Spiritual landscapes of Pentecostal worship, belief, and embodiment in a therapeutic community: New critical perspectives

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**A R T I C L E  I N F O**

Article history:
Received 6 December 2014
Received in revised form 27 October 2015
Accepted 17 December 2015
Available online 12 January 2016

Keywords:
Spiritual landscapes
Belief
Embodiment
Pentecostalism
Worship
Ethnography

**A B S T R A C T**

This paper offers new theoretical and empirical insights into the emotional and spiritual geographies of religion in therapeutic landscapes designated for marginal and vulnerable populations. Drawing on original empirical work conducted in a Pentecostal Christian therapeutic community in the UK working in the area of addiction and rehabilitation, this paper investigates the spiritual landscapes of Pentecostal worship, and considers the emotional, spiritual and therapeutic sensibilities residents attach to, and experience during, practices of worship and prayer. By examining the complex intersections between belief, embodiment and performativity of religious practice, I illustrate how the distinct patterning of worship space can differently open out, and close down, capacities and affective atmospheres of the divine. Attention is given to the different ways in which the residents experienced this worship space, and the extent to which their presence therein created a range of therapeutic and anti-therapeutic experiences. Drawing on these narratives, this paper argues how the contingent configuration of care/control might be seen as both constraining and empowering for residents, underlining the importance for geographers of religion to ground conceptualisations of the staging and performance of spiritual landscapes in the divergent sensibilities and ethics of engagement individuals bring to these sites.

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1. Introduction

And I would sit — like you have to come to devotions and the rest of it, but I would just sit at the back of the meetings, of the Wednesday nights, the Friday nights, Sunday mornings — all the time sat at the back, arms folded thinking I know better than all you lot. I would just pass my time, and then the time will come and I’m going to leave. But one day, and this was the real pivotal turning point in my life, I was sat in a meeting and someone led worship — don’t know who it was — someone preached — I don’t know who preached because I wasn’t listening — but there was an altar call and people were getting prayed for, and I wasn’t interested in it at all, I was just sat in this chair. And, all I can describe [of] it is a feeling which I now know as the presence of God came on my [pause], dropped on, I can’t really describe it, understand it. It was like if someone placed a sheet, a cotton sheet, it started on the top of my head, and it flopped down over my body. And I just broke into tears, I was just sat in the back, crying ...

Matt, 35, pastor and ex-heroine user, 30/05/10

Matt recounts one of his early experiences as a resident in Hebron, a network of semi-monastic Christian communities working in the areas of addiction and rehabilitation in the UK. His account foregrounds the structured nature of the Hebron environment, for instance, the mandatory requirement for residents to participate in religious meetings; but also draws attention to the emotional and spiritual geographies that co-produce lived experience in Hebron. He describes the presence of a profound and inexplicable something that dropped onto his body (‘a cotton sheet’); something/someone materially absent but deeply powerful and viscerally felt; a sensation that came to be known as ‘the presence of God’. How should we as geographers begin to understand the complex social, emotional and spiritual geographies that co-constitute therapeutic/regulatory spaces of recovery?

Drawing on two month residential ethnography conducted in a Hebron community, this paper investigates the staging and

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1 Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the organisation and its staff and residents.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2015.12.001
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performance of ‘spiritual landscapes’ of Pentecostal worship (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009), and specifically considers the emotional and spiritual sensibilities residents attach to, and experience during, practices of worship and prayer. Taking up Kong’s (2010) call for geographers of religion to move beyond the study of so-called ‘officially’ sacred sites, and address the ‘sensuous ways in which the sacred is experienced and reproduced’ across different sites of religious (and non-religious) practice (p 757); this paper seeks to make two contributions. First, it offers a conceptualisation of the performativity of religious practice, embodiment and belief as it is constructed, negotiated and experienced by residents in a Pentecostal Christian therapeutic community. By examining the complex entanglement of a particular set of discursive practices (Pentecostal Christianity, its staging and participatory ‘manners’), forms of embodiment (prayer, singing, music), alongside the different sensibilities and ethics of engagement individuals brought to the event-space of worship, this paper illustrates the ways in which the distinct patterning of worship space can differently open out, and close down, capacities and affective atmospheres of the divine. Second, the paper considers the different ways in which residents experienced this worship space, and the extent to which their presence therein created particular therapeutic possibilities (Kong and Gesler, 1998; Conradson, 2005; Williams, 2010; Foley, 2011), with regard to, for example, immediate somatic experiences felt during worship (euphoria, release, rest, peace, reflection) and through generating new, or reaffirming existing, transformations in self-identity and religious belief. However, I also draw attention to the limits of such therapeutic possibilities, and illustrate the ways in which the contingent configuration of care/control within the community might be seen as both constraining and empowering for residents.

The paper is structured in four parts. The opening section provides a conceptual discussion on spiritual landscapes and the embodied performance of religious practice, with particular regard to Pentecostalism. This is followed by a methodological and background discussion of life inside a Hebron community. The first of two analytical sections focuses on the staging and performativity of worship and details the ways in which Hebron works to create a particular ‘worship space’ with a distinct affective atmosphere. The second analytical section considers the variegated experiences of worship among different residents, highlighting narratives that position worship as a site of therapeutic potential, alongside other residents’ accounts whose experience of worship-space might be better described as ‘anti-therapeutic’ (Dunkley, 2009).

2. Therapeutic and spiritual landscapes

In recent years geographic scholarship on therapeutic spaces has utilised non-representational and post-phenomenological approaches to attend to the significance landscape, affect and embodiment play in constituting emotional and spiritual experience (Conradson, 2005; Williams, 2010; Foley, 2011; Maddrell, 2013a, 2013b; Perriam, 2015). Geography’s ‘emotional turn’ (Bondi, 2005) has also been developed by feminist geographers of religion (Hopkins, 2009; Vincett 2013) to emphasise the emotional geographies of religious space and identity, and bring more critical understandings of how ‘different groups of men and women with different markers of social difference — race, class, age, disability, sexuality, locality — experience their religion and use religious space’ (Hopkins, 2009: 12; see also Taylor et al., 2014).

Such a move has opened up new avenues to evaluate the emotional and performative aspects of religious practice and experience (Kong, 2001; Game 2001; Metcalfe 2001; Hetherington 2003; Slater, 2004; Buttimer, 2006; Holloway, 2006; Finlayson, 2012; Sanderson, 2012). Within this, an emerging literature has started to examine the therapeutic significance of sacred space (Foley, 2011; Williams, 2010; Perriam, 2015), including but not limited to: geographies of pilgrimage (Rose, 2010; Slater, 2004; Maddrell and della Dora, 2013); memorial artefacts and spaces (Maddrell, 2013b); Holy Wells (Foley, 2013; Scriven, 2014); retreat (Conradson, 2007; Perriam, 2015); contemporary Christian music (Lindenbaum, 2012); and houses of worship (Finlayson, 2012). Worship, according to MacDonald (2002: 69), broadly refers to a ‘human response to a belief in the greatness of God’, and he argues the geographic importance of unravelling the profoundly spatial experience of worship across a variety of different religious, historical and political contexts. Worship practices can include ‘formal’ practices of liturgy, singing and prayer but also a much more everyday sensibility towards God that does not need special occasions/events/spaces (Mills, 2012). In this paper, I focus on a particular subset of worship spaces that characterise charismatic evangelical and Pentecostal forms of Christianity, which have an overt emphasis on visceral ‘feelings and demonstrations of God’s power over thought and contemplation, and encourages the loss or yielding of self to God, which is manifest or represented in various somatic forms’ (Wachholtz and Pearce, 2010: 209). Elements of Pentecostal worship praxis — including ecstatic somatic experiences of glossolalia (speaking in tongues), dancing, singing, miracle-like divine healing and being ‘slain in the Spirit’ — have received renewed academic attention (Brahinsky, 2012; Krause, 2014) since the rising prominence of global Pentecostalism (Hopkins et al., 2013).

Geographical scholarship on Pentecostal worship spaces and praxis remain marginal. More broadly, geographic writings on worship spaces to date have largely concerned the symbolic and social ordering of space (MacDonald, 2002), while others have noted the politics of position, representation, ownership, and exclusion (Kong, 2001; Woods, 2013). Such an approach can overlook the agency of religious subjectivities, in terms of the different meanings, embodied experiences and negotiations actors bring to religious space, and risks presenting the view of congregations as mere ciphers for religious codes and architectures. More recently, however, the reconceptualisation of religious practice (Holloway, 2006, 2013; Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009) has offered more vitalist accounts of the performativity of worship spaces in ways that shift attention to the intuitive, sensual and visceral nature of religious experience. This way, analysis focuses on contextualising the interaction between the non-representational and the representational, the embodied practices of being in the world, ways of seeing/feeling, and (un)authorised codes of belief (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009).

2.1. Spiritual landscapes and the performativity of worship

Through the concept of spiritual landscapes, Dewsbury and Cloke (2009: 696) offer an analytical lens through which to understand the ‘co-constituting sets of relations between bodily existence, felt practice and faith in things that are imminent but not yet manifest’. Building on the post-phenomenological work of Rose and Wiley (2006: 475), spiritual landscapes concern the tension between absence and presence — the performance, creation and perception of something unseen but profoundly felt. The spiritual — the excessive, ineffable, ghostly presence, or haunting — is not confined to religious experience; but rather the spiritual, denotes the non-material virtual world, which Dewsbury and Cloke (2009) argue, is constitutive of a mixture of representative and non-representative registers. Through this, spiritual landscapes foreground the different ways otherworldly senses of spirit are staged and allowed to act through certain performances and architectures of potential, and highlight how spiritual presences produce actual
bodily dispositions, leaving marks in the landscape of existence, and affective memories, or traces within the body’ (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009: 697).

Similarly, Holloway’s (2006, 2013) conceptualisation of religious practices as performative events is useful here to elucidate the hetergeneous set of discourse, practice and performances that work to present the sacred in ways that can leave visceral traces on the body. While geographers have begun to attend to the importance of ritualisation and collective performance in the sacralisation of space (Finlayson and Meseg, 2013), this paper focuses less on how physical and symbolic places of worship become attributed as sacred and more on the ephemeral and affective geographies that produce and are produced by embodied practices of prayer and worship. By turning to the performative aspects of worship I wish to focus critical attention on the relatively under-theorised intersection of belief, embodiment and performance in the ‘performative presencing of some sense of spirit’ (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009: 689).

In taking a feminist and poststructural stance to question what has meaning for religious subjectivities and what is experience(d) of the divine (Yorgason and della Dora, 2009; Hopkins, 2009; Viccett, 2013), the argument here is not categorically to affirm the existence of a deity or the supernatural per se. Rather it is to suggest the need for social scientists to take seriously a more heterodox account of “other” acts (God, Higher Powers, spirits) that co-constitute the material, bodily, sensational and sensory worlds of religious subjectivities. Critical geographies of religious experience entails an investigation of the poetics as much as the politics of religious space, identity and performance (Kong, 2001), leading to a theorisation of religious experience that does not take ‘authentic’ religious experience at face value, but neither does it dismiss the ontological status of the divine in the lifeworlds of believers (Meyer, 2006). Instead, anthropological perspectives highlight the somatic, kinaesthetic and haptic dimensions of religious practices (see Reinhardt, 2014; Meyer, 2011; Krause, 2014). Such an approach offers an ‘object-subject’ reading of religious experience, emphasising the mediating forms (or ‘sensational forms’ Meyer, 2006) that ‘make the transcendental sense-able’, for instance, the solicitation of the sacred or the divine through objects — images, texts, buildings — which address and involve participants in a specific manner and induce particular feelings.

The notion of spiritual landscapes, as outlined by Dewsbury and Cloke (2009), draws several similarities with such theorisation of religious experience; namely, rejecting a Cartesian split between mind and body, and instead emphasising the centred body and the performative power of object—subject relations in mediating religious experience. Dewsbury and Cloke, however, seek to extend such theorisations of religious experience by arguing for an immanent spirituality that accentuates the significance of belief in shaping the capacity of the body to be affected in ways that can produce an alternative psychogeography, ways of being and experiencing the world (also see Holloway, 2013). This is not to suggest that belief is somehow detached from, or prior to, technologies of mediation; but rather belief becomes enfolded into experience of the sensory world (Wynn, 2012), in ways that attune the sensory capacities of the body and open up a discernment capable of registering presences that resonate outside the enframements of the everyday (Blanton, 2013). In this way, belief in the presence and power of ‘something other than the material present world around us’ (Dewsbury and Cloke, 2009: 696) leads to certain things happening that would not otherwise, and certain affects are produced that make people experience very real and specific feelings. The remainder of this paper seeks to ground these questions through a case-study of the emotional and spiritual landscapes of worship constructed and negotiated in a Pentecostal Christian therapeutic community.

3. Case-study: Hebron, a semi-monastic Pentecostal Christian therapeutic community

Historically, faith-based organisations (FBOs) have been a longstanding presence in the areas of drug treatment and remain significant providers in the sector in the UK, especially in the areas of residential treatment — filling a niche as therapeutic communities fell out of favour in the 1980s and many secular services ventured into areas of drug user activism, harm-reduction and treatment in the community (Yates, 2003). Rather than speaking generally about a ‘faith-based service sector’ in drug treatment, it is better to recognise the inherent diversity in terms of organisational ethics of care (conversion-oriented versus “without strings” service), programme philosophy (harm reduction versus abstinence), funding and governance (‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ — whether FBOs are formally working inside government financial and regulatory frameworks, or continuing to ‘fill a gap’ in areas where the state ceased activity or has traditionally not involved itself). Even these heuristic categorisations require further analysis to see how different theologies and ethics of care are performatively brought into being, (re)negotiated and experienced by service users (see Williams, 2013, 2015a).

Relatively little attention has been given within geographies of drug treatment to questions of religion, despite its significance in shaping policy paradigms, the governance and ethos of service providers, and the meanings and identities constructed and experienced by service users (but see Brandes, 2002; and Sanchez and Nappo, 2008). However, there is a developing literature on the spatial and regulatory environments of addiction treatment programmes (DeVerteuil and Wilton, 2009; Evans, 2012); the (re)construction of gendered selves (Wilton et al., 2014; Love et al., 2012); and the affective geographies of alcohol and ‘enabling places’ (Jayne et al., 2010; Duff, 2010, 2012). This paper seeks to contribute to the emergence of this literature by offering an account of the variegated social, emotional and spiritual geographies that are characteristic of a particular group of FBOs working in the area of addiction and drug treatment, namely, semi-monastic Christian therapeutic communities. To the best of my knowledge this is first geographic study to provide an ethnographic account of faith-based therapeutic communities working this in area.

The two month residential ethnography was conducted in Hebron, an abstinence-based men-only Christian therapeutic community. The community was based on an explicitly evangelical ethos, presenting itself as a free ‘Christian discipleship programme’ [‘for addicts’] which may suit some, but welcomes all’ (interview with Matt), and operated independently from government funding. I lived on-site alongside 18 residents, 4 of whom had been in the community less than 4 months. The majority of residents had stayed over a year or more. Although the community is relatively small, the Hebron network represents a major provider of residential rehabilitation services within the drug service sector, offering no fewer than 340 bed places in seven cities in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, free of charge. The pastor of a Hebron community is almost always a ‘cured addict’ who has been in the fellowship for five, seven or ten years, and the knowledge that older residents have all gone through the Hebron system themselves is framed to bring the possibility of empathy and peer-led recovery to encourage new residents, as stated in a promotional leaflet:

The Hebron ethos is a spirit that encourages people to believe that there is a way out, that they can change, and that God can take a beggar off a dunghill and turn him into a prince. They know that their leaders were once where they are. They have a living hope and example of a peer-leader right before their eyes.
Before arrival, prospective residents are told they would first go through a ‘cold-turkey’ detoxification without any form of pain-killers or substitute opiates like methadone. During their withdrawal residents are closely monitored by an older resident and serve in household duties like cleaning and preparation of food. Once strong enough residents help fund their own recovery and that of others by working in the community business: usually, gardening and furniture restoration, although the type of social enterprise varies according to the local opportunities in each city and country. The following ethnographic extract illustrates the typical daily routine:

Each day begins at 7am, in my dorm to the sound of a Hillsong CD. After breakfast, we assemble into the lounge for a half-hour ‘devotional’ service led by Gareth, a senior Hebron resident or Liam, a staff member. Residents then go their separate ways to work on different teams (flyer distribution, charity shop sales, gardening, household, furniture collection and furniture restoration) from 9.00am until 5.30pm. Everyone comes together to eat dinner at 6.00pm. This is followed by an evening devotional, which includes a longer time of worship, testimony and a sermon. Residents then have approximately an hour free time to quietly read, chat or play on the playstation — depending on the weeknight. At the weekend, residents receive their monthly family visit and weekly telephone calls, and Sunday afternoons are usually spent watching films, writing home, or playing football in the garden or park.

The programme is recommended for 12–18 months and requires residents to withdraw into a covenantal lifestyle defined by deliberate, deep commitment to serving and caring for others, and modelling the ‘restoration of personality that is found in the gospel’. This gives Hebron a certain semi-monastic character. The prominence given to worship in the daily structure was tied to a theological framing of addiction as a manifestation and consequence of sin, which at core was understood as a person’s ‘lack of acceptance of Christ’ (interview with Liam).

Faith-based and secular therapeutic communities are often characterised by strict privations that prohibit potentially divisive or unhelpful influences to the resident’s recovery — for example, freedom of movement (without accompaniment), ‘inappropriate’ television content, and euphoric music associated with past drug use. In Hebron, contact with friends and family was initially restricted for new residents and residents were prohibited from engaging in sexual relationships. Residents were prohibited from ‘secular’ (read ‘non-Christian’) books, music, radio and television. The rationale underpinning such censorship was that, for recovery to occur, there needs to be a clean break not only with drugs but also with all the habits, desires and social attachments that accompanied drug use. Instead, there was daily instruction in Biblical teaching and quiet times where residents were obliged to read Christian literature or listen to contemporary Christian music — understood by residents and staff to strengthen the community spirit and their own Christian ‘walk’ by ‘filling your mind with God’s truth’ (Tom, resident).

Religious codes, which when combined with attempts to problematise and remake ‘gendered identities linked, and underlying, drug and alcohol use’ (Wilton et al., 2014: 298), came to inculcate particular rules and attitudes towards piety and asceticism (for example, the celibate body) among Hebron residents. A particular form of heteropatriarchal masculinity served as one of the belief systems shaping (experience of) the Hebron space; constructed in the narratives and performativity of religious practice as much as the macho-culture (or ‘muscular Christianity’, Watson et al., 2005) that accompanied physical labour in the social enterprise (for example, clearing away brambles without gloves, lifting wardrobes and sofas). It is common in addiction treatment settings for social practices to forge strong attachments to the ‘healthy’ body following the social and biological impairment inscribed onto the ‘addict’ body (Wilton et al., 2014); and in this respect Hebron was no different, regarding ‘addict’ bodies as weak, dirty and in need of correction and strengthening through ‘tough love’. What was distinctive about Hebron, however, was that dominant constructions of masculinity as independence, strength and self-reliance (Wilton et al., 2014) became reconfigured and fashioned complex relationships in and through Pentecostal worship; combining, for example, commonly thought ‘feminised’ emotional expressions of worship (kneeling, dancing, praying, confession, testimony) with a particular authoritative and masculine approach to leadership, discipline and teaching. This intimate intermingling of religion and gender perhaps was best illustrated in Hebron’s style of worship where I joined the men singing out well known Christian hymns as football-chants, not as a parody, but as a cultural appropriation and expression of the styles and practices of singing many residents were more comfortable with.

3.1. Methods

To examine the experiential and embodied dimension of worship spaces, and the multiple meanings and experiences residents ascribed to these practices, I supplemented my own (auto) ethnographic reflections of daily practices of worship, prayer and Bible study with five tape-recorded interviews with senior members of the community, eighteen untaped interviews with newer residents, and over thirty informal resident focus groups documented in a field diary. The residential nature of fieldwork allowed a dialogical approach with residents, offering analysis of Hebron’s everyday narratives and practices (for instance, what people say they do and observing what they do), and how these narratives connected to the different meanings and embodied sensations felt — or not felt — during the event-space of Pentecostal worship (Cooper, 2012).

Observant participation (Thrift 2000), as the subtle inversion of participant observation implies a practical engagement in the field where the researcher’s body becomes an instrument for inquiry (Lea, 2006; see also Dewsbury, 2009; Sanderson, 2012), allowing access to the sensuous nonverbal ways of knowing and embodied lines of communication that emerge in fleeting acts of performance. Accounts of spiritual experience, by nature, will be incomplete, provisional, and contingent on the subject’s partiality, confinement in memory, desire and command of language. Nevertheless, experiential participation brought forth a space where participants and I shared experiences of worship in terms of what was felt, how it was felt, how one comprehends and articulates such moments into language and signifying codes (Pentecostalism), and what, if anything, is taken from this experience.

3.2. Positionality

In all of this, the positionality of the researcher is crucial. If methodology is a performative act (Law and Hetherington, 1998) that renders (in)visible possible social worlds, then, belief — or unbelief — shapes the openness or disposition of the researcher to be affected by the spiritual landscapes enacted and experienced in various social cultural settings. A number of scholars have emphasised the importance of faith-based reflexivity in geographic study of religion (Megoran, 2004; Slater, 2004; Ferber, 2006; Stump, 2008; Olson, 2008; Bailey et al., 2009; Hopkins, 2009; Laurie, 2010; Han, 2010), stressing amongst other things that knowledge production is inextricably historically and spatially
situated so that all researchers approach topics with a **view from somewhere** — certain philosophical predilections, political commitments and epistemic baggage. Much can be said about ongoing debates concerning the advantages and disadvantages of being a religious ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ when studying religion (Henkel, 2011; Ferber, 2006), and the precariousness of those ‘fixed’ categories which often serve to blanket out the multiple negotiations the researcher must perform when oscillating between stances of **critical distance** and **critical proximity** (Han, 2010). For the purposes here, I consider the specific impact my own Christian belief had in conducting fieldwork in Hebron, particularly with reference to “observational participation” in worship and prayer.

Growing up in an evangelical Baptist church in South Wales, my previous engagement with Hebron’s charismatic and Pentecostal forms of religiosity had been limited to cross-denominational church events and national Christian festivals as a teenager. Although my faith has become progressively critical of certain forms of evangelical and charismatic religiosity; to some extent, this posture of proximity brought a degree of cultural competence and rapport with residents, for example, the ability to participate in ‘devotions’, pray with residents, and I was even asked to teach new songs and lead music on my last evening! Being attuned to the phenomenological experiences of Christian activities that were, at least, to be comparable with those of respondents offered an invaluable and effective stimuli for opening up conversation about embodied experience of worship. However, my ethnographic placement in Hebron encompassed a series of ethical, personal, and practical tensions, including: staff on my arrival withdrawing the right to interview ‘newer residents’ in case it interfered with their recovery; feelings of ‘research claustrophobia’ with limited access to friends and family; and the tensions of ‘religious power’ concerning my own worship expression and use of religious language and the ways this is differently perceived by groups of residents. These issues are dealt with in much more depth than can be allowed here (see Williams, in press). As a ‘guest’, I never escaped the ‘outsider’ tag, not having personal experience of substance abuse, as well as being illiterate with certain Pentecostal practices such as ‘speaking in tongues’ amongst others. My independence from Hebron and positioning as both a non-member of staff allowed, to a degree, some residents to confidentially share views about their experiences without fear of recrimination. For those who did not express a religious belief, I tended to distance myself from the community and stress as a Christian I was openly critical of some of the practices I observed. At times, I found my immersion in the Hebron community greatly unsettling, for instance, hearing stories of demonic possession (and deliverance), slotted into the hierarchical shepherding structure that characterised leadership decisions, or the manner of Pentecostal ritual(s) to which I was expected to conform. Arguably, this ongoing tension between proximity and distance allowed a heightened criticality of the specific discourses, practices and performativities that made up worship-space in Hebron. It also suggests the need not to essentialise the criticality of ‘religious’ or ‘non-religious’ researchers, as if belief somehow produces a fixed and homogenous way of seeing, and instead attend to the multiple, fluid and contradictory tensions and practical negotiations that shape the critical interpretative frames emergent in the field and beyond.

Elsewhere I have raised concerns over retention rates (high rates of abstinence for “graduates” but a significant initial dropout rate given the structured routine and religious content), the presentation of faith as a panacea to addiction (without acknowledging that problems may persist long after conversion), and questioned the ethical basis of evangelism in closed rehab environments where intense, repeated and extremely programmatic approaches are used to shape Christian character (Williams, 2013). To develop this further my aim in this paper is to examine the co-constitutive relations between agency, belief, materiality and embodiment to offer an account of the ways in which people make sense (or not) of spiritual landscapes of worship in Hebron. I begin by exploring the staging of Pentecostal worship as an event-space, focusing on the embodied, liminal and transformative dimensions of worship. Each section presents short vignettes drawn from (auto)ethnographic reflection and resident interviews.

4. Staging, performance and embodiment

Worship as event-space signals the ‘assemblage of heterogeneous materialities and immaterialities: texts, talk, bodies, objects, architectures, atmospheres of mood, smell, touch and sound, rhythms and emotion’ which combine and intersect to generate distinct ‘affective atmospheres of the sacred or the divine’ (Holloway, 2013: 205). These assemblages can be organised (or patterned) in ways that generate particular intensities and consistencies which vary in tone and atmosphere, ranging, for instance, from quiet contemplation to ecstatic expression (ibid). The deliberate design of worship space can differently open out capacities and affective atmospheres of the sacred, while simultaneously, circumscribe such capacities because of expected outcomes and contrived participatory ‘manners’ — routinised behaviours, attitudes and meanings. Pentecostal worship praxis claims a set of participatory ‘manners’ which centre on distinctly somatic ecstatic performances of effusive singing, dancing, healing and speaking in tongues. These practices are embedded in a contingent spatial arrangement with distinct doctrinal and corporeal histories (Brahinsky, 2012), yet seem to have a ‘shape-shifting’ character in travelling across historical, political and denominational boundaries. In contrast to the somewhat stereotypical image of global Pentecostalism and its carefully curated worship spaces involving loud rock music, stage lighting, TV cameras, vast (usually young) crowds enthusiastically singing words displayed on giant screens (see, for example, Connell, 2005); Hebron’s stage was an am more modest affair.

Each morning after breakfast and the evening meal residents made their way into the lounge to sing songs, pray together and listen to a sermon. The space was (re)organised to carry a physical and symbolic resemblance to “traditional” church architectures — and all the associated behaviours and embodied expectations that can accompany this. Residents moved five large sofas to a back-room, laid out several rows of chairs, and selected 5–6 hymns, mostly handwritten on acetates, to be displayed on an overhead projector. On the wall was a small poster which read: “Son, I have a job for you to do. These are the only tools you’ll need.” The words overlaid a hammer and two nails arranged in the shape of a cross. The men, almost all in their 30s, usually sang unaccompanied, creating a lively atmosphere of clapping, open prayer and shouting.

On occasion residents moved the rows of chairs aside to allow free movement to dance, jump, kneel or lie down, thereby highlighting the ‘performatives qualities of space itself’ (McCormack, 2005: 141) where the materiality of a chair, for instance, helps facilitate the performative gestures of the body. The following ethnographic extract describes a worship meeting in Hebron and demonstrates the capacity of ‘sensational forms’ (Meyer, 2006) — objects, music, texts — to configure and mediate sensory experience:

*The service started. Matt, the pastor, walked up to the front and opened in prayer. Everyone fell quiet and bowed their heads in an accustomed fashion. A couple of people, including myself, took off their glasses and rubbed their faces with the palms of their hands.*
As Matt began to pray, Tim — a visiting worship leader, started finger picking the strings of the guitar, an open E-chord, each note with half a second delay, creating an ambient resonance in the room. ‘Shout to the Lord and you will receive a blessing, feel his presence’. Each time Matt spoke with more conviction the music increased intensity. Some residents started shouting out words in affirmation. ‘Yes, Lord’. It was hard not to feel something stirring. As the prayer came to an end, some people remained seated, reflecting on what had been said, praying to God or thinking about something entirely different. Two residents scrunch up their eyes as their lips moved silently. The rest of us stood up as that E-chord grew into the popular song ‘Open the eyes of my heart Lord’. The group began to clap each beat in proportion to the vibrancy of the music, swaying and raising their hands in worship. As we began to the next song I became conscious Tom was standing in front of me, six foot two and tidily dressed, his arms raised high above his head. ‘If it wasn’t for your blood I’d be dead’. The picture of him singing those words stayed with me. Earlier in the week he had shown me scars and several collapsed veins from intravenous drug use.

The power of particular musical structure and compositional devices in Pentecostal worship has been well documented (see Cooper, 2012) so has music’s ability ‘to make us experience our bodies in accordance with its gestures and rhythms’ (McClary, 1991: 23 in Smith, 2000: 633). In Hebron, practices of singing, clapping, prayer, as well as bodily gestures of submission and praise can be understood as performative events (Holloway, 2006) — they do something to the body, manifest a response to something being done, as well as represent something. Embodied practices of worship attune the sensory capacities of the body to perceive and feel things — allowing the subject to sense a presence far more powerful than that which persists in the ordinary sensorium (Blanton, 2013). Highlighting the patterning or orchestration of worship spaces focuses attention on its capacity to differently ‘impress on bodies certain affective registers’ (Holloway, 2013: 205). This can be clearly seen in the manner in which expectancy and hyped up emotion were produced, affirmed and directed:

The visiting speaker used an analogy of a circus elephant that had been tied to a stick since birth. He acted out the struggle of the elephant repeatedly trying to run away only to find that the rope and stick were too strong. The young elephant comes to accept it cannot overpower its chains. Even when it has grown to full strength the elephant thinks the stick will stop it running away. During his sermon he asked questions of the negative words spoken over ‘us’ since birth, the words that have held us down, the words that we start believing of ourselves. Some of us are like that Elephant, the strongest animal in the world, but [we’re] not using that power because we don’t believe we can break free from these chords or [believe] these bonds are even breakable. You get used to it, you come to accept it. [But] In the Bible it says the power of God lives in you - if we surrender to him He will release you from all fear, no longer tied down but free ...

The sermon ended with a challenge: ‘You can either be “pussycat, pussycat ... or Lions!”’. He softly stroked the back of his hand and then lets out a roar, ‘Lions’. The style of the worship that followed was dynamic with residents clenching raised fists, dancing, clapping, and laying on hands as they prayed with each other. It was hard not to get caught up in it all and I kept checking my own performance and others, wondering whether their experience was the same as mine. The atmosphere in the room was one of expectation and excitement, hope and passion, but also one of introspection and intimidation.

This example demonstrates one aspect of micro-political staging bound up in worship spaces, namely, the deliberate exhortation and disciplining of moods, emotions, urges and aesthetic impulses. This encompasses the varied discursive frames used ‘up the front’, which, in this example, work to nudge individuals to position themselves within the parameters of a particular narrative (Elephant/Lions or Pussy Cats); but equally, it also concerns the more subtle embodied feelings of being ‘caught up’ and enlisted into a ‘kinaesthetic resonance with the Pentecostal sensorium’ (Brahinsky, 2012: 231).

Focusing on the orchestrated worship space as it is lived, however, shifts the question to the different ways in which different people are positioned, and position themselves, within the event-space of worship and come to negotiate the symbolic, material and sensual environment. Analysis of lived religion illuminates the complex dynamics of ‘agency’ in Pentecostal worship, which intricately embodies an entanglement of the ‘individual and corporate, cognitive and corporeal, mechanical and spontaneous’ (Brahinsky, 2012: 231). Rather than univocal dupes of a hyped up emotionality, Pentecostal subjects reflect on the intelligibility of embodied sensations, or the practice of worship more generally, which, by very nature, coalesce the affective politics of conformity/individuality, exuberance/reservation, sincerity/pretence, and improvised/scripted behaviour. It follows that the propensity for, and interpretation of, embodied sensation is shaped in part by internalised dispositions, which I refer to as cultivated modes of being and ‘visceral registers of appraisal’ (Connolly, 1999: 27). As Holloway suggests, theological belief can be seen to be ‘imbriated in a series of relays with techniques that work on the affective and visceral to inform a faithful sensibility and disposition’ (2013: 206). Belief forms the symbolic and emotional meaning invested in ritual, as well as constitutes the range of sensations felt through the body, and the manner in which these are registered, enacted, and interpreted. If belief becomes folded into the subject’s experience of the sensory world (Wynn, 2012), then, particular spiritual practices help inculcate certain qualities of mind and body. In this way, the cultivation of a faithful disposition charges the affective atmospheres of worship with new sensual and performative possibilities, intensities of feeling, and the manifestation of divine presences.

Many Hebron residents described personal accounts of experiencing divine presences, understood to be manifest and represented in somatic intensities felt during worship (‘inner warmth’, ‘hair on my arms raised’, ‘broke down in tears’). Effusive bodily sensations of joy, awe, happiness, peace, excitement, reverence, wonder, expectation, passion, desire, and gratefulness were regarded as physical marks of the Holy Spirit at work. Residents expressed feelings of being “overwhelmed” — clutching for words to describe what was felt corporeally. Tom shared his experience of being prayed for by a visiting speaker:

‘A warm glow came over me ... it felt like a sudden rush, and I fell on the floor. I was singing in tongues — it was totally crazy, never done that before ... I felt I was losing myself in God’s presence, a stillness.

Tom, resident 21/05/10

In this example, the embodiment of prayer can be seen as a physical and an imaginative experience, where the act of laying on of hands connects to the deeper narrative of the power of the Holy Spirit, and transfers power across bodies (cf. Foley, 2011). Tom talked of being immersed in ‘God’s presence’ and feeling a stillness that came on him; a moment he and others understood as a
transformation derived from the encounter with worship. He emphasised the sense of personal empowerment and comprehending and narrating the affective intensities felt during worship which sets free…

releasing guilt and affirming the signification that ‘knowing deep down God has forgiven me’ had made in and through the acknowledgement of the relation of self to a Big Other. In this way, theological narratives claimed and performed through the event-space of worship were not simply expressions of sentiment but provided, for some, a performative counter-narrative that brought about positive therapeutic experiences, with regard to, for example, immediate somatic experiences (euphoria, exuberance, stillness, and peace) and by resurrecting subjunctive narratives of worth, acceptance, and hopefulness against dominant constructions of the ‘addict’ identity (Engelbrecht, 2011; see also Cooper, 2012). While there is a clear irony here considering Hebron’s own role in the reproduction of dominant imaginaries of the ‘addict body’, the following examples provide insight into the ways faith sensibilities and practices of worship came to be actively enrolled in the creation of therapeutic experience:

‘[My] faith has shaped me greatly, basically, what I’m doing now I thought I’d never be doing, my faith has given me great relief, confidence, faith has given me excitement and joy… its changed my life basically, turned my life from upside-down to a straight path … Basically, things that I’d never get through, [its] given[n] me faith to get through stuff. I gave up on school. I gave up on hope, and to know that I have that faith now to get through the smallest thing to the biggest, it’s amazing. Anything that comes against you, you will get through it, if you give it to God one hundred percent. Definitely … We work by faith everyday – we believe in things that we can’t do.’

Gareth, resident, 20/05/10

‘I was running away from guilt, shame – the old me had done some pretty nasty stuff – but now I’m free – I am no longer like that, don’t have to let the memory of that define who I am – cos that’s just the Devil at work trying to stop you, and tie me down’

Liam, leader 20/05/10

In these narratives, Gareth and Liam attribute the marked transformation in their character as the power of God at work in them, which was then expressed in the form of thankfulness and charisma in practices of worship. Gareth describes how his faith revolved his whole way of being in the world, not simply in bringing a sense of ‘hopefulness’, ‘confidence’, ‘joy’ and ‘excitement’ but by strengthening his character to believe he can do things that he cannot do. Similarly, Matt’s account below highlights the signification he places in his belief that ‘God’s power’ broke through the power of addiction:

‘Where do we go from there, life is simply incomparably than what it was before … in the past I had scars on my wrist from cutting my wrists, I wanted to die. Everyday I would wake up in the morning and because it came to a place when even the hostels wouldn’t let me in, so I had to sleep behind the hostels, so every morning when I woke up my eyes would open, I just had this sense come over me, oh why again, why another day, why do I have to do this every day. The same old same old: waking up, withdrawing, going out to get the money - just the cycle of addiction. It was unbreakable, and in my own power it was unbreakable, but through God’s power, through his grace, love and mercy. He did it. What doctors told me I would never do, what psychiatrists told me was not possible, God did it. Now I am completely free from my addiction, He has given me a new life, a new Hope …

Matt, Hebron pastor 20/05/10

The following extract tells the story immediate after his conversion:

For Ben, the space of worship instigated a change in his relationship with Liam, one of the leaders. He explained he had been struggling with Liam’s ‘blunt encouragement’ since returning to Hebron for a ‘second chance’ after relapsing a few years back. This example suggests worship space can open up modes of reflexive engagement and reaffirms how affective atmospheres of worship are intimately bound up with but not entirely reducible to complex relationships of power between different members. Frequently, residents emphasised the importance of communal aspects of worship which created a sense of belonging and camaraderie, alongside personal spiritual growth (Lindenbaum, 2012). The event-space of worship, the combination of music, rhythm, movement and bodily comportment, also had a distinct capacity to generate intensities of feeling that fracture and fold normal senses of time-space (Anderson, 2004). This is best illustrated in residents’ accounts of trance like states of ‘feeling lost in worship’ as well as instances of momentary apparitions or visions:

‘Nothing happened today but last week, I got a vision of a lot of people I hurt, their faces running before me during the time of worship. Then I felt God saying it’s over, and those pictures of people — their faces changed, as if they were accepting me … In my life I have carried a lot of guilt, I know now I no longer have to live with that. Knowing deep down God has forgiven me. The Bible says ‘if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed’ — that gave me hope, because I was always labelled, by myself and by others, as an alcoholic …

Rich, resident 26/05/10

Here the materiality of the worship space becomes an emotionally charged place of association, disrupting linear senses of temporality by invoking felt presences and images of drug histories. Rich highlights the role theological narratives (‘what the Son sets free …’) play in shaping how some residents come to comprehend and narrate the affective intensities felt during worship. He emphasised the sense of personal empowerment and transformation derived from the encounter — stressing the significance that ‘knowing deep down God has forgiven me’ had made in releasing guilt and affirming a new (religious) identity.

5. Belief, worship and the therapeutic

The nexus of theological text, performance and embodiment in worship-space, for Rich and others, constituted a distinct therapeutic practice that informed and reaffirmed faithful sensibilities and dispositions. For some residents, practices of worship opened out a liminal space where the identity of the self was renegotiated in and through the acknowledgement of the relation of self to a Big
Immediately I would, you know, go out in the mornings, everything was fresh, my belief and my faith was new. I would go outside the house, in the garden, get up earlier than everyone else and I would sit there and look out across the field and stuff. I would hear the birds for the first times in years. I would recognise flowers, and everything was fresh and new. And I just had a thought in my mind, how could I be so blind for so long — like how can this not be created.

Matt, Hebron pastor 20/05/10

Matt’s account illustrates the possibility for religious modes of subjectification to inform an embodiment of an alternative psychogeography, way of seeing and experiencing the affective world — in his words: ‘hear the birds for the first times in years … everything was fresh and new’. It points to the symbolic and emotional space of the Hebron environment itself being recharged with different meaning, and subsequently, the ability of belief to reconnect one’s faithful sensibilities and capacities to be affected by an otherworldly, nonmaterial spirit in practices of worship and prayer. For some residents worship-space in Hebron constituted a site of emotional, spiritual and therapeutic significance.

Not all residents shared these experiences of worship in Hebron, and by no means did worship-space necessarily bring about ‘positive’ therapeutic experience. Rather, participation in worship produced a complex and variegated set of responses from residents: some emphasising the therapeutic qualities of worship; whilst others drawing attention to the controlling character of punishment for individuals to feel worship practices as a condition of continued residence. The protestant ritual(s) that effects a kind of whipping up of emotion, as well as the requirement that residents had to participate in such worship practices as a condition of continued residence. The propensity for individuals to feel ‘connected’ in worship-space, and the degree to which these experiences brought about therapeutic experiences — or lack thereof — is not simply a matter of religious belief. Rather it is a complex process that encompasses social, emotional and spiritual engagement with human and nonhuman ‘others’ (Conradson, 2007; Perriam, 2015), and therefore it is vital to take into account the ethics of engagement — the ways different residents engaged, performed, narrated, and contested religious space, including the specific backgrounds, emotional needs, desires, beliefs, meanings and experiences — each resident brought to the event-space of worship.

Paul, for example, was in his mid-50s, and used to be a physics teacher in a boy’s grammar school, turning to alcohol to deal with stress of performance indicators. Apparently one of his students who had been predicted an A got a C. Paul took the flak because it lowered the school performance benchmark, dropping out of the top 10 in England. He explained his drinking spiralled out of control and having unsuccessfully tried other treatment programmes, he came to Hebron three months ago — partly because it was free. He had a religious background in the Church of England and jokingly described himself as nominally Christian, or agnostic, depending on the day. Paul regarded the mandatory participation in worship meetings as a ‘reluctant necessity’ staying in a Christian rehabilitation centre, but appreciated the space for reflection when ‘we go elsewhere for church’ or ‘when there is an outside speaker’. In confidence he shared that he often felt ostracised from the charismatic and Pentecostal style ritual(s) that effect a kind of whipping up emotion in worship meetings, and expressed concern over religious ethos of the community itself. On one occasion, Paul described the morning worship sessions as ‘untuneful, akin to a scene from ‘One flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest’ … the only thing that we need to do is put on some white gowns’. He continued:

Worship here is, it’s a performance, it’s derogatory … I’ve tried doing it half-hearted but feel hypocritical “why am I doing this”. Is it to get everyone to accept me? But I feel at home with the preaching — when it’s wise and experienced anyway — I always pay attention. But when Liam stands up and says ‘I don’t want to see you standing [there] arms by your side’ getting someone telling me what I should do, then, I feel stubborn … They have a very limited view of success — you have to be saved. Until then they will keep saying keep going, you’re not ready to leave yet, 6 months, 8 months … it’s all out of love and best interests at heart, they’ve seen thousands of people come and go, many die, maybe then they’re right.

Paul, resident, 16/05/10

This account highlights the overt pressure, and programmatic goal, in the community to convert to Christianity, which raises fundamental questions about power, (in)mobility and constrained consent in treatment programmes presenting as ‘free entry and free exit’, especially in cases where individuals might not have alternative options if they leave (Williams, 2013). It also emphasises the over-scripted participatory ‘manners’ which closed down meaningful participation and affective registers (‘I feel stubborn!’). Some people think I am an “atheist” because I don’t join in [worship] in the way they do’. Paul’s experience demonstrates that, for some residents, engagement in a particular set of Pentecostal worship rituals in Hebron was understood as a site of ‘anti-therapeutic’ potential (Dunkley, 2009), engendering feelings of indifference, marginalisation and oppression. Yet pragmatically he ‘sticks with it’, questioning: ‘where would I go? This is my last chance with my family’. His story gives an insight into the entanglements of power that are at work in the attitudes, behaviours and daily decision-making of residents in closed drug treatment settings.

Paul persevered in the programme, explaining one thing that gave him hope was the joyfulness and marked progress fellow residents (Tom, Nikolay, John) have made since joining Hebron around a similar time as him. Younger resident Tom made a ‘commitment to faith’ one month into Hebron after struggling with a ten year heroin addiction and initially came to Hebron after his house had been fire bombed in Glasgow. Similarly, Nikolay, in his 20s and an evangelical Christian, had left Bulgaria to make a fresh start in his recovery from alcoholism and escape ‘unhelpful’ social and familial networks. For many residents, including John (below), Hebron had become a familial environment where they felt valued and able to change:

‘No one is looking at you like you're some kind of freak, the guys here, we've all got the same backgrounds, we're all here to change, when you first come here — yea, it is a shock to the system, but the guys genuinely look out for you, make sure you're alright. I hadn't experienced that anywhere before …’

John, resident, 16/04/10

‘I've got some good friends here, they've become my family, constantly[ly] living in and out of each other's pockets’

Will, resident, 18/05/10

‘Nobody told me that before - that I was loved unconditionally - I had come to accept things as they are. Now I see this as low self-worth, but people had always treated me that way, as if I was dirt … [for the] first time for I can remember, I am sober and I like being this way, I wake up and don't even have that desire for that drink, God has taken that away from me’

Jamie, resident 13/05/10
In understanding the ways residents came to narrate and experience the embodied performance of worship-space, it is important to contextualise these narratives within the complex socio-spatial environment from which they emerge, including experiences of belonging, friendship, and acts of kindness, as well as the tangible feelings of joy, hope and gratitude residents conveyed since ‘breaking free from addiction’. In therapeutic communities, however, there is a key concern about the power dynamics of peer-support mentoring and the politics of imitation, particularly for newer residents who might be prepared to conform to the expectations of those around them in order to gain approval and secure relationships in the community. While public expressions of belief should not be discounted as disingenuous, it is important to acknowledge the role faith narratives can play in the curation of worship-space, as well as their role in reinforcing certain power-relations within the community with regard to the construction of faith-identities (‘believer’ vs ‘nonbeliever’) and the spatial ordering of ‘inside’ (safe) and ‘outside’ (risky). These spatial narratives were further overlaid with religious signification, as illustrated in Derek’s public prayer in a worship meeting: ‘Thank you God, for pulling me out of the dark pit that I was in and bringing me into the light … I know if I wasn’t here, I’d be dead. Christ has set us free!’ (Ethnographic notes 4/05/10). Narratives of personal transformation were framed through prevailing spatial demarcations of life ‘outside’ Hebron which was characterised by ‘risk’, ‘death’ and ‘relapse’, whereas ‘inside’ centred around notions of ‘freedom’, ‘joy’, ‘new creation’, ‘new purpose’, and ‘new body’.

For three older residents who had in the past relapsed after leaving Hebron, such narratives of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ took a more complex signification, at different times, ranging from, a quiet criticism of the lack of after-care facilities available for residents who leave, to a fresh commitment to faith and renewed sense of belonging. This paper has explored the emotional and spiritual landscapes of worship-space as an event-space reveals the co-constitutive relationships between agency, belief, materiality and embodiment that work to produce complex entanglements and experiences of immanence. Specifically, this paper has helped foreground the role belief can play in cultivating a faithful sensibility and disposition, opening out the body to perceive and feel new sensorial and performative possibilities and manifestations of ‘absent presences’ ascribed to very ‘real’ nonhuman actants (God, Higher Power, spirits). While the example here is grounded in the milieu of Pentecostal worship in a therapeutic community, the paper has contributed to the existing literature on geographies of religion by illuminating the micro-political staging and intimate power-dynamics involved in spiritual landscapes of worship; the variegated meanings and experiences participation in worship-space can generate; and the importance of examining the different ways in which individuals engage, negotiate, challenge and (re)create religious space, identity and practice (see Olson et al., 2013). While for some individuals, engagement in worship-space was connected to therapeutic possibilities, through tangible experiences of joy, release, peace and stillness and by working to reaffirm existing and generate desired transformations in self-identity and religious belief. For others, who, for various reasons, felt ‘unconnected’ to such practices, the mandatory nature of worship-space could be understood as a site of indifference, isolation or oppression. Feelings of (dis)connection were not solely a product of individual alignment to Pentecostal sensibilities and its participatory manners, as illustrated by the fluid, and often momentary, senses of connection experienced, albeit in different ways, by religious and non-religious participants. Processes of ‘connection’ in worship are negotiable, contingent and need to be understood in relation to wider social, emotional and spiritual factors at work in shaping the way residents engage in these sites, including: the dynamics of peer-support, belonging, physical detachment and structured routine; personal and emotional needs; and culturally specific beliefs regarding individual spirituality and past experiences of various treatment philosophies.

Analysis of the worship-space in Hebron has raised two significant and wider geographical debates that warrant future research. First, geographic study of the relationships between religion, health and ‘marginal’ therapeutic landscapes such as substance abuse treatment settings (DeVerteuil et al., 2007) remains an under-theorised field. There is great scope for geographers to examine the intimate entanglements of the disciplinary, therapeutic and spiritual relations constructed, negotiated and experienced within a variety of different treatment settings, including those which blur the intersection between the ‘religious’ and ‘secular’. Semi-monastic therapeutic communities such as Hebron are just one example within a vast landscape of treatment providers, and analysis here has exemplified the symbiotic relationship that exists between the disciplinary and therapeutic in a particular subset of faith-based treatment providers characterised by a particular exclusivist and evangelical ethos. Prospective residents ultimately must submit to the regimented structure and religious authority to receive its blessings. A much more nuanced, empirically grounded, approach is needed to examine the multifaceted role of religion and spirituality in therapeutic landscapes designated for marginal and vulnerable populations. It is clear from the narratives and experiences of Hebron residents that worship-space became a site of emotional, spiritual and therapeutic significance, but not always positively. New innovative methodologies, including in-depth participatory and (auto)biographical research, are needed to investigate the practices and spatialities of worship in the production of therapeutic sensibilities, and their role in sustaining (or conversely, undermining) the integrity of a sense of self (see Griffith and Griffith, 2002: 109 in Engelbrecht, 2011: 15). Preliminary
observations from Hebron suggest the need to investigate the connections between religion and the emotional, affective and spiritual experiences of chronic alcohol and drug use itself. There is great scope for geographers to theorise the broader spiritual landscapes in rehab environments, including, the embodied experience of the absence of ‘drugs’ in withdrawal (with particular regard to examples of psychosis and hallucination), and the ways in which individuals continue to live with, and negate, the haunting of the past in the present. Equally, what significance do religious practices play in replacing or reconfiguring embodied and social attachment to psychoactive sociality and the varied emotional, spiritual and therapeutic meanings and experiences individuals attach to drink, drunkenness and drug use (Latham and McCormack, 2004; see Jayne et al., 2010 on alcohol-induced euphoria, stillness, connectivity). How, and to what extent, might the distinct sensorial, kinaesthetic and affective set of worship practices in Hebron (unlike most therapy sessions) offer capacities to generate new feelings of connectivity, joy and belonging thought to have been lost or no longer attainable?

Second, with regard to the geographies and spatialities of worship (Mills, 2012), this paper has helped sharpen analysis of the intuitive, sensual and visceral nature of religious experience by highlighting the co-constitutive relations between agency, belief and embodiment that produce different affective capacities and manifestations of divine presences. Critical work is needed to investigate the micro-politics entailed in the staging and performance of spiritual landscapes of worship. Examination of Pentecostal worship-space has provided insight into the messy entanglements of power, materialities, music, discursive tropes, bodies, beliefs, and personalities, and how these intertwine to produce particular affective atmospheres and participatory ‘manners’. This paper has drawn attention to the politics of cultivating visceral modes of appraisal through which individuals interpret bodily sensations through different theological and cultural frameworks (Cooper, 2012). By focusing on the performativity of religious practice as it is ‘lived’ by different residents in Hebron, this paper has presented a characterisation of spiritual landscapes of worship, and of Pentecostal therapeutic communities more broadly, that accentuates the differential ethics of engagement brought to bear in navigating the affective politics of worship.

Acknowledgements
A previous version of this paper was presented in the Absent Presences and Present Absences: Spectral, spiritual, and therapeutic spaces in research session in the 4th International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Emotional Geographies 1st—3rd July 2013 at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Liz Bondi, Sophie Tamas and Jonathan Wyatt for organising this special issue and the conference session from which it originated. I would like to thank the staff and residents who participated in this research, for their helpful guidance and insight and for welcoming me into their community. I wish to thank Paul Cloke, Callum Sutherland, Mark Jayne, Geoff DeVerteuil, as well as Deborah Thien and two anonymous reviewers for their critical comments and suggestions. All oversights, however, remain my own.

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