

Modelling Christian Spirituality as Transversal Urban Space

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Abstract

From the late twentieth to the early twenty first Century, mass urbanisation has challenged humans to assume fully the label *urbis incola*. Despite humanity's urban inculcation, City Spirituality and Urban Theology still seem peripheral theological endeavours. One reason for this may be a lack of rigid theory on how Christian Spirituality might contribute transversally to the broader urbanity of the city. This article wants to contribute to constructing Christian Spirituality as such a transversal space, by modelling it as a system of general complexity, constrained by the membranes of Biblical Spirituality and City Spirituality. Here, Biblical Spirituality nominates the rich memory of Christian tradition, shaping and producing anticipatory qualities, while City Spirituality deals with the reality of the city as assemblage, symbol, and a hoped-for 'city to come'. Christian Spirituality, thus constrained, can act as springboard for further unfolding thought by the religious, the not-so-religious and the atheist urbanite.

Keywords: Christian Spirituality; Biblical Spirituality; City Spirituality; General Complexity; Methodology

Introduction: Baking Christian Spirituality's Adaptability, from Memory...

Christian Spirituality's adaptability to cultural vicissitude remains striking. Such negentropy (cf. Smuts 1926:251) emerges from Christian tradition's rich identity of rusted metaphors, revisited by Christian Spirituality for contemporary reinterpretation and revitalisation. One may model Christian Spirituality's negentropic tendency with general complexity theory. Christian Spirituality, when modelled with general complexity, is characterised as a temporal system of human thought and life, facilitating non-linear connections, and producing emerging properties.

Cilliers (2010:61–62) explains how complex systems use rich identity to cope with unique features in its environment:

The more diversity there is involved in the construction of the identity, the richer it will be. A “rich” identity does not imply that such an identity is open, general, or vague. This is exactly the nature of a lean identity. A rich identity is also richly constrained... Excess diversity in the system allows the system to cope with novel features in the environment without losing its identity—as long as one remembers that identity is now a dynamic concept which is subject to change.

Novel cultural environmental variations nudge Christian Spirituality to seek *au courant* articulations of Christian tradition. Christian Spirituality vernacularises, by drawing on the rich identity of Christian tradition: an ongoing process of symbolising Christianity’s meaning in a particular time-space (cf. Jung 1920:12).

General complexity privileges working descriptions above reductionist definitions (Loubser 2014:4). Cilliers (2010:58–59) clarifies:

Complex behavior is possible only when the behavior of the system is constrained. On the other hand, a fully constrained system has no capacity for complex behavior, either. This claim is not quite the same as saying that complexity exists somewhere on the edge between order and chaos. A wide range of structured systems displays complex behavior. Complexity is not a function of plenitude, but of interchange and relationships.

The present paper proposes Christian Spirituality as a complex system with Biblical Spirituality and City Spirituality as membranes. Other complex portrayals of Christian Spirituality are feasible and certainly encouraged: restraining epistemological devoirs allows for thicker and richer interactions (cf. van Huyssteen 2006:18). The present ambition is constraining Christian Spirituality as a complex system, between Biblical Spirituality and City Spirituality to produce an academic frame for further deliberation (Lombaard 2011:214). Biblical Spirituality, for the present purposes, nominates the rich identity of Christian tradition drawn upon by Christian Spirituality, while City Spirituality marks an emerging situation Christian Spirituality faces.

This process of restraining Christian Spirituality as system of general complexity will take four phases. First, a working description of Christian Spirituality is devised. Once Christian Spirituality’s description is in place, Biblical Spirituality is considered. Next, City Spirituality is styled. Last, the contribution this particular constrained working description of Christian Spirituality offers to current urban discourse, is enucleated.

Christian Spirituality: Bookshop Variety Spirituality or Spectral Rebound?

To devise a working description of Christian Spirituality one must first ask, ‘What is spirituality’? Next, does spirituality have any contemporary concern? Finally, how can spirituality’s origins

constrain Christian Spirituality's description? By asking these three simple questions, one can evince four markers to constrain Christian Spirituality.

A glance through one's local bookshop or digital distributors' Spirituality section, clarifies popular culture's eclectic approach to spirituality. No wonder an academic interest in spirituality may seem screwy (Kourie 2009:151). Such caution among academics is warranted, which is exactly why constraining spirituality is here placed first.

Contemporary spirituality research almost dogmatically quotes Waaijman's (2002:1) spirituality definition:

Spirituality as we define it touches the core of human existence: our relation to the Absolute... In our daily life, as a rule, spirituality is latently present as a quiet force in the background, an inspiration and an orientation.

Although Waaijman's spirituality definition remains a handy starting point, one can challenge its ontological over-determination of the Absolute. Spirituality's current return, however, has de-ontological biases.

Davis' (2009:3) introduction to *The Monstrosity of Christ* describes the rebound of spirituality and theology:

If the theological was marginalized in the age of Western secular modernity, it has now returned with a vengeance. Theology is reconfiguring the very makeup of the humanities in general, with disciplines like philosophy, political science, literature, history, psychoanalysis, and critical theory, in particular, feeling the impact of this return.

One should not, however, read such a theological return to the humanities as ontologically inspired. Rather, Davis refers to a de-ontological return: a resurrection transforming theology from essentialist belief to hermeneutical tool. Such a de-ontological return is, as Caputo (2006:5) puts it, a theology of the event:

An event refers neither to an actual being or entity nor to being itself, but to an impulse or aspiration simmering within both the names of entities and the name of being, something that groans to be born, something that cannot be constricted to either the ontic or ontological order at all... An event is not an ontico-ontological episode on the plane of being but a disturbance within the heart of being, within the names for being, that makes being restless.

Theology *sans* strong ontological *theos*, as Žižek (2009:101) insists, can now also be a proper atheist stance:

What, then, is the proper atheist stance? Not a continuous desperate struggle against theism, of course—but not a simple indifference to belief either. That is to say: what if, in a kind of negation of negation, true atheism were to return to belief (faith?), asserting it

without reference to God—only atheists can truly believe; the only true belief is belief without any support in the authority of some presupposed figure of the ‘big Other.’

Yet, what if the reality is even stranger? What if the return of spirituality not only resurrects theology as hermeneutical tool, but is part of the fibre of what Kourie (2009:152) calls a constructive postmodernism, which ‘...without denying the very real benefits of the scientific and technological advances of modernism, nevertheless is open to the mystical, the spiritual and the aesthetic’. If Kourie’s claim of constructive postmodernism’s *Gestalt* shift holds, then the humanities’ return to theology, as hermeneutical tool, merely mimics a new dialectic relationship between the scientific-technological and the mystical-spiritual-aesthetical (Schreiber 2002:7).

By now, one cannot help noticing Waaijman’s capitalised Absolute. Whatever the reason for spirituality’s contemporary return, it is a humbler endeavour than Modernity’s Neurosis of Producing Strong Ontological Truth Claims. The first constraining marker for Christian Spirituality, then, is a de-ontological commitment to a theology of the event: a hauntology of a very holy ghost (cf. Derrida 1994:10, 63, 202).

The first marker generates a possible second. If the contemporary resurrection of theology and spirituality has a different flavour from the modernist version’s strong ontological truth claims, then one may see spirituality venture beyond religion. Whereas spirituality was previously part of, or propagated by, religious traditions, now spirituality can be with or without religion (Caputo 2006:273–277). Some who ascribe to spirituality, as Žižek has already claimed, might even rightly pass for atheists. Atheism can even be an advantage when practicing spirituality, as Caputo (2006:266) explains:

So by the mad para-logic of the impossible, rightly passing for an atheist is no obstacle, and might even be an advantage, while rightly passing for one of the inside crowd [of the kingdom of God] could spell trouble.

One, also, need not disregard organised religion and its offerings, as Kourie (2009:153) notes:

Nevertheless, although the established religious traditions do not exert a strong appeal for a large number of people, religion and spirituality can be partners, and not necessarily rivals; spirituality can be a source of renewal for religion and the latter can prevent spirituality from becoming rudderless and isolated.

A de-ontological description of spirituality leaves the door wide open for a religious, atheist, or not-so-religious person to partake in the meaning-forming potentialities spirituality offers. Such openness leads to the second marker constraining Christian Spirituality, namely: Christian Spirituality must engage, in some way, with contemporary spirituality with or without religion.

Before continuing, a pause is required to consider the not-so-religious category. The not-so-religious category refers to those who neither constructively believe nor disbelieve. Such a position, however, leaves the not-so-religious open to superstitions. Superstitions remain a risk as one social associative milieu desists while another is consisting (Clark 2007:70–80); social

associative milieus do not ever strictly exist but consist through central organising principles. Christianity, as a past consistency, by desisting, releases its housed superstitions: its previously meaningful arrangements of superstitions, accommodated and structured through Christian theology.

As an example: Conversing with German colleague Tobias Faix in 2013, he recounted stories from his youth interviews on religious experience in Germany (cf. e.g. Faix 2007). Young people arranged various religious symbols on a surface and were then asked why they chose those particular symbols. One interviewee selected, amongst others, a cross. When asked why he chose the cross, the interviewee gestured the *signum crucis*. He explained that football star Pirlo made this sign before soccer games. The interviewee admitted that he does not know what the *signum crucis* means, but he also gestures it before playing soccer. He expected that this mimicry would allow him to play soccer like Pirlo.

If one understands Christianity as a past consistency accommodating and structuring superstitions, which, when unbound, return in various forms, the question becomes, how was the origin of Christian Spirituality bound? In other words, what can one learn from Christian Spirituality's origins to evince how it consists by structuring and accommodating various spiritualities?

The origin of the word spirituality already holds some clue to Christian Spirituality's glue. Kourie (2009:155) summarises the origin of the word spirituality:

As is well known, the word 'spirituality' comes from the Latin *spiritualitas*, which is related to *spiritus* and *spiritualis* — used to translate *pneuma* and *pneumatikos* in Paul's writings. Paul, in turn relied on the Old Testament role of the spirit (*ruah*) of God.

A few things follow from Kourie's description:

- Spirituality is embedded in a Judeo-Christian history;
- Spirituality's early development was deeply biblical;
- Spirituality has a communal texture.

The word spirituality is embedded in Judeo-Christian history. Yet, this does not preclude one from using spirituality to nominate other religious, social, psychological or meaningful experiences. One should, however, be aware that spirituality comes with a history, not completely divorceable from its origins in a particular text, the Bible, and a particular faith community.

Stretching back through Latin translators, Paul's writings, and into the Hebrew Bible, spirituality emerges from a Judeo-Christian textual tradition. Christian Spirituality, according to Schneiders (2002:134) is indivertibly biblical:

...Christian spirituality is a self-transcending faith in which union with God in Jesus Christ through the Spirit expresses itself in service of the neighbor and participation in the

realization of the reign of God in this world. Christian spirituality, thus understood, is necessarily biblical and it is adequate only to the degree that it is rooted in and informed by the Word of God.

To have a hope of being called Christian, a spirituality must be rooted in, and informed by the Word of God (Schneiders 2002:135). Here is found the third marker of a working description of Christian Spirituality: Christian Spirituality cannot help but be rooted in and informed by the Word of God.

The third marker enjoys a curtailed exploration of how biblical authors wrote: Paul serves as a single example. Paul does not write into, or in, a vacuum. He writes with a religious community in mind, and he writes in community (Meeks 1983:7, 8). Johnson (2010:271), after careful consideration of the socio-historical and literary data from what is traditionally called Paul's letters, concludes:

Paul's "schools" was operative in the production of his letters even during his lifetime. Although Paul authorized each letter that bore his name, it is highly probable that many hands and minds contributed to their final composition. The social setting for Pauline correspondence is as complex as for his ministry.

Authorised, here, merely means Paul inspires each letter, and in this sense his name bears the weight of authorship or originator.

Paul not only writes synchronically with, and next to, compeers but also draws diachronically on a compounded oral, written, and revised Hebrew Bible. Contemporary readers may construe biblical texts as flat, fully formed, and privatised (which is a naïve way of reading even modern texts), but each biblical passage passes through, and compresses, multiple oral, written, and redacted sources.

This means that even the root of Christian Spirituality grows in a public greenhouse. Mainstream proponents of Christianity have cherished such tension between private and public spirituality (Sheldrake 2003:19, 21–23). Here, then, is the final mark to constrain the present working description of Christian Spirituality: Christian Spirituality takes shape in the tension between life's public and private spheres. An overemphasis on either leads to a reduction.

The four promised markers constraining Christian Spirituality have now been identified. The first and second markers have been sufficiently described for the current modelling of Christian Spirituality as complex system. However, the third and fourth require further explication: Biblical Spirituality as the rich identity of Christian Spirituality, and City Spirituality as an emerging tension between life's private and public spheres facing Christian Spirituality.

Biblical Spirituality: Rooting Minimalist Rich Identity

A statement like 'Biblical Spirituality is the rich identity of Christian Spirituality', seems straightforward, yet is marred by quagmires. To illuminate these quandaries means questioning two of Schneiders' (2002:134) claims from the previous section. What do 'rooted in and informed by...' and 'the Word of God' mean?

When scanning the local bookshop or digital distributors' Spirituality section, not only does popular culture's eclectic approach become apparent, but so does popular Christian spirituality's biblical anaemia (Adam 2004:15). Such a biblical dearth should shock, considering that the Bible is Christian Spirituality's revitalising fountainhead. Without deep biblical engagement, from where does Christian Spirituality draw inspiration or bounds? Biblical Spirituality is devoted to remedying this critical biblical poverty, assisting spirituality in general but also Christian Spirituality, to regrow its ancient roots without reading the Bible fundamentalistically (Adam 2004:19).

'Old' and 'New' Testament study has made significant advances since the *Aufklärung* which allows for a close reading of the biblical texts: a close reading, informed and shaped by the full range of academic tools at one's disposal (McGrath 1994:171–176). The broader field of Christian Spirituality has retarded opening these hermeneutical floodgates. Lombaard (2011:222–223) suggests that both Biblical Studies and Christian Spirituality are partly culpable for the slothful adaptation, or even anaemia, of a post-*Aufklärung* close reading of the Bible: exegetical studies seldom move beyond text-analysis, while Christian Spirituality has underplayed the importance of method.

Into Lombaard's described fissure, steps Biblical Spirituality by analysing biblical texts to evince meanings or implications for believers (or even for atheists). Bridging the gap between Biblical Studies and Christian Spirituality relies on the conviction that the Bible is the normative text for Christian Spirituality. Or in alternative phrasing: the Bible is the Word of God. Although claiming 'the Bible as the Word of God' seems naïvely elementary, even connecting the Word of God with a book is already problematic.

The Word of God is a complicated and nuanced term referring to three broad categories (McGrath 1994:166–167):

1. Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh;
2. The message or proclamation of Jesus Christ;
3. In a general sense, the whole Bible.

The third category describes the present paper's concern. Even once narrowed to the whole Bible, one still faces questions of canon(isation) not easily ignored, since speaking of a stabilised Christian canon remains problematic to this day (Johnson 2010:595–613). Which biblical canon is meant, can be refined with McGrath's (1994:160) sneaky, yet useful, hermeneutical loop: 'The canon of Scripture may be regarded as emerging organically from a community of faith already committed to using and respecting it'. What a local faith community holds as canon, then, is where the endeavour of Biblical Spirituality starts. No held canon, however, is read in its entirety. Faith communities find a canon within a canon to support and

strengthen their particular *Weltanschauung*. Yet, in the lesser read, or minor, narratives are often resources and counter-readings ready to challenge, provoke, and poke communities' docile dogmatic assumptions. Such minor narratives seldom let sleeping dogmas lie: a reason Sheldrake (2010:29) sees excavating minor narratives as a mark of Christian Spirituality's renewing power. Still, questions loom, such as: Why the capitalised return of 'the Word of God'? How should one read the Bible? Now, one inches to Biblical Spirituality's theoretical core.

The capitalised 'Word of God' deserves particular scrutiny, since the previous section seemed to disavow such strong truth claims. Here, howbeit, the capitalisation only holds that a particular faith community subscribes to a canon's truth claims, and even here, each faith community holds a canon within a canon, as explained. The Word of God is not an ontological truth claim, but the truth of a call (Caputo 2006:13), a sacrament, or in Schneiders' (2005:5) words:

...[T]he Bible, becomes Scripture when it functions sacramentally in a religious community, i.e., when it mediates the encounter between the believers, personally and as a community, and the Transcendent, however the latter is understood.

Again, protesting capitalised Transcendence is in order, opening the possibility for the religious, not-so-religious, and atheist to engage a biblical text sacramentally and hence live biblical spirituality.

How would one imagine such a diverse group can, or would want to, parley in the Bible's soft sacramental power? Demonstrating this surprising claim means turning to the reading and interpreting act: itself always already embedding the soft sacramental power of the Bible (Lombaard 2011:211). Again warnings must be heeded, lest the reader(s) end up bending emergent complexity towards complicatedness (liberalism), or even worse, mere simplicity (fundamentalism) (Schneiders 2005:6; Lombaard 2012:171–173).

Schneiders (2002:133–142; 2005:1–22) provides an illuminating answer by arguing for two nuances of Biblical Spirituality. First, Biblical Spirituality holds the Bible as conduit exposing the reader(s) to multiple spiritualities (Schneiders 2002:134). Furthermore, while reading these curated biblical spiritualities closely, the person(s) reading become(s) biblical in character (Schneiders 2005:1–22; Lacocque 2009:29–41). There seems little doubt about Schneiders' first claim for a myriad of spiritualities curated in the Bible. Each biblical book has its own eclectic formation which, makes it hard to imagine these books as monoliths from the outset (Childs 1979:27–106). By drawing on interpretative tools from Christianity's rich identity, one can experience responsible contact with these multimodal curated spiritualities, while being ever mindful of the inevitable distance between the reader(s) and the curator(s) (Lombaard 2012:178). What is meant here by contact is explained by Polster (1973:99–101):

Contact is not just togetherness or joining. It can only happen between separate beings, always requiring independence and always risking capture in the union. At the moment of union, one's fullest sense of his person is swept along into a new creation. I am no longer only me, but me and thee make we... Contact is the lifeblood of growth, the means for changing oneself and one's experience of the world. Change is an

inescapable product of contact because appropriating the assimilable or rejecting the unassimilable novelty will inevitably lead to change.

Returning to Schneiders' second claim: in a close reading of biblical spiritualities the reader(s) become(s) biblical in character. One only has to turn to recent philosophical readings of the Bible to see how such a claim reads true (Caputo & Alcoff 2009). Even though a purist may scorn philosophers' eisegesis, if one reads their accounts something soon becomes clear: although none profess faith, they retain a respect for, and are influenced to various degrees by their chosen biblical texts. It seems, then, Schneiders' second claim holds even for those who could rightly pass for atheist.

A close reading of biblical texts thus exposes and relativises, to various degrees, the spirituality of the reader(s). Biblical spiritualities protect the spirituality of the reader(s) against idolatry and irrelevance, similar to how McFague (1983:1–29) models religious metaphors. Idolatry happens when religious metaphors (read spiritualities) become dead and unchangeable formulas, while irrelevance occurs due to the overuse of religious metaphors. Close readers are thus concurrently read and are being read by the biblical text.

Here, one has an interesting overlap between Biblical Spirituality and the twentieth Century minimalistic art movement. Mainstream art theory holds that Minimalism has three general attributes:

1. Framelessness: Asbury (2005:173) explains Gullar's view of Minimalism as one where the frame is the '...mediator between fact and fiction, the fictions space, while also facilitating its communication with the external, real, space'. By removing the frame as mediator, the art observer co-creates the artwork, and concurrently the art views the observer. With Biblical Spirituality, while reading the Bible retains a rigorous interpretative framework, in the interpretative process, the frame is found removed and the reader(s) are left biblical in character.
2. Non-object: Minimalism views artworks as non-objects. Non-objects are not anti-objects (Asbury 2005:170). Rather a non-object is not a less important object but an object less self-important (Reynold 2004:230). In this sense, Biblical Spirituality holds the biblical text as non-object. Although, the close reading and being read by the biblical text remains central, by focussing on this sacramental double-reading, Biblical Spirituality leaves the text less self-important.
3. Rearrangement: The 'art' of the artwork resides, for Minimalism, in its constant rearrangement (Reynolds 2004:235). Such is Schneiders' (2005:16–18) description of the human symbolic discourse for Biblical Spirituality: the reading, misreading and rereading of the biblical text rearranges the symbolic discourses of the reader(s) and the biblical text.

This comparison with Minimalism, underscores Biblical Spirituality as rich identity transforming the complex system of Christian Spirituality. There is, however, a single issue sullyng Schneiders' nuancing of Biblical Spirituality. For reasons unknown, she collapses into a Christocentric hermeneutic (Schneiders 2005:10–12). This is triply odd: first, her whole argument for reading the Bible with exegetic responsibility is undermined; second, the complex

interaction between the close reader and the text flattens into a complicated Christ-search within each text; third, an axiomatic Christocentric reading would make 'Old' Testament scholars cringe (Brueggemann 1997:109).

By sidestepping Schneiders' hermeneutical Christocentric collapse, one keeps the biblical text open for a close reading with or without Christ as central figure; open to the biblical text's complexity seeking new and unexpected meanings (Lombaard 2012:182). With Biblical Spirituality as rich identity rooting and informing Christian Spirituality now having been described, one can consider the fourth marker: Christian Spirituality takes place in the tension between the private and public spheres of life.

City Spirituality: Emergence between the Public and Private Spheres

Although manifold scenes for investigating the tension within Christian Spirituality between the private and public spheres of life spring to mind, a rich articulation is found in the syntax of city as an assemblage. Therefore, this section explores an emergent situation facing Christian spirituality—global urbanisation—as space, symbol, and promise for engaging the tension between the public and private spheres of life.

Contemporary life is so reliant on cities, that the massive urban growth over recent decades is often forgotten (Bishop & Phillips 2013:222). No wonder Sheldrake (2010:159) emphasises '...the future of cities is one of the most critical spiritual as well as economic and social issues of our time'. Cities remain a critical spiritual issue, even though at first sociologists of religion heralded mass urbanisation as the end of religion. They have however since realised that '...cities turn out to be centres of religious innovation...' (Burchardt & Becci 2013:1). What is more, recent archaeological evidence suggests cities may have had a religious origin (Schmidt 2000; Mann 2011).

The broader importance of cities is underscored by sustainable cities being tagged as a sustainable development goal adopted by the United Nations in August 2015. Today, city dwellers outstrip rural denizens, which interweaves humanity's future fate with its ability to assume fully the label *urbis incola*.

City and 'shadow city' dwellers may deem delineating urban urbanity straightforward (cf. DeLanda 2006:34; Bishop & Phillips 2013:226–227). Urbanites are at the same time adroit to the variations of the city's genius loci, as initiates into a city's *poesis* and slowly blinded to its shadow and complexity. The uninitiated, however, see the city as a chaotic system of seeming unrelated, encoded, and complex events.

The complexity of cities necessitates grappling with its emergence and interdependence with its surroundings. DeLanda (2006:39) eloquently illuminates the city's complex synergy with its broader assemblage:

... [N]o city could keep its identity without ongoing exchanges between its political, economic and religious organizations; and no nation-state would survive without constant interaction between its capital city and its other urban centers. In technical terminology this can be expressed by saying that territorializing processes are needed not only historically to produce the identity of assemblages at each spatial scale, but also to maintain it in the process of destabilizing processes of deterritorialization.

DeLanda thus portrays cities as complex organisms networking on multiple levels with its milieu, or voiced otherwise: cities operate in an assemblage – an insight imploring more clarification.

Modest villages form the assemblage substratum of a city. Towns scale complexity by assembling and then again disseminating political, economic, and religious novelty. Analogous interactions also apply from towns to cities and from cities to capital cities. Lefebvre (1996:118–121) claims such to-and-fro movements ultimately dismantle the notion of urban; a vision, Virilio (1991:12–13, 19) claims, is realised through network technologies. An assemblage approach, while agreeing to a degree of urban throughout the assemblage, also recognises the various urban densities, and the contributions of the constitutive units of cities, as well as urban diffusion back into the assemblage.

Vital for this article is that studying cities engages a highly sophisticated form of human dwelling (Gelley 1993; Ward 2000:2; Sheldrake 2010:166). Cities, as assemblers and promulgators of neoteric political, economic, and religious forms, forge both its denizens and its given assemblage. As such, cities are germane when scrutinising the tension between the public and private spheres of life – the fourth marker in the current complex system of Christian Spirituality.

Cities as complex assemblage again impels a restriction to a working description: here accomplished along three fissures. First, by describing the space of City Spirituality as social contract between dweller and dwelling memory; next, by attending to symbol in City Spirituality as the emerging feature of its complex assemblage; last, by weighing the event astir in the name of cities always looming over, enticing, and pulling cities forward like a very holy ghost.

First, one ought to acknowledge that every city retains memory. Memory accords cities concurrent differentiation and identification with its complex assemblage (Cilliers 2010:59). Deprived of memory, apt anomalous notions refined in its complex assemblage of villages and towns would merely engulf a city. The memory of the city assists in discerning and further distilling relevant novel ideas from its complex assemblage environment. All cities, thus, retain minimal uniqueness via memory hysteresis.

The recollection of a city not only articulates an acquired acumen appraising vicissitudes from its complex assemblage, but also cultivates anticipatory qualities. For general complexity, systemic memory is erudition which nourishes non-linear constellations generating intricate anticipatory abilities, as Cilliers (1998:58) explains:

If one characterises memory as the past being carried over into the future, it follows that the future can only be anticipated in terms of the memory of the system. Anticipation is

not, or at least, should not be, simply an extrapolation of the present. It is a complex, non-linear process which tries to find some trajectory, some way of 'vaulting' from that which has already been experienced to that which has to be coped with. The quality of the anticipation is a function of the quality of the memory. A more varied, richer, deeper and better integrated memory will open up more sophisticated anticipatory capabilities.

The bilateralism between the memory of a complex system and anticipatory qualities, allow cities to adapt to revisions in its environment. A city with rich memory, in other words, is more resilient during flux. The question remains: where does the memory of a city reside? Crinson (2005:xii) provides an informative answer to the locus of city memory:

Urban memory can be an anthropomorphism (the city having a memory) but more commonly it indicates the city as a physical landscape and collection of objects and practices that enable recollections of the past and that embody the past through traces of the city's sequential building and rebuilding... [U]rban memory [also] seem to indicate cities as places where lives have been lived and still felt as physically manifest, shaping what is remembered beyond the discourses of architects, developers, preservationists, and planners.

Notice, Crinson voices the memory of dwelling (infrastructure) and dweller equally: two memories intertwined and fixed through a thick social contract mesh (Lefebvre 1996:133–136; Isin 2000:9–11; Ward 2000:4). The intertwined memory of dwelling and dwellers facilitates unforeseen synchronicities (cf. Jung 2010) and simultaneities (Kofman & Lebas 1996:19) for current city dwellers. This dense dwelling-dweller memory linked through a social contract mesh, one may dub the space of City Spirituality.

To depict City Spirituality as encompassing both the stones and people of a city is nothing new. Isidor of Seville already conceived such a link, as Sheldrake (2010:141) notes:

For Isidore, there was no absolute separation between 'the city of stones' (*urbs*) and 'cities of people' (*civitas*). Yet, what makes a city a city are the people not the walls. 'A city [*civitas*] is a number of men joined by a social bond. It takes its name from the citizens [*cives*] who dwell in it. As an *urbs* it is only a walled structure, but inhabitants, not building stones, are referred to as a city.'

Isidore (and Sheldrake) sides with *civitas* as the more 'real' city. Such siding, however, does not clearly articulate contemporary cities, for two hitherto mentioned reasons: the urban bounds have now been scattered throughout the assemblage of a city, and city memory is a shared enterprise between dwellers and dwellings.

Sheldrake (2010: 51) is not dyspathetic to *urbs* storing city memory, as the following description proves:

Cathedrals are repositories for the memory and the aspirations of the community that are constantly renewed and changed across time. Indeed, the moment a building like a

cathedral becomes fixed, rather than continually mobile and changing, it is a museum rather than a living symbol of human communal living.

Cathedrals concretise and concentrate the complex assemblage of a city. They were, and in some places still are, the 'memory palaces' of a city, changing with the memory of the city (Sheldrake 2009:144). As living architectonic memory monuments evolving with the memory of a city, cathedrals were/are *point de capiton* reminding inhabitants and immigrants alike of the *civitas* memory stored in all city *urbs*. Summarily, cathedrals link(ed) the space of City Spirituality with symbol in City Spirituality.

Hatching an evolving description of the space of City Spirituality by tracking the memory of *urbs* and *civitas*, bound by a thick social contract mesh, is quite conceivable. Yet, something invariably egresses such descriptions: the emerging properties of a city. Studying the emerging properties of the complex assemblage of a city falls under the nomination symbol in City Spirituality. What, however, does emergence mean for the complex assemblage of a city?

Heylighen et al. (2007:120) gives a helpful description of emerging properties with several examples:

In present terminology, we would say that a whole has emergent properties, i.e. properties that cannot be reduced to the properties of the parts. For example, kitchen salt (NaCl) is edible, forms crystals and has a salty taste. These properties are completely different from the properties of its chemical components, sodium (Na) which is a violently reactive, soft metal, and chlorine (Cl), which is a poisonous gas. Similarly, a musical piece has the properties of rhythm, melody and harmony, which are absent in the individual notes that constitute the piece. A car has the property of being able to drive. Its individual components, such as motor, steering wheel, tires or frame, lack this property. On the other hand, the car has a weight, which is merely the sum of the weights of its components. Thus, when checking the list of properties of the car you are considering to buy, you may note that 'maximum speed' is an emergent property, while 'weight' is not. In fact, on closer scrutiny practically all of the properties that matter to us in everyday-life, such as beauty, life, status, intelligence..., turn out to be emergent.

Symbol in City Spirituality, as the emerging properties derived from the space of City Spirituality, is consequently bound to impressions, catchphrases and caricatures of a city. Such impressions, catchphrases and caricatures gather the complexity of a city into a gander feigning as its crux. Paris is a pictorial of love, yellow taxicabs conjures up New York, and red double-decker busses recalls London. Such impressions permit the non-denizen to collapse the complex unpredictable assemblage of a city into a tightly spun stabilised whole.

Symbol in City Spirituality both supersedes and subscribes the complex assemblage environment of a city. Ward (2000:4), like Lefebvre (1996:108–109), phrases symbol in City Spirituality as writing:

The city produces and promotes itself through symbols and symbolic action—the building of this bridge, the election of this woman, the labour of this man, the schooling of this child. Urban culture issues from this symbolic production. As such, it is writing par excellence: the public inscription of several million upon its pavement and upon the lives of each other. The city itself is a writing within which all other writings are circumscribed.

The underbelly of symbol in City Spirituality, however, is a forgetfulness of its shadows, only lit by ‘cameras installed in public places, at intersections along main roads...[and] the cathode ray window of a video control room that sometimes makes us [urbanites and guests] into the gifts’ (Virilio 2000:65). Yet, symbol in City Spirituality never divulges these shadows but illuminates the ethereal, the iconic, and the upper echelons. Symbol in City Spirituality both divulges and hides the ideology of a city, its utopian ambitions. Or in Lefebvre’s (1996:151) words:

[W]ho is not a utopian today...? Would not the worst be that utopianism which does not utter its name, covers itself with positivism and on this basis imposes the harshest constraints and the most derisory absence of technicity. Utopia is to be considered experimentally by studying its application and consequence on the ground.

From the complex assembled space of City Spirituality, symbol in City Spirituality promotes a future, but one circumscribed by the current perceived successful, not the sullied substratum. Yet, in these future fabricating ambitions, however lacking these might be, something common stirs in all cities: a call of the event of a ‘city to come’.

The space of City Spirituality and symbol in City Spirituality distinguishes a particular city as a nodal thickening in its complex assemblage. What binds all cities, no matter how diverse their complex assemblages, however, is a call of the event of a ‘city to come’: an ideal city with the uncovered utopia to include symbolically its denizens, along with those who have not yet arrived (Ward 2003:462–473).

Derrida (2004:7, 8) eloquently articulates this event of a ‘city to come’ haunting every city:

If the name and the identity of something in the city still has a meaning, could it, when dealing with the related questions of hospitality and refuge, elevate itself above nation-states or at least free itself from them (*s'affranchir*), in order to become, to coin a phrase in a new and novel way, a free city (*une ville franche*)? Under the exemption itself (*en général*), the statutes of immunity or exemption occasionally had attached to them, as in the case of the right of asylum, certain places (diplomatic or religious) to which one could retreat in order to escape from the threat of injustice.

The ‘city to come’, as refuge for all, even those yet to arrive, means no city can claim finality or flawlessness. ‘To come’, also receives a double meaning: a city is both always in the future and always awaiting its future denizens. Such an open utopia asks more of cities than the mere resilience called for by the United Nations’ sustainable development goals. The ideal city always remains the ‘city to come’: a common link between cities from diverse complex assemblages. It

drives City Spirituality to become more than its space and symbol. The 'city to come' is a future city which never exists, but insists, and allows the current city to consist.

The space of City Spirituality, symbol in City Spirituality, and the 'city to come', are concurrently present in all cities. Ward (2003:466) wonders at cities, trailing Lefebvre's (1996:101) oeuvre, as human art forms keeping the trinity of City Spirituality in tension:

For if cities are understood as the greatest of human artforms, then the building and designing of cities is shot through with transcendental aspirations. The founders and builders of cities imitate a divine office. We should not then be surprised to discover in our cities intimations of the heavenly city. And to my mind—this is what gives cities their buzz, their kudos, their charisma...

The 'city to come' is worth mimicking in the space of City Spirituality and symbol in City Spirituality, but also comes with an important warning: one must choose one's 'city to come' very carefully (Lefebvre 1996:210–212; Kang 2013:180–184). Such care, for Christian Spirituality modelled as a system of general complexity, comes through furrowing through memory, specifically, the memory of biblical spiritualities imagining a 'city to come'.

Revisiting biblical spiritualities enriches City Spirituality by providing language and visions for a 'city to come' (Ward 2003:462–473). Visions of a 'city to come' also influences both the space of City Spirituality and symbol in City Spirituality. This dialectic engages the tension between the public and private spheres of life in one of the most complex forms of dwelling open to humans.

Conclusion: Constrained for Unfolding

Koolhaas (Hustwit 2015), recently, commented in a *Fast Company* article: 'I also believe that our vocabulary is really very, very used up and finished, and there's been very little rethinking of what cities can be'. If anything, rethinking for a future must return to a rich memory, to discern possible resilient novelties. This article aimed to constrain Christian Spirituality with the membranes of Biblical Spirituality and City Spirituality, to create a transversal base into which other studies can unfold a new urban vocabulary.

If one does not return to a rich memory, urban vocabulary remains stale and the city risks becoming Virilio's (2005:77) prophesied 'pseudo-territory...[functioning] like a residue or, rather, like the essential fallout of the transportation revolution'. This transportation revolution includes not only the ethereal technical reticularity made possible by the internet (*civitas*) and the World Wide Web (*urbs*), taking us everywhere and nowhere at the same time, but also mass migrations due to climate change or other tragedies. One could not agree more with an even older Virilio (1991:13) claim: 'From here on, urban architecture has to work with the opening of new "technological space-time"'. Biblical Spirituality and City Spirituality constraining Christian Spirituality might open a transversal crack to reread biblical spiritualities, excavating ancient language for a new technological space-time between dweller (*civitas*) and dwelling (*urbs*).

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