry out actions that they feel represent that frame. (This is opposed to less purposeful forms of reflexivity; what Archer (2003) has called “fractured reflexivity” (p.362), which has no practical outcome). Theography is distinct from theology (often associated with academic scriptural interpretation, or - as I have outlined above - a praxis) and liberation theology (which emphasises the importance of praxis for theology, but concerns reconstructions of Christianity by marginalised people and not a more general religious process (Gutiérrez, 1988; Howson, 2011)). Theography goes beyond both of these concepts, highlighting the reflexive aspect of theology-as-praxis in which religious subjects engage in recursive theorising of transcendence, negotiating between discursive and affective registers in order to make choices about and changes to practice. As religious subjects encounter new (and evaluate old) discourses-regarding and affective experiences-of transcendence, reflection upon and retheorisation of transcendence are prompted, leading (potentially) to altered practice. I identify theography as a crucial process within theology-as-praxis and an influential factor regarding decision-making and changing religious practices.

III FRAMING TRANSCENDENCE, PRAXIS, AND SPACE

Before discussing how theography can edify the analyses of geographers of religion, I want to flag-up why it is important to consider how subjects frame transcendence when thinking about space and praxis. Although theology has begun to garner attention regarding its effect on spatial imaginations, particularly in geopolitics (Megoran, 2006; Sturm, 2013; Wallace, 2006), there has been little work focussing on how subjects reproduce theology in a more quotidian way, and the effect this has on spatial imagination and practices. Being that religion is regarded as increasingly pertinent, permeating an increasing number of spheres of life (Kong, 2001; Tse, 2014), even possibly becoming “the emerging political language of the time” (Agnew, 2006, p.183), human geography can increase its broad salience with increasingly detailed understandings of the ways in which subjects reproduce religion. In this section I will illustrate how different frames of transcendence must be paid close attention to because of their distinct impacts on the spatial imagination of the subject and their praxis. I will compare the work of Badiou and Levinas in order to show how different frames of transcendence are crucial to the subject’s spatial imagination and creating parameters of legitimacy regarding action. Although both of these writers work with “secular” (Moyn, 2005, p.182) notions of transcendence, comparing them provides an effective proxy for illustrating the differences that emerge in theologically-inflected ways of life by highlighting how two different ways of framing transcendence legitimate different responses to a common problem. For Badiou and Levinas the common problem is how to respond to the other.

Badiou’s (1997; 2009) theory of transcendence¹ reorients the subject towards the other by severing the subject from the symbolic order. He suggests that in order to be receptive to the other, the subject must overcome its way of understanding the world - and its according marginalisations - by reducing their identity to fidelity to *the event*. Rather than the self being informed solely by immanent factors and folding its past experiences over into the present to practice in ways that seem ‘new’ - but are in fact contextual - Badiou

¹ Badiou himself is not comfortable with the notion of transcendence. He has tried to form a theory that can explain the transformation of the subject emerging from an ontology of pure immanence (McLennan, 2011). However, arguments about transcendence cannot but dog Badiou’s philosophy due to his theory of the event representing an apparent break in immanence (Fowl, 2010; Holsclaw, 2010; Phelps, 2008).

argues that *events* exist in which something happens that exceeds what has gone before. These events disturb the subject's relation to their perceived reality so as to create an opening for them to rewire their values and perceptions. Badiou argues that the clearest example of the subject using an event to transform their relation to the other is found in St. Paul's Christian theology. In St. Paul's writings, the Christian subject is defined as someone who severs connections to all of their identifiers by privileging fidelity to the resurrection event. Badiou uses this as a model, arguing that by breaking the strength of other identifiers over the subject, fidelity to an event renders the subject indifferent to the perceived differences caused by unevenness in intersubjective identities. This sets the subject against oppressions that are incommensurable with the event's reframing of reality, a reframing which generates new ways of conceiving what is possible without the availability of explanatory tools for those possibilities in the hegemonic symbolic order. In proclaiming the event and refusing to comply with the dominant order, the subject undermines the legitimacy of that order by exercising solidarity with those who have been labelled 'other' by it.

Badiou's theory encourages the subject to conceive of transcendence as located in an immanence-breaking event. Fidelity to the event should initiate a cycle of praxis that discerns tactical ways in which to undermine the hegemonic order and challenge allegiance to what is immanent with reference to an irruption in its continuity. Praxis should also include an active promotion of the event's reframing of what is possible. Therefore with regards to space, it is the responsibility of the Badiouian subject to recognise that the event changed the spatial reproduction of othering relationships, and deduce how an analogous shift would look now. First century Christians' commitment to the resurrection event caused them to shift the geography of their living arrangements, selling land and property in order to live in community and provide for the material needs of believers, addressing divisions between rich and poor (Claiborne and Campolo, 2013; Hengel, 1974). The Badiouian subject does not simply follow this example but tries to create parallels in terms of societal change by asking: how are social divisions that the symbolic order tells me are impossible to overcome reproduced spatially? How might I reverse these spatialities so as to undermine them and witness to the possibility of an alternative? In Badiou's philosophy, undermining the symbolic order and promoting something that contradicts it, are both demonstrated by practicing solidarity with those who are oppressed by the dominant order; seeking to legitimate their claim to better representation and enhancing their representation in spaces from which they are actively excluded. This has profound geographical implications as the subject seeks to most effectively eradicate spatial inequalities maintained by the dominant order that - for example - exclude homeless people from commercial areas (Davis, 1990; Mitchell, 1995) or refugees from asylum (Gill et al., 2014). A Badiouian praxis would seek to shift the subject's spatial imagination so that homeless people would not seem out-of-place in public parks and shopping centres and so it would seem sensible that people from war-torn countries could move to wherever they feel most safe.

In contrast, Levinas (1952; 1969; 1978) reorients the subject towards the other as the route to rather than subject to transcendence. Levinas argued that there can be no subjective encounter with transcendence without the other. The transcendent is located in the Messianic Age - a non-oppressive sociality - which can only be reached through ethics; an engagement with the other. This engagement involves letting the other delegitimise the subject's symbolic order (Eagleton, 2009). In trying to fit the other into their symbolic order the subject does violence to the other and so in order to reduce oppression the subject

gives up their symbolic order to the other for critique (Caygill, 2002). This is a transformative process; Levinas wrote that “[t]he subject, whilst preserving itself, has the possibility of not returning to itself” (1978, p.165). By submitting to the will of the other, the subject sacrifices their symbolic order (see Marcel, 1927). The other makes the illegitimate oppressiveness of the subject’s symbolic order clear to the subject through their ethical encounter, after which the subject returns to themselves with a transformed way of ordering the world. It is by repeated transformative encounters with others (ethics) that the subject follows a route to transcendence.

Levinas conceived of this process as tied to Jewish religion. He rejected theories of God/transcendence as a presence or an encounter (for which he critiqued Kierkegaard (1992)). All that the subject can do is follow a trace of transcendence through ethics, which Levinas argued was expressed most accurately by a moralistic Judaism that favoured a “Talmudic science” (Levinas, 1952, p.2) over numinous encounters with transcendence. Levinas recommended a praxis informed by studying the Talmud, a book belonging to Jewish tradition and the basis for Jewish law. It includes expositions of and meditation upon the Torah by many Jewish commentators, in order to discern properly Jewish ethics and philosophy. To Levinas, the Talmud was the recorded process of distilling the ethical essence of the Torah. In the absence of the jarring presence of a transcendence, transcendence is sought by studying and developing a process of ethical reasoning that has evolved over the centuries. Aided by the Talmud, the subject must engage in ethical relationships with others in order to overcome oppressive social orders (Moyn, 2005).

Levinas’ frame of transcendence sets up a rigid praxis; studying the Talmud and face-to-face dialogue with the other are the only acceptable endeavours. However, Howitt (2002) argues that although adopting a Levinasian ethics is rooted in the place of the face-to-face encounter with the other, it also requires a broad spatial imagination, particularly regarding scale. He posits that the subjective symbolic order that the other challenges also includes a “visual ideology” (p.301). This visual ideology stretches across scale, defining spaces and places that are valuable to the subject but also crucial to the nourishment of the other. If these places are imagined in a way that impedes the other’s nourishment, then - according to Levinas’ ethics - this imagination must be overthrown. If responsibility for the other is to be exercised, a sense of interdependence regarding place - that places are interconnected across space as a network of nourishment for the other - must also be allowed to challenge the subject’s symbolic order. When the subject recognises what is required - (i) that places must have space for plurality beyond their own symbolic order, and (ii) that they form part of a set of interconnections that must be maintained - if the other is to be nourished, this shapes a more political approach to place that has an anti-colonial tenor (Howitt, 2002). Place can no longer be defined as a resource to be appropriated but should be marked by the coming together of deep social interaction in order to produce creative solutions to the intertwining of different needs. This opens up a praxis that involves a politics of place, building fluid and generous fellowships, based on the findings of their ethical endeavours and commitment to a frame of transcendence that is located in a Messianic future.

Comparing Badiou and Levinas’ work highlights that different frames of transcendence give rise to different spatial imaginations and legitimate options for praxis. Badiou’s event-based transcendence splits space into tactical arenas of antagonisation (re: the symbolic order) and solidarity (re: the other). Levinas’ Messianic transcendence, engenders an anti-colonial politics of place through the ethical transformation brought about by encountering

the other. However, both thinkers set up static notions of transcendence. The notion that praxis may change the subject's frame of transcendence, helping to work out some of the impracticalities that may arise from purely Badiouian or Levinasian praxis are not factored into their theories. Although their thought alerts geographers to the importance which different frames of transcendence have for praxis, it is important to remember the reality of theography for most religious subjects. Religious subjects reframe their notion of transcendence in the midst of the reiterative process of praxis. It is unlikely that in empirical work, the geographer will come across an archetypal Badiouian/Levinasian subject. The theographic subject, may try to put Badiou or Levinas' model into practice, but will encounter transcendent norms and experiences that will challenge that model. Practice under reflection interferes with these static notions of transcendence and it is this fluidity in religious praxis that I want to explore in the following section by thinking through the different ways in which theography enables the subject to change their religious practice.

IV THEOGRAPHY AND CHANGING RELIGIOUS PRAXIS

So far, I have defined theography as a new way of looking at religious subjectivation; it is a reflexive process of theorising transcendence couched in praxis, based on a negotiation between cognitive and embodied knowledges regarding transcendence, and geared towards transforming the subject in line with this theorisation. I have also - by comparing two contrasting frames of transcendence regarding a common problem - illustrated how this theorisation has an impact on spatial imaginations and decision-making. Now, I want to give some grounded examples of how theography affects religious praxis, particularly how it enables subjects to change their praxis. They will be used to highlight that theography can be used to change the subject as a Foucauldian technique-of-self in two contrasting ways. Firstly, to redefine theological praxis and challenge mainstream ways of being religious as a poststructural act of subversion (Dempsey and Rowe, 2004; Foucault, 2005), and secondly to act upon themselves in order to conform with preexisting theological praxes (Foucault, 1991). I will look at three different ways in which religious subjects change their praxis. The first two will highlight how religious subjects use theography to explore new ways of being religious by (i) creating what I call questioning communities, and (ii) extending their praxis in order to alter their relationship with their institutions. The third one will underscore how religious subjects use theography in order to subject themselves to institutional discipline.

Questioning communities are often focussed around convening spaces of collective questioning and discussion, the aim of which is the transformation of the subject's religious praxis through reflection, negotiating the subject's dissatisfactions with previous or ongoing experiences of religious discourse, affect, and practice (Conradson, 2013). These questioning religious communities make accepting spaces for people's queries whilst simultaneously challenging their theological blind-spots. They represent an attempt to give the subject space and time to exercise their agency through theography, allowing them to reframe transcendence and endorsing experimentation with new religious meanings, affects, and practices (Bell, 2006). These spaces convene encounters with difference and encourage subjects to develop a proclivity for questioning and testing their frame of transcendence. An example of this can be drawn from Moody's (2012) work with the Ikon community in Northern Ireland. Their practices are centred around "transformance art" (Moody, 2012, p.189), art performances that seek to question and destabilise people's

religious identities through encounters with the other². These performances are supposed to force reflexivity and reevaluation, and represent an attempt to push through to a religion “beyond belief”³ (Moody, 2012, p.192). For example, one of the performances involved an actor reading out what an interviewee describes as a “gorgeous” (p.194) sermon. Then, the original recording of the sermon was played as delivered by the politician and evangelical minister Ian Paisley, troubling listeners by attaching an ominous set of political resonances to the words. This jarring experience links with one of the key provocations that Ikon put forward, inviting people to reflect not just on “right beliefs” but “believing in the right way” (p.194). Questioning communities represent an attempt to redefine theology as praxis, emphasising the healthiness of change and difference, acknowledging that subjects engage in their own reframing of and attempts to understand transcendence through questioning and experimentation, critiquing past discourse, affect, and practice. However, they can also expose the subject to difference - rather more forcefully asking the subject to reconsider frame of transcendence and reapply it - transforming their praxis through a transformed relation to the other. This requires theographic techniques, not just to reflect upon potentially conflicting theological information but to act upon this to transform and alter the self, changing desires, outlook, and practice.

However, not all subjects working through dissatisfaction with their previous religious experiences join questioning communities. Some maintain links with institutional forms of religion, but extend and redefine their praxis in ways that alter their relationship with their institutions. An example of this is found in Vincett’s (2013) work with Christian feminists. Vincett interviews women who struggle with going to church because their church’s discourses and practices are misogynistic. However, they also want to be part of these institutional church spaces because they feel it joins them to something universal and because they feel responsible to represent and welcome women in the church (Leming, 2007). As a response to this tension, these women extend their religious performance in ways that break with the institutional theology, creating “parallel churches” (Vincett, 2013, p.178); additional gatherings outside of normative church times and spaces. These spaces do two things. Firstly, they provide space for women to reflect upon their dissatisfactions with church and imagine new women-affirming theologies together. Secondly, they give women the opportunity to connect with God in ways that they cannot in church, blending their new theology into reimagined ritual practice. For instance, women set up a communion altar on the boundary between the official church sanctuary and the room they are given to hold their parallel church in. This subverts normal church practice, allowing women to experience communion in a way that resonates more with their framing of God, but also symbolically critiquing the church by emphasising their marginalisation, affectively emboldening women in their preservation of women-inclusive spaces. Women reflect upon and tweak institutional theology and praxis to find a way of being religious that deals with conflicting theological impulses; the desire to be part of the universal church versus the desire to have a woman-affirming theological praxis. The emboldening effect of this reflexivity - enabling women to feel that they are equally connected to God as men despite the way that men exclude them from church activities - is used as a technique of self to “hold church to its catholicity” (Leming, 2007, p.86). This is a good example of the reframing of transcendence and working on the self in accordance with that reframing that constitute theography. Taking part in parallel churches makes women feel more entitled to

² The other being framed here as that which undermines the subject’s religious praxis by highlighting its exclusivity or oppressiveness.

³ This religion beyond belief is characterised by questioning dogma and structure (including but not limited to religion) that gets in the way of forming a collective marked primarily by love and justice.

representation in institutional church space. Despite experiencing subordination in institutional spaces, they feel compelled to inhabit them and to act as a welcome to other women and a critical voice towards institutional misogyny whilst also feeling like they are maintaining a connection to a universal church.

The examples of theography-facilitated change that I have given above pertain largely to what would be perceived to be subversive poststructural practice. Subject's use theography in these examples to thwart hegemonies, resist norms, and imagine new ways of framing the transcendent. However, theography does not necessarily have to be used in such dissident ways. It can also be used to enable subjects to conform to preexisting theological praxes. This may be because they are trammelled towards conformity to a religious discipline, or it could be that they use the discipline of a religion to resist another type of governance, for instance, to be a consumer, or to be law-abiding, or to be respectable (Foucault, 2005; Martin et al., 1988; Sullivan, 2005). Foucault (2005) and Connolly (1999) both foreground various reflexive practices in religion as ways of enacting a resistant micropolitics. However - although they highlight this as a technique of self that can help the subject to resist other systems of governance (see Luz (2013) for an example of how upbuilding Muslim identity helps Palestinians resist Israeli imperialism) - this religious resistance can also be exercised against the temptation to dissent against institutional religious norms, enabling subjects to tend towards institutional conformity.

Foucault gives an example of the religious subject using reflection to negotiate between their thoughts about practice and frame of transcendence - i.e. do theography - in order to suppress their dissident tendencies (Martin et al. 1988). He identifies monastic contemplation in particular as a way of reinforcing the subject's commitment to a particular frame of transcendence. He argues that Christian monks used contemplation to screen their thoughts for selfishness and deception, reflecting on them to assess whether they turn them towards or away from God. The idea behind this was to purify thought, shifting the subject's focus away from themselves to God, altering decision-making and actions. This self-examination was always done with an abbot (the head of a monastery) so as to conform the monk's thoughts to an institutionalised framing of transcendence and produce obedience. This kind of theography illustrates the subject submitting in advance to a particular frame of transcendence and then using their agency to constrain their deviant thoughts and feelings with institutional discipline. This requires repeated and increasingly extensive attempts to shift thinking and feeling towards a norm - based on a framing of transcendence - despite contradictory desires. Foucault mines ancient texts on monastic practices to explore how subject's willingly submit to and apply discipline to themselves but this is also a more contemporary concern for religious subjects. Olson et al.'s (2013b) work with young Christians in Glasgow illustrates how the subject can often struggle to hold to an ideal regarding transcendence when coming up against spaces in which alternative readings of their religion are projected onto them. Although keen to perform an "authentic" (Olson et al., 2013b, p.1422) brand of Christianity, these young people come up against spaces where they find it difficult to perform their faith with integrity. Sometimes they receive sectarian slurs, which they struggle not to react against despite claiming an identity that supposedly transcends sectarian divisions. At university, they feel as if being honest about their faith would be looked down on, and so are less open and enthusiastic about their religiousness. Although Olson et al. (2013b) do not explore the coping mechanisms that their research subjects deploy in response to these conflicts, their research does highlight a gap for the type of reflexive activity that Foucault talks about in religious life. Olson et al. highlight that the body is the site where the conflicting frames of

transcendence need to be reconciled and Foucault's work on monasticism suggests a process by which this reconciliation could be carried out.

Although I have outlined ways in which subjects either dissent or conform to religious hegemonies, the reality for many religious subjects is that there will often be a mixture of both dissent and conformity in their praxis. Dittmer's (2008; 2010) work on American evangelical reading groups and internet forums is a good example of this. He identifies various hegemonies in the groups and forums, with subjects in these settings forming geopolitical ideas from a mixture of biblical and para-biblical writings on the end times; for example that apocalyptic events will be based on the notion of a vengeful God. However, there are a range of ways in which subjects play with different ideas within this hegemony, sometimes even teasing at the edges of it. Sometimes debate focusses around the particularities of exactly who the USA should direct its military aggression at (another hegemony being that US military action is seen as a righteous force for God's justice). However, there also those who hold a painful tension of desiring God's justice whilst also having relatives in the armed forces. Dittmer leaves space here to wonder whether these subject's might be constructing subaltern theologies that reconcile their devotion to Christ with a less bloody fate for those that they love. This is a complex situation in which people are reproducing their religious subjectivity between different spaces and ideas of religious import. The reading group is where scriptural truth is sought for, but the home is where the notion that each human life is transcendentally valuable is intensified by familial affection. Theography represents a way that subjects can negotiate this networked religious experience of differing affects and discourses which spread themselves across space.

V CONCLUSION: THEOGRAPHY AND NETWORKED RELIGIOUS GEOGRAPHIES

The above discussion has illustrated the usefulness of theography for the geography of religion. As a concept it foregrounds the importance of framing transcendence upon subjects' spatial imaginations and praxis, and illustrates more clearly how the subject produces this frame of transcendence without over-reliance on top-down affective or discursive structures. I have also explored how theography can offer new understandings of how space shapes and is shaped by religious subjects, explaining through this that subjects expend just as much theographic effort to conform as they do to dissent from religious governance. Now I want to draw attention to some new lines of enquiry that theography might help geographers of religion to explore.

Firstly, further investigation can develop out of theography's foregrounding of how subjects form a frame of transcendence by drawing on different affective and discursive knowledges that are encountered in different times and places. Religious ways of being are not formed out of homogeneous affect and discourse but a plurality. For example, a New Age practitioner does not encounter the same affect when they perform a ritual compared to when they experience a sudden break from their habitual practices (which indicates that the transcendent is guiding their path towards a more spiritual way (Holloway, 2003)). However, each of these experiences are as religiously significant to the subject as the other and contribute to the way in which they frame transcendence. This underscores that there must be a process of discernment that subjects undertake in order to enable them to classify what is religiously significant affect/discourse and what is not, even whilst participating in a variety of seemingly disparate religious spaces and encountering contrasting ways of framing transcendence. Theography can give

geographers of religion a view onto how religious subjects make sense of this plurality - convening a network of difference - and how this making-sense has an effect on their future decisions regarding religious practice and change. It illustrates the possibility of reflecting with the subject on how they are receptive or non-receptive to different ways of framing the transcendent as a result of their own religious praxis being constructed through a gamut of space-times that are themselves constructed from different mixtures of affective atmospheres and discursive norms (e.g. space-times for ritual, conviviality, duty, and decision-making). How does theography mediate the differences in religious experience and interpretation so as to result (or not) in the coming about of religious hybrids and hegemonies? What factors contribute to the subject choosing to dissent from or conform to broader religious movements?

Secondly, discussion regarding levels of receptivity and non-receptivity to difference have been key to debates regarding postsecular geographies (Cloke and Beaumont, 2013; Coles, 1997; Habermas, 2011; Holloway, 2013; Olson et al., 2013b; Williams, 2014). This emerging branch of geography has been primarily concerned with ethical and political movements that resist classification as secular by accepting and drawing inspiration from religious motivation, metaphor, and interpretation without adopting a definitively religious or secular identity (See Barclay, 2013; Cloke et al., 2015; Jamoul and Wills, 2008; Muers and Britt, 2012). However, little has been done to explore how religious people make sense of their participation in broader ethical and political movements without recourse to fundamentalist zeal. How do they reconcile the religious resonances in mixed-motivational ethico-political settings to previous religious affects and discourses? Where is the limit of a subject's reworking of their religious subjectivity in order to remain part of a movement (see Epstein, 2002; Tosi and Vitale, 2009)? Theography provides a way of examining these questions within postsecular geographies.

Thirdly, the politics of religious spaces has tended to be conceived of in two ways; either as a reaction to the top-down governance (Brace et al., 2006), or as an internal struggle over the theological encryption of religiously appropriated spaces (MacDonald, 2002). Theography recognises that subjects form their religious subjectivity in the gaps between institutional religious space and "unofficial" (Kong, 2010, p.756) religious spaces. This offers a new way of examining the politics of religious spaces by highlighting their porosity, with hybrid religious subjectivities constantly filtering through and altering them. How are the spaces beyond the religious community - which the subject is also drawing on to form their religious subjectivity - affecting the co-creation of religious space? Religious subjectivities are co-created by a mixture of hegemonic religious governance (Agnew, 2006; Connolly, 2008), and religiously significant resources with more subversive resonances (e.g. many South American Catholics tied their theology to anti-capitalist movements - seeing Christ in the faces of the poor - despite orders from the Vatican to desist (Kirk, 1980)). How do congregations of religious subjects organise themselves to be more or less receptive to the plurality of religious ways of being? Are there limits on how much difference can be tolerated in order to maintain a sense of purpose or collective identity? What effect does it have on subjects' praxis when their religious communities become more or less open to difference?

To sum up, theography can help geographers of religion to further explore: (i) more complex assessments of how religious subjects differentiate between religiously significant and non-significant affect/discourse and how this affects their receptivity to religious difference and change, (ii) how their level of receptivity to difference has an effect on

postsecular partnerships, and (iii) how the politics of religious spaces address the reality of religious difference even within a particular congregation. The new lines of enquiry will help geographers of religion to understand - in more nuanced ways - the constitution of religion through subjective participation in the intricate theographic dynamics of shifting religious praxes.