Hans Schilderman (Ed.)

DISCOURSE IN
RITUAL STUDIES

Discourse in Ritual Studies

Empirical Studies in Theology

Editor

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PART THREE

HERMENEUTIC PERSPECTIVES

INTRODUCTION
A DISCOURSE IN RITUAL STUDIES

Hans Schilderman

This book invites you to engage in a discourse in ritual studies, focusing on liturgy.[1] The occasion is the retirement of Prof. Dr Ton Scheer as professor of liturgical studies at the faculty of theology, Radboud University Nijmegen, where he lectured in liturgical studies from 1976 up to the end of 2004.[2] Now that he has been accorded emeritus status, the proper way to honour him for his scholarly contribution over the years is to present him with a volume offering a ritual studies perspective on liturgy. It is not, however, a *liber amicorum*. Though friends of his contributed to the volume, and the offering of this book is in itself a friendly gesture, the choice of authors was not confined to colleagues in liturgical studies. A cross-section of scholars associated with his faculty was invited to address core issues in ritual studies from their own theoretical vantage-points, research traditions and academic disciplines. Most of them are practical and empirical theologians, while two systematic theologians were willing to join in the enterprise.

Why engage in a discourse in ritual studies? One cannot answer the question without first indicating how one understands the term 'ritual studies'. For the purpose of this volume we endorse the common American usage of the term. The ritual studies group of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) describes its activities as "the interdisciplinary exploration of ritual—broadly understood to include rites, ceremonies, religious and secular performances, and other ritual processes—in their many and varied contexts, and from a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives". Similar interdisciplinary definitions can be found in the mission statements of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* and

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[1] Thomas Quartier rendered valuable assistance in the compilation of this volume.

[2] Ton Scheer was a lecturer in systematic theology and liturgy at the Theological College of Tilburg from 1967 to 1976. In 1968 he obtained his doctorate (cum laude) at the San Anselmo Liturgical Institute in Rome with a study of the incarnation of Christ in the liturgy of Greek and Latin speaking churches. In 1976 he was appointed lecturer in liturgics at the faculty of theology in Nijmegen and became a professor in 1980.

the *Ritual studies monograph series*, which publishes "studies with a focus
on the description, interpretation, and explanation of ritual practices
seen from the viewpoints of anthropology, history, religious studies,
philosophy, performance theory or other perspectives that can fruitfully
be brought to bear on the phenomena". These definitions are formu-
lated generically, that is to say with a multidisciplinary focus; they are
exploratory in their theoretical stance, open to a methodologically wide
spectrum of research methods or techniques, and not limited to specific
ritual canons or religious backgrounds. It is in this broad framework
of discourse that we aim to raise issues of liturgy as a public form of
religious worship. Liturgy in this sense is a generic term and represents
an object of study in religious studies, which does not exclude research
into its Christian or—more specifically—Roman Catholic setting.

One of the drawbacks of generic definitions of ritual studies and its
multidisciplinary approach is that they usually give diverse opinions on
its paradigmatic and methodological research requirements. A variety
of approaches can be said to stimulate and enrich the study of ritual,
especially when pursuing complementarities. However, discourse may
also get bogged down between paradigms that differ so widely that it
hampers discussion. Thus from a theological point of view one can
argue that the study of ritual is caught between two poles. One pole is
ecclesiasticism, indicating that ritual studies is a discipline characterised
by church-oriented principles of action. In view of the significance of
ritual for a denomination's self-definition, ecclesiasticism takes confes-
sional problems both as its point of departure and its destination,
focusing on traditional and institutionalised liturgy, which, given its
conventional orientation, is not likely to vary in research of beliefs and
practices, nor to offer new paradigms or innovative theories. The other
pole in the study of ritual is primitivism, indicating that ritual research
mostly refers to exogenous cultural practices or—if indigenous—to
unaccustomed and 'out of the ordinary' rites and ceremonies.[3] Empirical
research here is usually curiosity driven, idiographic, detail-oriented,
cautiously dusting off the artefacts of ritual with help from the eth-
nographic tools of anthropology. Fuelled by inquisitive interest, these
ritual researchers usually do not focus on prevailing mainstream ritual
beliefs and practices in modern societies nor contribute to validated

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[3] These principles seem to fit seamlessly into secular views of religion that envisage
ritual as a dispensable relic, none too relevant to modern times.

theories of these. Instead they look for significant archaic traces to be found, if not on the fringes of everyday life, then hidden in unnoticed particularities of convention.

Though both ecclesiasticism and primitivism stress valuable and indispensable aspects of the study of religious ritual, they do not seem to define the most eligible range for studying the dynamics of religious ritual from a theoretical, generic point of view—that is to say, not unless relevant research questions can be formulated somewhere in between these poles. To give a positive example: one can focus on problems in the adaptation of ritual to modernity. Thus secularising societies display a migration of ritual from church-bound settings to both the private and public domains of modern society, where its religious characteristics reflect a *status quaestionis*. Does religious ritual prevail, be it as grand survivor of the vicissitudes of history and global differentiation? Does it take refuge in the niches of orthodoxy, migrant communities or charismatic groups? Does religious ritual simply adapt to modernity and accommodate itself to new environments or assimilate its new environment into new ritual expressions? Or do modernity and its enlightened ideology indeed celebrate—as 'enlightened' thinkers would have it—the end of the last relic of superstition, namely ritual?

It must be acknowledged that liturgical topics are not among the most frequently addressed issues in ritual studies. The discipline is characterised by a manifestly anthropological approach. Despite a clear and invitational interdisciplinary orientation, it is worth noting that theology and the subdiscipline of liturgical studies hardly feature.[4] There is no apparent reason for the absence of theology. One could speculate that theology's indebtedness to confessional research problems, its highly institutionalised object in established liturgy and its age-old expertise actually impede engagement in an emerging, innovative discipline such as ritual studies. One can argue that ritual studies offers both a broader and a more limited approach compared to liturgical studies. On the one hand ritual studies is broader in the sense that it covers non-religious rites, which—positively argued—increases opportunities for comparative and interdisciplinary research. Negatively, however,

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[4] For instance, the authoritative *Journal of Ritual Studies* mainly publishes contributions on anthropological research. The 18 issues since its first appearance in 1987 contain only three explicit references to liturgy in the titles of articles. See e.g. Theodore W. Jennings, Jr. (1987). Ritual studies and liturgical theology: An invitation to dialogue, pp. 35–56.

in the process of broadening its domain the discipline may lose sight of theological aspects of ritual. On the other hand, the domain of ritual studies is more limited in the sense that it may easily overlook the fact that the community and religious aspects of liturgy require a conceptual framework of their own, which ritual studies simply does not provide. Liturgical study may impoverish, for instance, in respect of its theological vocabulary and the implicit, specific conditions, aims, functions and norms of ritual. Positively argued, however, ritual studies can be said to adopt a comparative approach to religions, especially with regard to these aspects of ritual.

For theologians these pros and cons of a ritual studies perspective on liturgy also present a motive and a challenge to enter into discourse. In this book the choice of authors and the topics of their articles allow liturgical studies momentarily to step out of its disciplinary framework and denominational setting, without having to pursue presupposed anthropological views and interests. To the extent that liturgical studies is conducted as practical theology based on an empirical research tradition, this formula offers a proper focus for the analysis of the specific type of ritual that liturgy as a form of public worship represents. It presents empirical research opportunities for comparing religions; it invites interdisciplinary studies; and it highlights both the descriptive and normative dimensions of liturgy. Thus this volume seeks to pursue the discourse in ritual studies from a theological vantage-point with liturgy as its object. The aim is problem-sensing and problem-setting in ritual studies from a theological point of view, in the course of which readers are warmly invited to disagree.

The discourse on which you, the reader, are about to embark is marked by the authors' shared hermeneutic paradigm for practising theology. This paradigm views reflection on the Christian heritage in terms of a hermeneutic dialectic of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Interpretation is seen as an argumentative interplay of correct doctrine and right action, acknowledging that both represent standards for appropriating the Christian heritage in and for contemporary times.[5] This

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[5] E. Schillebeeckx, E. *Theologisch geloofsverstaan* 1983. Baarn, 14–17. N. Schreurs. *Geloofsverantwoording Van apologetiek naar een hermeneutische theologie met apologetische inslag.* Nijmegen 1982, 144. D. Tracy (1975). *Blessed rage for order. The new pluralism in theology.* New York 1975. D. Tracy. *Plurality and ambiguity. Hermeneutics, religion, hope.* London 1988, 82–114. J. A. van der Ven. *Entwurf einer empirischen Theologie.* Kampen-Weinheim 1990, 47–69.

hermeneutic approach refuses to dichotomise the 'what' and the 'how' of interpretation. Its reflection takes into account the communicative practice of interpretation marked by cultural pluralism, social conflicts and the inherent boundaries of discourse itself, whilst still striving to acknowledge its normative and religious object in its argumentation. The hermeneutic approach can be considered one of the hallmarks of modern theology. Inasmuch as ritual studies falls under practical theology another obvious aspect of the hermeneutic approach needs to be emphasised: the perspective of practice. Ritual is a framework of interpretive actions per se! This framework is studied in its various empirical forms with due regard to its conditions, functions and ends. The authors take this into account, as evidenced by their contributions to this volume. They analyse ritual practice in a paradigm of hermeneutic interpretation and communication, albeit in terms of concepts and perspectives from their respective disciplines.

The focus of the book is narrowed down further by studying the ritual practice of liturgy in a paradigm of action. The choice stems from the discipline of practical theology that concentrates on the notions of action and practice. It indicates a study of 'things' as *pragmata*. Practical theology researches 'things' with a view to 'doing things with things'. Hence rites are studied as religious acts with due regard to their prescribed order (ritual), especially in public worship (liturgy). The action paradigm in this volume is not conceptually rigid. It may invoke a wide variety of theoretical approaches. Action is simply a common denominator that may highlight basic or complex acts (practice); agent- or party-oriented theories; fine-grained or coarse-grained approaches; descriptions in terms of movements or of events; interpretive or analytical conceptualisations; explanations in terms of intentions or of effects. In any of these approaches rites and ritual are studied as practical phenomena. Using an action paradigm in ritual studies also entails issues of practical reasoning. Ritual studies not only explores the truth claims of propositions in ritual; it also examines the implied imperatives with a view to developing its practice. Thus action theory helps us to answer questions about what we should do in ritual. Yet purely instrumental research that merely tells us how to achieve given aims must be rejected. For one thing, it would render the theoretical issue of liturgical quality largely irrelevant. Hence research in ritual studies should include theories of how we determine ritual means *and* ends. Its theories, moreover, can be expected to define these ends from a perspective of plurality, choice and conflict. It should critically

examine standards of established ritual action and apply them with due
regard to religious and moral arguments. This makes a strong case for
studying ritual practice from the angle of the disciplines of ethics and
dogmatic theory as well. To maintain that *theologia est habitus practicus*
is particularly relevant to the ritual study of liturgy, in that it requires
the study of the interplay of technical, moral and religious aspects of
ritual practice.

Among the methods used to study ritual practices are empirical
methods and techniques. Methodologically the design and conduct of
empirical research follows an 'empirical cycle'. This is a conventional
procedure consisting of five phases. Research starts with observing
rites and ritual, and collecting and organising empirical facts about its
practice in such a way that appropriate research aims and questions
are formulated. Then, in the inductive phase, hypotheses are formu-
lated by way of sharp analytical reasoning based on the observed facts.
Next comes the deductive phase, in which the concepts developed in
the inductive phase are formulated in verifiable—hence in principle
refutable—predictions about ritual practices. These predictions are
tested in analyses of new observations of rites and ritual. In the final
phase the outcomes of these analyses are argued against the theoreti-
cal background outlined in the initial research phases. These steps in
the empirical cycle constitute a logical research procedure that displays
analogies with all kinds of elementary reasoning processes.[6] Because of
the wide variety of empirical methods of data collection and analysis
the emphasis can be on any of these steps. Actual research projects
may prioritise observation and induction or deduction and testing.
Research aims vary, as do the disciplines and theories that deal with
ritual phenomena like liturgy. As a result nothing is gained by either—or
debates on the use of quantitative or qualitative procedures. Acquired
knowledge and insights are validated insofar as they appeal to, and
can be criticised by, the academic forum after close scrutiny of the
methodological standards. Practical theology that follows this empiri-
cal cycle can be understood as empirical theology with hermeneutic,
critical rational and intra-disciplinary aims.[7] Empirical research in ritual

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[6] A. D. De Groot. *Methodology. Foundations of inference and research in the behavioral sciences*.
Mouton, The Hague, 1969.

[7] J. A. Van der Ven. *Entwurf einer empirischen Theologie*. Kampen-Weinheim 1990.
J. Schilderman (2001). Blazing the trail of empirical theology. In Ziebertz, H.-G.,
Schweitzer, F., Häring, H. & Browning, D. (eds), The human image of God. (pp.
405–433). Leiden: Brill, 421–427.

studies seeks to reveal disparities between ideal and reality in the public faith practised in liturgy. Thus it helps to interpret these disparities by clarifying the meaning of liturgy for the world we live in.

This volume comprises three parts that invite the reader to take a closer look at the theoretical, empirical and hermeneutic aspects of the action approach to ritual studies. The first part outlines a variety of theories of ritual action. It presents what can be regarded as a sample of theories to examine ritual practices of liturgy in the discipline of practical or empirical theology. The authors analyse the object of ritual studies in terms of their respective theoretical frames of reference. The second part of the book deals with perspectives of empirical theological research into rites and ritual. It offers relevant illustrations of some steps in the empirical research cycle and indicates the relevance of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the study of ritual. Among the contributions are two research reports on the current programme in liturgical studies entitled 'Rites of passage'. The third part comprises hermeneutic reflection on some normative core issues in ritual studies. The practice of ritual is considered from both an ethical and a dogmatic point of view. Let us look more closely at the articles that follow.

The first part of the volume provides a theoretical perspective of ritual as action. Schilderman introduces the problem that ritual studies poses for liturgical scholars: can this discipline serve an academic purpose by providing a basis for insights into religious ritual that do not constitute a legitimation of specific (confessional) forms of ritual? To answer this question, the author offers an analytical sketch based on theory of science to clarify a cardinal problem in liturgical studies: that of defining its scientific domain. He presents a conceptual analysis of liturgical practice as a compound structure of ritual action. The author raises questions about the object, methodology and theoretical apparatus for liturgical research in ritual studies. He approaches these issues from the angle of liturgical quality, which results in a focus on the religious and normative aspects of liturgy. In subsequent steps Schilderman shows how the notions of practice and action can be understood as both theological and analytical vantage-points in ritual studies. Having explained these formal requirements of defining the domain of ritual studies, he indicates the different levels at which this research object can be examined.

In the next article Van der Ven sketches the topic of this volume as a dynamic interplay of religion, morality and ritual, explained from an evolutionary perspective. In the process he presents a seminal text, a valuable contribution to the interdisciplinary discussion of ritual

studies and liturgy that this volume is about. From an evolutionary perspective he argues that religion has gone through a process of cognitive evolution that has had cultural consequences for religion and morality. Morally it has led to a decrease in ethnocentrism reflected in certain interpretations of the creation narrative in Genesis 1, namely the pursuit of social justice as a human reflection of an *imago Dei*. The cognitive development of the human mind parallels a growing cultural foundation for universality at a religious and moral level, reflected in human rights. This entails less moral dependence on local ascription and growing awareness that religious and ethical issues have to be addressed at the generic level of humankind as a whole. Van der Ven is adept at clarifying this subtle interplay of evolutionary perspectives that are usually tackled in different paradigms stemming from the academic study of cognition, culture and ethics. He then applies these insights to a very specific, normative issue, namely the interpretation and design of some elements of the ministry of the word in the Roman Catholic Eucharist: confession, Bible readings and the sermon. With our knowledge of the basic evolutionary developments of modern human consciousness, what are the requirements to address participants in liturgy? To be more specific, what are the conditions for doing justice to the principles of human dignity, (religious) freedom and social equality in liturgy? By approaching confession, Bible readings and the sermon from the angle of liturgical participants' receptive apparatus, the author argues that modern liturgy lacks an emotional appeal to adequately handle negative emotions of guilt and shame; that it selects texts from the canon without proper regard to their capacity to facilitate interpretations that can be understood by the modern mind; and that it often fails to motivate a liturgical audience to rearrange their lives in relation to the moral and religious topics concerned. Overall, then, Van der Ven uses various examples of ritual action to demonstrate that conventional liturgy may block, or at least fail to unblock, a process of meaning giving at the grassroots level of ritual. Thus research at this theoretical and foundational level on the one hand, and empirical investigation of actual liturgical experiences on the other are important for the evolution of liturgical praxis as well.

The next article may be considered a sequel to Van der Ven's. Hermans et al. apply a specific evolutionary theory to an empirical study of religious ritual. The authors first sketch their research problem by describing the theological dynamics of divine and human action. God's action may become transparent in the human action of religious—

sacramental—ritual. Since the human mind must facilitate this, research is needed that explores to what extent ritual actually stimulates sensory impressions and influences emotions, and to what extent certain features of ritual such as frequency and form facilitate this. Hermans et al. conducted a study of the papal meeting during the Toronto World Youth days in 2002 and were able to partly corroborate their hypotheses, while uncovering data that prompt further research. The study, which combines quantitative and qualitative data analysis, illustrates the importance of empirical research for basic questions of semantics and pragmatics in liturgical studies. The authors interpret their data according to a non-naturalistic theory of religious ritual that leaves the religious core of liturgy intact, at the same time contributing to an evolutionary theory of religion in ritual studies.

Finally De Jong presents a ritual action approach from a linguistic perspective. His article centres on a clarification of the frequently (mis-)used notions of 'performance' and 'performatives' in relation to liturgy. On the basis of Searle's theory of speech acts he explains liturgical performance as an attempt to realise collective communicative intentions. Within that framework he presents a taxonomy of the main kinds of 'serious' speech acts in liturgical practices and a speech act approach to indirect speech acts, metaphors and fictional language in liturgy. He then examines the characteristics of 'performatives' as a specific and highly relevant kind of speech act in liturgy. He concludes that these performatives are not assertives or directives, but declarations. In these performatives people declare that they are performing some other speech act, in liturgy mostly expressives. In this way they 'create' and 'guarantee' the institutional fact of communicating their feelings. The declarative nature of performatives is questioned by Habermas and some linguists. De Jong, following Searle, refutes their arguments. Finally he explains how an analysis of liturgical performance, especially liturgical performatives, in terms of speech acts helps to clarify important issues in empirical liturgical research. Its relevance is implied in the empirical knowledge of the performance of speech acts in liturgy and the conceptual insight it offers into considered choices of communication in ritual practices.

The second part of the volume takes an empirical view of ritual as action. The first contribution is by Grimes, a master at observation and inductive reasoning. His own approach to ritual studies focuses on the performing arts. He does empirical research according to the ethnographic tradition while focussing on narrative types of data

collection. In his article Grimes deals with the issue of ritual barriers by analysing ritual screens. By means of a narrative about an improvised theatre workshop that gradually turns into a ritual, Grimes describes the act of sequestering sacred and profane, special and ordinary domains. He seeks to promote conceptualisation by inductively ransacking grassroots meanings of ritual screen phenomena and actions. He does so in various relevant settings by constantly switching from observation to conceptualisation, both questioning the metaphoric language of altar screens and responding to it. Thus a variegated meaning of ritual screens gradually emerges. Screens act to divide and connect, to keep out and to keep in. On closer scrutiny, however, material screens are not necessary to facilitate these functions. A gesture, concept or metaphor may convey the same meanings. On the one hand, then, sequestering is taken as a universal act, while on the other it can be depicted as a religious symbol or ritual performance in its own right, giving it ultimate significance. By developing and applying metaphor to a liturgical object like an altar screen, it appeals to an audience and already performs its meaning while it is being created. According to Grimes, the step from observation to theory demands caution, since every theory is a screening device as well. Theory introduces conceptual dichotomies that push something to the fore by pushing something else into the background. According to Grimes even the inductive research procedure of metaphoric moves remains a risky process.

The next contribution is by Robinson and Schilderman, who report on one of the three rites of passage projects in the Nijmegen liturgical studies research programme. In this project marriage values are conceptually clarified and empirically researched to determine their relevance to views of ritual. They first outline the problem of marriage as a modern institution, defining it on the basis of four normative conceptions. These form the input of the first step in the deductive process: clarifying the concepts and arranging them in a model. The concepts are: the official marriage contract; the offspring born of the marriage in terms of the meaning that children have; values relating to sexual conduct; and the experience of love. Each concept is worked out theoretically and operationalised for empirical research. The authors report on a trial run among bridal couples and describe their differential support for the identified basic marital values. Next they compare support of these values with an important aspect of marriage ritual, namely the inductive and deductive forms of marriage rites. Thus Robinson and Schilderman are able to provisionally validate some of the empirical

scales that they constructed for a broader sample, which includes the people attending marriage rites. The article illustrates the design phases of empirical theological research in ritual studies.

The next contribution is by Quartier and Hermans, who report on yet another project in the rites of passage programme, namely funeral ritual. They offer an example of the next phases in the empirical cycle, those of formulating and testing exploratory hypotheses in ritual studies. Following Ariès and Assmann, Quartier and Hermans understand ritual as the place where communicative memory of a deceased loved one and the cultural memory of ancient myth meet. This connective structure is realised in rites of remembrance and hope arising from the anamnestic and epicletic structure of liturgy. Finitude is studied by identifying a temporal dimension with its model of life, death and afterlife, and then interpreting this model in terms of transcendent or immanent motives. In their empirical research report the authors describe the relationship between attitudes of finitude and of liturgical memory. The distinctions regarding finitude were partly corroborated. Respondents record an immanent interpretation of death, while they doubt immanence of life and afterlife on the one hand and transcendence of finitude on the other. Immanence in finitude proves to be a predictor of a communicative memory in ritual, whereas transcendence correlates more with cultural memory. On the whole finitude features more prominently in an immanent than in a transcendent interpretation. Quartier and Hermans discuss the implications of their empirical results for liturgical form and structure.

The final article in the second part of the volume illustrates the last phase of the empirical cycle: evaluation. In a report on his empirical research into ministry Schilderman deals with ministry as a ritual profession. After a short description of his actual empirical results he considers the reception of several publications of these results. Concerns were expressed by scholars who used the published research as an occasion to address several implicit issues, such as the envisaged professional profile of pastoral ministry, the research characteristics of academic theology, and the spiritual identity of pastors. According to the author, the evaluative problem that underlies this reception is that of legitimation: how does an empirical theology of ministry contribute to the office of ministry? Since the notion of legitimation was a key concept in his research, he applies this evaluative problem to liturgy as a ritual profession. He describes the notion of pragmatic innovation in liturgy in terms of the need to reconstruct its tradition in viable adaptive ways.

Schilderman then turns to the need to connect the hermeneutic aim of liturgy with questions of ritual assimilation and ritual accommodation. This calls for ritual expertise, an *ars celebrandi* that is not yet available in any clear-cut form but that needs to be defined with due regard to the questions of pragmatic innovation and adaptive hermeneutics.

The third part of the volume adopts a hermeneutic angle on the discourse of liturgical action. It starts with an article by ethicist Wils, who analyses the difficulties of interpreting religious ritual in and for modern times. Acknowledging that ritual is the practice of religion, he observes that its character as pre-reflective performance aimed at preserving the validity of myth is highly vulnerable to critical rationality. Modern consciousness reduces ritual to an aesthetic gesture and makes it a butt of irony. Following Flusser and Assmann, the author then asks how actions can still be coordinated in such a way that they attest the social cohesion of a culture. With regard to this binding force, a gradual shift can be observed from action to text; from liturgy to hermeneutics. Cultural memory is not represented merely by repetitious acts (ritual), but requires exegesis of canonical texts. In such exegesis cultural memory is an object of reflection, interpretation, adaptation and debate, hence tends to overlook its primordial motives. The author is inclined to support the view that the era of ritual is over. Efforts to adapt ritual to modern times tend to blur ritual's primordial function of cultural recollection, while a relapse into an alleged ritual past is equally pointless and even dangerous. According to Wils, then, ritual studies should prudently look for adaptations of ritual that fit the circumstances, at the same time studying its interaction with texts and their interpretations.

The second and final article in the last part of the volume is by systematic theologian Essen. He poses a fundamental hermeneutic problem: can the presence of history be ameliorated? In answering the question he starts with the observation that we may feel a moral obligation to the dead, especially those who died in vain or were victims of injustice. The aporetic character of this 'anamnestic solidarity' is transcended in religious ritual, as Essen illustrates by clarifying the real presence of resurrection in the 'mnemo-technique' of the Eucharist. The Christian disposition of hope unites past, present and future in an experiential reality. This applies particularly to sacraments, whose performative character includes references to past and future. Building on Assmann's memory research, Essen uses Betz' distinction of Christ's personal (pneumatic), anamnetic (salvific) and substantial (incarnate)

presence in the sacraments as a structure to clarify the performative character of the Eucharist. According to Essen, Christ's real presence encompasses his active reality and the anamnestic reality of its historical significance, as represented by the pneumatic motives of *epiklesis* and in the eucharistic elements of bread and wine. As such, the Eucharist puts human time, in which identity has to be lived through suffering, into the liturgical perspective of salvific time. Thus time is understood from the perspective of eternity, which puts an end to the arduous struggle for identity.

The theoretical perspectives in part one of this volume afford insight into the diverse approaches that liturgical research in ritual studies may benefit from. The empirical part presents the practice of empirical research and its methodological requirements. The hermeneutic part puts ritual practice in an ethical and dogmatic perspective. The three parts all provide material for a discussion that draws empirical liturgical research into ritual studies. Overall they illustrate both the versatility of interdisciplinary research into liturgy and the actual fruitfulness of an interplay of theological and religious studies approaches, especially when it comes to ritual.

The term 'discourse' in the title *Discourse in ritual studies* can be understood in various ways, from simply a conversation to a treatise on complex subject matter. In this volume discourse is seen as somewhere in between, as an act of understanding that proceeds from premises to consequences. In reading the articles one observes a clear philosophical undertone. While most of the authors are not themselves established scholars of ritual, they rise to the challenge of discussing liturgy from a common, shared ground of understanding. They inquire into the discipline of ritual studies and engage in the discourse from perspectives peculiar to their own research. By the same token readers may enjoy the articles as an interpretive challenge to their own expertise, drawn by what undoubtedly remains one of the core *loci theologici*: liturgy as the public expression of a shared faith. The volume warmly invites its readers to join in this practice of interpretation.

PART ONE

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

LITURGICAL STUDIES
FROM A RITUAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVE

Hans Schilderman

1 INTRODUCTION

As a form of public worship in Christian churches, liturgy has always been an important object of theological study. Liturgy is a community's practice of its faith guided by prescriptions for formal behaviour. In the case of Christian churches it entails institutionalised sediments of ritual behaviour that the faithful are born to, are bound to perform regularly and are expected to pass on to future generations. Thus liturgy is religious practice in an expressed, shared, committed and prescribed form. It is the appropriated practice of religious duties that prevails in a religious community in the form of public observance and exercise of religious behaviour. It reflects what the community envisages as its ultimate identity before God. Thus it instates and maintains a common focus of ultimate respect for all members of that community. Liturgy is one of the main loci that bind theology to the confession that it studies. As the formal, rule-directed behaviour of institutionalised religion, liturgy is closely linked with theology, its reflection and legitimation. Thus the definition of ritual has been spelled out over the centuries in rather precise confessional terms. Theological reflection focuses on ritual in its orthodox—or, for that matter, deviant, heterodox—form. This framework of proper theological understanding and codified ecclesiastic practice may have obscured the more generic characteristics of ritual, which are also observable in phenomena that are not specifically religious. The study of this broader function and setting of ritual may generate relevant liturgical insights that are overlooked from inside the 'golden cage' of the institutionalised definitions that predominate in Christian religion.

This is not to deny that religion is a natural habitat for ritual to flourish and is rightly at the centre of liturgical studies. From a ritual studies perspective, however, the concept of ritual may well be considered an

artefact that reifies the very practice of religion. This is one of the crucial observations that Bell (1997, 253–267) makes at the end of one of her profound studies of ritual. In the course of history notions of ritual have resurfaced in ritual performance time and again, influencing or even inventing the religious rituals practised today. Our conceptualisation of ritual profoundly affects our practice, often in ways that are not observed in the act of reflection. Bell notes that we distinguish routinely between belief and action, thinking that this enables us to transcend our ties to time and place. Actually, however, the study of ritual demonstrates that the two are deeply intertwined. The concept of ritual is a fabric composed of both lay and scholarly attitudes towards religious practices as they influence actual ritual performance. These attitudes reflect different views of the assumed functions and dysfunctions of religious ritual in and for modernity, even to the extent that they may disguise the plainly modern and overtly secular habitat of rituals. Bell emphasises that the emerging notion of ritual as a category *sui generis* makes us aware that ritual varies culturally: the universal claim made in one ritual setting has rivals in others. Hence a definition of religious ritual in confessional nomenclature does not give it self-evident validity, either in lay or scholarly settings.

This is what the academic enterprise of ritual studies invites liturgists to do: to adopt a perspective on ritual per se, as distinct from its cultural, particularistic forms and parochial approaches. For liturgical studies this challenge calls for a *tour de force*. Christian liturgy is not only a practice but also an object of faith, and moreover one that is highly institutionalised and both ecclesiastically and theologically closely supervised. Adopting the perspective proposed does not require meticulous analysis of interdisciplinary links between ritual studies and liturgical studies. Instead the question considered in this article is couched in terms of philosophy of science: what are the proper foundations, assumptions and implications of the academic discipline of liturgical studies that will enable it to meet the challenge presented by ritual studies? What evidence-based claims can be upheld scientifically and how can they be justified socially?

To answer these questions, the article starts with a somewhat philosophical consideration of foundational aspects of liturgical studies. One obvious drawback of such an approach is that it raises a multitude of questions while answering only a few at a satisfactory level of analysis. Another disadvantage is that such a broad perspective fails to take account of the sophisticated and highly specialised research of both ritual and liturgical scholars. The advantage is that it enables us to

create a comprehensive order, for the sake of discourse, among the complexities that characterise a discipline such as liturgical studies. First we outline a major problem in liturgical studies: that of defining its scientific domain (2). To circumvent the problem we examine the discipline from the following angles: its problem range (3), its disciplinary frontiers (4), its proper object (5), and its universe of discourse (6). Finally we briefly summarise our case (7). We do not profess to offer disciplinary or methodological consensus on the issues raised, but merely take some preliminary steps, in the framework of analytical and empirical theology, towards a ritual studies approach to liturgy. It gives us the freedom to blaze a trail without clear-cut destinations.

2   Research Problem

The subject under discussion raises three closely interrelated questions. They cohere in the sense that they challenge clear-cut scientific domain descriptions of liturgical studies. Firstly, is liturgical studies really an academic discipline with its own object and should it be regarded as such? If so, what is that object and what is its discipline? Secondly, can liturgical studies really be adequately researched—is it amenable to conceptual and technical design? If so, what is the appropriate theoretical apparatus and methodology for liturgical research? Lastly, there is the important question of its theological identity: how does liturgical studies relate to its manifest vantage-point, namely Christian religious and church practices?

What object?

What is the object of liturgical studies? There are many answers to this question. Its object could be core pericopes in the New Testament that refer to ritual, such as those relating to the institution of the Eucharist. Without exegesis of these basic sources of religious worship liturgical practices would remain vague and imprecise. But, having said that, one cannot ignore the necessity to examine the reception and interpretation of these basic texts at different times in the history of liturgy. Thus church history from early Christianity to modern times can be regarded as an indispensable object of liturgical studies. In addition the discipline has a theological object in the form of the religious notions expressed in liturgy: God, Jesus and the Spirit. These *personae liturgiae* require systematic theological reflection and hermeneutic interpretation to establish their relevance to present-day Christian liturgy. And, since

their significance for human existence is said to crystallise in the sacra-
ments, these secrets of grace undoubtedly are a key object of liturgical
studies. From yet another perspective the object of liturgical studies
is the faithful, who are focal in worship. This leads to other research
objects. Since liturgy represents the concrete locus of church and faith,
ecclesiological and soteriological issues also qualify as objects of study.
And what about the missiological perspective? It brings to mind the
inculturation of liturgy in differing cultural contexts of churches world-
wide, which has attracted considerable attention in recent decades.

But why look for an object of liturgy only in classical theology?
There are objects to be found in the human and social sciences as
well. According to a semiotic approach, the study of liturgy benefits
from focussing on signs and symbols that facilitate communication in
liturgy, which applies not only to textual interpretation but also to the
study of the abundance of liturgical expressions in religious music,
architecture and art. Anthropology is another discipline which deals
with liturgy as a phenomenon that characterises religious movements
in various cultural settings. The relatively long tradition of conceptu-
alising rituals has given rise to an emerging discipline of ritual studies
applied mainly in anthropological studies of liturgy, to the extent that it
is said to be the religious studies alternative to liturgical studies. There
are many other options when looking for an object of liturgical stud-
ies. A recent example is neurobiological interest in brain functions that
facilitate religious experience as an outcome of genetically preformed
inclinations towards religious behaviour (McCauley & Lawson 2002).
This is just one challenge for both traditional and liberal views of the
object of liturgical studies.[1]

Last but not least, we mention a practical-theological perspective on
the object of liturgical studies: the practice of liturgy. In the past litur-
gics was seen simply as an instructive science, which used the insights
of other theological disciplines more or less technically as theologically
validated norms for proper liturgical performance in worship. It was
applied to pastoral ministers and their relationship with the faithful. In
this paradigm practical theology was regarded as *theologia applicata*, an
adaptive discipline which employed theological insights instrumentally in
the pastoral practice of liturgy. Though traces of this paradigm are still

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[1] Thus these studies offer support for the challenging hypothesis that giving meaning
to ritual is probably beside the point when defining the essence of ritual.

observable, it has been rejected as a foundation for practical theology since the 1960s. Classified as applied theology, liturgical studies would have no claim to a theoretical approach of its own and would be no more than an ancillary science that derives its conceptual framework from other theological disciplines. Liturgy, as the actual gathering of the faithful to celebrate their faith, has theoretical significance of its own. The phenomenon of liturgy proper is the main focus of liturgical studies nowadays. Its object may be defined as the ritualised faith of a community (Kranemann 1998, 989–990). A focus on the interrelated characteristics of rite, faith and community defines liturgy as Christian worship to be studied in its practical setting.

The question of the object of liturgy implicates different disciplinary perspectives with various consequences for the aim of liturgical studies: 'anything goes'. One can regard this as academic fertility, conducive to growth and merit. Or one can evaluate it as a discipline which has lost its way and is now fair quarry for its academic competitors.

What method?

Another problem in the domain of liturgical studies is its method. How should scholars of liturgy conduct their research? Can liturgical research be designed conceptually and technically? These questions relate closely to the preceding one, in that the various disciplines usually have their own preferred methods and even methodologies.

Answers to methodical questions depend greatly on the sources that are tapped in research. Textual, linguistic, historical and behavioural sources all require distinctive methods and techniques to study them and describe and compare the data they generate. The concomitant paradigmatic and theoretical approaches further complicate matters. Phenomenological, speculative, hermeneutic, descriptive, explorative, comparative or explanatory aims of data analysis can be pursued to test theoretically different claims. In theology the debate on aims often centres on a distinction between descriptive and normative research. Should theologians be detached researchers and limit themselves to verifiable facts that they obtain from a study of their sources? Or should they be engaged believers, even committed church members in their research activities? The question is not easy, since descriptive approaches have normative aspects and normative ones have descriptive aspects. The fact is, however, that these diverse aims, claims and norms are readily identifiable in actual liturgical research practices.

There simply is no single umbrella characteristic or exclusive method in the tradition of liturgical studies that can claim to be the accepted approach to research.

On the other hand there is relative academic consensus on the methodological requirements of research based on the Popperian approach prevalent in scientific discourse at most universities. Especially when combined with empirical research methods, it represents a basic perspective in the natural, medical, management and social or behavioural sciences alike. Nonetheless one finds this approach following very different methodological traditions in different academic disciplines. Thus the highly idiographic approach adopted in, for instance, anthropological studies differs greatly from the nomothetic approaches of hardcore sociology with its causal explanations of social reality, or from the experimental quest in psychology to falsify well established notions about our mental apparatus.

Applying a critical, empirically oriented methodology in liturgical research assumes, firstly, that its object is the human practice of worship, including behavioural characteristics, attitudinal dispositions in human experience and contextual entrenchment in cultures and institutions. From a theological perspective one could say that it abandons the speculative approach of looking at liturgy *sub specie aeternitatis* in favour of studying it *sub specie salutaris*: how does liturgy affect our signification of reality? But specifying such a critical empirical methodology does not tell us on what terms the discipline should interact academically with other disciplines. For that interaction to be fruitful several fundamental questions should be answered beforehand. What is the status of evidence-based theory in liturgical studies? How should propositions, concepts and hypotheses in liturgical studies be formulated analytically? Where are its crucial experiments to falsify established theological viewpoints? These questions cannot be answered on the basis of empirical research practice in liturgical studies, since that can hardly be called an established tradition. But without answers to such questions liturgical studies runs the risk of being blackballed and is likely to make a quick exit from the academic stage.

The statement that liturgy is a practice of religious worship that is studied critically and empirically implies a clear methodological stance, formulated in academic terms that fit the discourse of adjacent disciplines. It also requires conceptually and theoretically well argued and methodically guided research. Meeting these requirements calls for both demarcation of the discipline's domain and cooperation with other empirical disciplines in the academic theatre.

What confession?

If one accepts that practical theology can no longer be understood as an applied, more or less ecclesiastic science that collects insights from theological and other disciplines and applies them to pastoral problems and church strategies, it raises questions not only about its research object and method but also about confession. Liturgy studied from a practical-theological perspective focuses on religious worship, that much is clear; but why Christian worship? There are obvious answers to the question. 'Most theological faculties have an ecclesiological foundation and mission.' 'There are so many Christians.' 'We train pastors.' 'That is our time-honoured expertise.' These answers are inadequate, however, because they resort to the academic vice of convention. One could even surmise that these stock answers deter liturgical scholars from accepting academic challenges regarding object and method, and make them underestimate the challenges posed by ritual research in other academic disciplines.

On the other hand, there is no obvious need to reject the practical consequences of Christian conventions. One can argue that they create the necessary disciplinary conditions that direct educational and research aims to specific institutions and cultural practices. In that respect liturgical studies is very similar to other academic disciplines, which are also bound by the constraints and opportunities of their research contexts. It should be noted, however, that conventions do change. Every member of a theological faculty board—at least in Western Europe—is fully aware that the Christian faith, church membership and participation have declined over the past few decades. But this has not led to the demise of ritual expression as a category *sui generis*. On the contrary, ritual varieties are mushrooming. Islam is the number one religion in Europe when it comes to reintroducing religious symbols into the public domain of secularised society. Charismatic churches innovate ritual and are quite successful at canvassing middleclass members who have left the mainline churches. Professional undertakers tailor burial and crematory rites to the particular needs of bereaved families. Secular ritual springs up spontaneously in public gatherings prompted by collective mourning of death or senseless violence. Youth cults emerge that ritualise their cherished icons. A spiritual marketplace has evolved with myriad ritual expressions on offer for occasional or regular choice. Closing our eyes to these realities would be to misjudge the interdependence between confessions and their cultural, ritual and religious environment, especially in times when scenarios are changing.

But this brings us back to the problem of domain: should liturgical studies limit itself to Christian ritual practice of shared belief, or should it include the practices of other monotheistic and Abrahamic religions such as Islamic and Jewish liturgy? Or maybe it should not focus on the confessional level at all but look at the formal dimension and redefine its domain as that of ritual studies? This would have liturgical studies zooming in on purely ritual aspects, which entails broadening its compass to include secular ceremonies as well. It would have the advantage of formulating a new object at a higher analytical level. A probable disadvantage would be its expertise: a new academic domain would have to be conquered in the fields of adjacent disciplines.

Answering questions

The questions regarding object, method and confession are complicated and can only be answered in the actual academic practice of liturgical studies. Nevertheless we attempt to offer a proposal.

In philosophy of science disciplinary issues are usually settled by identifying scientific domains. In demarcating these domains the classical distinction is between the material and formal objects of a discipline. The material object is the actual phenomenon studied by a science, whereas the formal object is its typical approach when studying that phenomenon. In the case of both the material and the formal object, liturgical studies seems to have no self-evident or generally agreed definitions of its domain. As noted already, its material object could be any of a multitude of objects ranging from artefacts (liturgical pericopes, religious hymns, church buildings, prayers), signs (symbols, indexes), codes (orders of the mass, sacramental precepts), actual behaviour (rites), or attitudes (dispositions towards liturgy). As we have indicated, its formal object is claimed by a host of theological and socio-scientific disciplines, which leaves it scattered over a large academic terrain. The challenge is to offer domain definitions of liturgy which, while sufficiently comprehensive to define liturgical studies as an academic discipline in its own right, remain relevant to other disciplines as well.

The distinction between a material and a formal object is clearly artificial if it does not take into account the interaction of the studied phenomena with the perspectives from which they are studied. To provide a more balanced view, we define the domain of liturgical studies in terms of a philosophical identification of four domain elements, which enable scientific disciplines to identify their object. They are: the range of problems (*Problembereich*), interdisciplinary transfer (*Anwendungsbereich*),

the actual object domain (*eigentlicher Gegenstandsbereich*); and the universe of discourse (Weingartner 1971, 1980). In making these distinctions we adopt an approach to liturgical studies that understands its object as practical, its method as empirical and its confessional relevance as comparative. This, then, determines our ritual studies approach to liturgy.

3   PROBLEM RANGE

In defining a problem domain a scientific discipline considers certain theoretical issues and inquiries into them. Even at an abstract level there are any number of problems that constitute a legitimate range for liturgical research. Here we merely discuss one that we consider relevant for practical theology, namely liturgical quality. To this end we examine the religious focus of liturgical quality and the normative perspective in which it is placed in theology.

Religious focus

Liturgy is a primary religious practice. A religion is known by its public representation. Whatever its beliefs, its significance derives from its shared expression and its ritual form. In practice, therefore, celebrated religion has priority over reflected religion. It is the priority of the faithful expressing their faith before theologians analyse it conceptually. If liturgy indicates the time and place to worship God, its quality lies not merely in technical characteristics of ritual practice, but in an ultimate religious value that the practice invokes or represents. Liturgical quality thus refers to a level of excellence that is not confined to the actual ritual practice but extends to religion as a whole. The quality of a religion is usually judged by its ritual expression and only secondarily by its reflected confession.[2] However appealing this idea may be, it is not without complications. Liturgy is not practised without dissent. Religious practices change and tend to cause conflict from time to time. This makes liturgical quality a contested notion, fraught with problems that nevertheless trigger dynamic development in liturgical practice. If one

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[2] This was traditionally expressed in aphorisms like *'Legem credendi lex statuit supplicandi'* (let the rule of worship determine the rule of faith; Pope Celestine I to the bishops of Gaul in 422) and *'lex orandi, lex credendi'* (the rule of prayer is the rule of faith; Prosper of Aquitaine, also 5th century).

ascribes primary religious significance to liturgical quality, it is a valid problem range for empirical research in theology. From an analytical perspective the problems relating to liturgical practices can be classified into intra-religious, interreligious and secular problems.

Intra-religious problems are mainly linked to the development of liturgy over time. As history shows, religious practices are characterised by continuity and change. Maintaining liturgy in a religious community requires 'canonical' codes specifying its ritual form of worship. Each context differs over time and requires religious innovation to keep ritual in line with the enduring religious tradition. If that is the case, what is said about the church should apply to its ritual practice as well: *liturgia semper reformanda*. This maxim can be seen as descriptive of the various spiritual renewal movements over the centuries, of the Reformation, of the liturgical movement as a whole, and of global inculturation practices in church mission over the last few centuries. All these phenomena reflect actual changes in the perception of liturgical practices, while they simultaneously indicate a need for liturgy to be experienced as a proper ritual expression of one and the same Christian faith in a continuing community of believers. To establish what constitutes 'proper ritual expression' requires liturgical codes that define its orthodoxy or, more precisely, a canon of ritual prescriptions for religious practice. The extent to which this canon actually functions as a religious code of ritual action is a matter for research. It should be noted, however, that ritual codes are 'codes in action'; within a religion they serve as a means of religious ascription, socialisation, propagation and legitimation (Van der Ven 1996). The conditions, forms and aims of ritual codes as applied in various contexts are a relevant problem range for empirical research in liturgical studies.

Liturgy faces interreligious problems as well. These relate to the quality of a liturgy in comparison with the corresponding characteristics of other religions. It is one thing to study liturgy as an isolated form of worship that characterises a certain religion. It is quite another thing to study it from the perspective of a religious environment. The extent to which other religions influence a given liturgy is often disregarded. However, the liturgical practices of a monopolistic religion usually differ considerably from those of minority religions or those in a compartmentalised confessional landscape.[3] Emerging and declining

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[3] Like the Netherlands, for instance, in the period of 'pillarisation' (*verzuiling*) during the last one and a half centuries.

religions in particular usually interact. New religious formations may integrate secular rituals that they encounter as viable religious options.[4] Established churches may merge if they become too small, while others introduce new ritual elements that seem successful in turning the tide.[5] To use the terminology of rational choice theory: liturgies depend on both supply and demand factors in a religious market. The measure of quality is not just the canon that validates the worship historically; it also depends on an appraisal of the 'religious benefits' ascribed to liturgical practices as experienced by the faithful. Though many believers may be socially and culturally firmly committed to a specific religious confession, religious ties are weakening in modern times. This increases opportunities for community change, change of faith and change of ritual.[6] From a religious perspective these opportunities are obviously assumed in missionary and conversion activities. One may have good reasons for considering one's own religion the best available, but to prove this quality demands competing successfully on the 'religious market'. In a nutshell: worship should be viable. Empirical research charts this from a 'market' perspective: it studies the strategies used, describes the rituals offered by professionals in the field, determines the social location of liturgical participants, clarifies their motives and explains their ritual and religious mobility. The range of research problems is sufficiently focussed, while maintaining its explanatory scope.

Finally, liturgy faces problems of secularism arising from its situation in a nonreligious environment. Quality refers not only to standards that have become entrenched over time, nor only to a religion's competitive position in a religious market, but also to its capacity to adapt to a nonreligious environment. The issues relating to this aspect of liturgical quality we would like to call ecological problems. They concern the need for liturgy to adapt to its environment, its socio-cultural ecosystem. Ecological adaptation may involve both assimilation and accommodation problems. Assimilation has to do with whether and how liturgy adjusts its secular environment to its ritual and religious standards, whereas accommodation has to do with adjusting ritual and

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[4] Charismatic churches, for instance, seem to integrate carnival-style characteristics associated with pop music festivals.

[5] Like the merger of Lutheran, Reformed and Calvinist Churches in the Netherlands (2003) into one Protestant Church of the Netherlands.

[6] An example from the public domain is the late Queen Juliana of the Netherlands. She was commemorated at her funeral in March 2004 as a 'religious shopper': visiting different churches, participating in different rituals, embracing different spiritual traditions.

religious standards to elements of the secular environment. Adaptation problems become more pertinent in the modernisation process with its classic rationalisation of religious commitment and 'disenchantment' or demythologisation of religious worldviews (Weber 1980; 1992). Analytically, a liturgy may react to modernisation by choosing among various strategies to deal with adaptation problems: reaffirming and re-emphasising a religion's authority (a deductive strategy); identification of a religion with modernity (a reductive strategy); or exposing and reviving religion's ultimate concerns in modernity (an inductive strategy) (Berger 1970, 49–75; 1980). Here the basic problem range highlights another crucial issue in liturgical studies, namely empirical clarification of a religious ritual's interaction with its secular environment, or, phrased as a basic anthropological question: what explains the dynamics of the profane and the sacred?

Thus one way of describing the religious focus of liturgical studies is to clarify problems relating to liturgical quality. The emphasis on quality ensures the inclusion of both the dynamics of continuity and change (diachronic dimension) and the interaction of ritual and context (synchronic dimension). Liturgical research, then, can focus on description, comparison and explanation of intra-religious, interreligious and secular problems in liturgical practices, with due regard to their canonicity, viability and ecology.

Normative perspective

How should one deal with liturgical quality? While quality issues like religious canonicity, viability and ecology indeed define the range of problems in liturgical studies, what is typical of the discipline's analysis of such religious problems? An answer to this question requires a normative perspective. We can describe characteristics, properties and attributes of liturgical practices, but to indicate what is 'good' practice demands a normative perspective. Being a theological discipline, liturgical studies is often referred to as a normative science, to be studied in terms of the interaction of values and actions, ideal and reality. As a practical discipline liturgical studies can clarify this normative interaction in terms of 'practised qualities'.

A normative perspective presupposes an ethical view, or at least the application of ethical criteria. A point we want to make at the outset is that a normative perspective by no means implies a speculative view. On the contrary: ethics can be regarded as a practical discipline in

philosophy, like empirical theology is in theology. In her ethical study of sources of normativeness, Korsgaard distinguishes between two basic criteria to assess a normative perspective: criteria of explanatory and justificatory adequacy (Korsgaard 1996, 10–21). A criterion of explanatory adequacy is important to determine if, why and how normative claims have psychological and social effects. This criterion assesses the actual impact of normativeness when put into practice. It is probably an underrated criterion in modern ethics, in that it requires attention to the empirical aspects of normativeness. A criterion of justificatory adequacy is needed to prove that normative claims are backed by valid arguments. Thus it vouches for the intrinsic necessity to act according to these claims. According to this last criterion justification calls for solid reasoning to prove that liturgy is practised optimally when certain valid qualities are observed. But this is only half the story: one also has to convincingly 'explain' that these qualities are indeed reliable and effective to guide the practice they are believed to enhance.[7]

The fact that a normative perspective demands analysis of the intended practice has far-reaching consequences for the type of problems studied in a theological discipline. Analysing practices from a normative perspective requires a kind of practical hermeneutics, in which one inquires into the *what, where and when, who, how* and *why* of the practices concerned (Schilderman 2004). Hence a normative perspective in interpreting the intra-religious, interreligious and secular problems pertaining to liturgical quality requires answers to a series of interpretive questions. What are the qualities of liturgy and how are they defined? What are the historical and socio-cultural properties of these qualities? Who cherishes these qualities of liturgy? How are the qualities of liturgy experienced and maintained? And finally, why are these qualities justified, and how can their validity and reliability be defined theologically and ethically? Answers to these questions are not self-evident. As noted already, the problems under investigation first have to be described, compared with each other and explained. In the process the quality of liturgy is conceptualised as a normative problem domain to be empirically clarified by charting and interpreting disparities between liturgical ideals and realities. In other words,

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[7] The distinction of explanatory and justificatory adequacy offers an interesting alternative in the debate started by G. E. Moore on the 'naturalistic fallacy' of cognitive naturalists, since it recognises descriptive and prescriptive ethical claims in ethics without losing sight of their interactive relationship.

the term 'liturgical studies' denotes aims of academic problem setting, problem clarification and problem solving in the hermeneutics of liturgical practices.

4   DISCIPLINARY FRONTIER

When describing disciplinary frontiers a discipline's object is viewed from the angle of the interaction with adjacent disciplines, leading to demarcation, integration or innovation. When we outlined the problem of domain definition in the introduction to this article we observed that heavy interdisciplinary traffic between liturgical studies and many other disciplines offers opportunities but also raises problems. What, then, are the interdisciplinary frontiers of liturgical studies? To answer this question we have to make a journey from theology to ritual studies and back.

The problem

Let us start with a simple counter-question: are interdisciplinary studies really problematic? We have freedom of conceptual and theoretical design, we can use whatever research techniques we like, and there is a free academic press. Apart from methodological requirements and criticism from the academic forum, there is no external academic authority that deals with interdisciplinary questions. This rightly encourages free interdisciplinary enterprise. However, in reconstructing the development of new disciplinary domains one can hardly fail to notice that such free enterprise is usually not characterised by a natural inclination towards academic innovation or openness to theoretical change. On the contrary, it causes many disciplines to compartmentalise. They cherish their academic autonomy and are perfectly satisfied grazing in their own paddock. In fact, disciplines that excel at interdisciplinary cooperation usually seem to be subject to external influences: socio-cultural change, government policies, funding opportunities, industrial demands, professional development, and unanticipated discoveries.

Some disciplines take advantage of new developments, others don't. Science develops in a dynamic 'market' environment, in which no discipline can 'patent' its specialised knowledge in advance. It is only when rivalry arises regarding research aims, problems or programmes that the kind of urgency is generated which makes interdisciplinary

cooperation or demarcation a viable option. It should be noted, however, that interdisciplinary cooperation does not obviate the need for disciplinary demarcation. New fields of research are cultivated only temporarily by interacting, adjacent disciplines. The new knowledge domain gets staked out in the broader scientific field; it is protected from public scrutiny; and its academic membership will be subject to new standards of admission and evaluation. Thus interdisciplinary cooperation is clearly not an academic asset that is pursued by all disciplines at all times and in all circumstances.

One has to take into account that empirical study is a fairly new venture in theology. It is controversial both inside and outside theological faculties. A profile of liturgical studies as a theological discipline practised from an empirical perspective has direct consequences for its interdisciplinary status and exchange with other disciplines. This can be explained by defining liturgical studies as a practical and a theological discipline.

Practical discipline

Saying that liturgical studies is a practical discipline entails, firstly, description and understanding of actual liturgical practices. From that formal perspective it is not the church that counts but active participation in the church. The accent is not on faith but on the acts of prayer and devotion in which it is expressed. The object is not ritual as spelled out in missals and ritual directories, but actual ritual performance in which people demonstrate their faith publicly. Insights from other disciplines—theological or behavioural sciences—help liturgical studies to understand these acts that express participants' belonging, believing and ritualising. Hence they are valuable, often indispensable resources for interdisciplinary cooperation.

But there is more to practice than just behaviour. Practice requires practical reasoning that guides action, as opposed to the conceptual guidance offered by theoretical reasoning. Philosophy has several traditions of practical reasoning. One view is that it is meant to achieve certain ends and looks for instrumental action: how (with what subjective ends or means) can we accomplish objective ends? This is a narrow definition, since it is confined to the instrumentality of action but fails to explain the more or less objective status of the ends. It is generally considered that practical reasoning cannot establish the desirability of ends apart from the practical propositions that agents associate with

their action. Especially since Kant one could question whether even such action-based reasoning is capable of explaining the universality of norms. Action-based reasoning also requires norm-based reasoning, which invokes some imperative that in principle can be shared by all actors. If we regard liturgical studies as a practical discipline, we have to look not merely at the behavioural aspects of liturgical practices, but also at the moral ends of the actions involved—the argued liturgical acts themselves, and the norms that motivate them. This is what Korsgaard (see section 3, Normative perspective) calls the justificatory adequacy of normativeness in practical reasoning. Here liturgical studies could well benefit from discussion and cooperation with other practical disciplines in theology (ethics, spirituality) and philosophy (ethics, anthropology).

But how do we deal with explanatory normativeness in the study of liturgical practices? An action theory should also clarify how normativeness works once it is put into practice. This is a complex problem, which we will describe with reference to Weber (1968). Weber contributed two elementary propositions to this debate: one relating to the definition of action, the other to the study of action. Firstly, he defined action as behaviour with subjective meaning. Unless behaviour is intentional and goal-directed we do not speak of action. Nevertheless, according to Weber, action cannot be understood in terms of causal explanations of behaviour. Explaining human behaviour calls for reflection on the moral values that prevail in society and guide people's behaviour. Weber's second proposition at first sight contradicts the first: he maintains that social science methods should be value-free, clearly distinguishing facts from values. The scientific endeavour to judge the truth of hypotheses and theories should be independent of value judgments. One should not confuse academic reconstruction of the values implicit in action with academic evaluation of these values. In the social sciences Weber's methodological principle of value-free research became a major model for studies of behaviour. Less attention was paid, however, to its complex connection with value orientation in the definition of action. Weber himself analysed this connection with methodological thoroughness. From the observation that scholars are themselves socio-culturally influenced when they study the socio-cultural environment, he developed his method of ideal types. Ideal types are logical schemes to obtain conceptual clarity by comparing these schemes with the diverse empirical phenomena with which the scholars are embroiled. This method prevents them from identifying their personal values with those of their academic study object.

Weber's proposal for clarifying the practical nature of a discipline deserves renewed attention. Practical theologians engage in practical reasoning that requires a focus on the means, ends, acts and norms of practices. But because they are always involved in the practices they study, they need to maintain a methodological and analytical distance to stop them from arguing ideologically, or—academically even more suspect—unwittingly arguing from unacknowledged assumptions on which their research is based. Like practical theologians, liturgical scholars should follow a conceptual approach, not because concepts model reality but because they offer a theoretically informed contrast to empirical variations they refer to.

Theological discipline

Adopting a conceptual approach to practical reasoning has obvious consequences for understanding liturgical studies as a theological discipline. The values and norms that guide liturgical practices are studied from a religious perspective. However, according to Weber's methodological approach, this perspective is not necessarily that of Christian theology. On the positive side, the use of analytical theological concepts opens up a comparative option in liturgical studies. From a methodological point of view the natural vantage-point is not Christian, or Roman Catholic, liturgy (nor any other religious ritual in itself), but theoretical models of theological reflection which offer plausible standards of comparison. Though from several perspectives Christian liturgy still presents an obvious universe of discourse, knowledge of its practice is gained through comparison with other worship practices. This has a number of consequences for liturgical studies. We mention three: a disciplinary, an intra-disciplinary and an interdisciplinary consequence.

In a disciplinary perspective liturgical studies examines liturgical practice as a practical and theological discipline. Though there is every pragmatic reason to study liturgical practices within the framework of Christian tradition and in the setting of specific confessions and churches, theoretically the position is different. Only those conceptual frameworks qualify that offer the kind of contrast which allows comparison of specific liturgical practices. At a basic level this framework for liturgical studies can be determined by identifying its sources from a semiotic perspective. Liturgy is ritual action which expresses religious forms of meaning in a public setting. In terms of this succinct definition the sources of liturgical studies are religious signs, especially in

ritual form; religious texts that orient these signs; religious codes that provide the normative framework for the signs and texts; and metaphors that relate signs and texts to everyday reality. Being practitioners of a practical science, liturgical scholars study signs, texts, codes and metaphors in their enacted form. They study religious gestures, such as bowing, kneeling, keeping silent and praying in liturgy. They also study religious texts insofar as they are read, spoken and understood by participants in liturgy. Special attention is paid to religious codes as expressed in ritual orders of services, textual canons and sacramental codifications of ritual. Last but not least, they study prayer, meditation and public addresses (sermons) from the perspective of the metaphors used in religious and ordinary life.

This characterisation of liturgical studies as a theological discipline of enacted religious forms of meaning is not exclusively Christian. Christianity, Islam and Judaism display similarities and dissimilarities in their religious forms of meaning. Any religion marked by public ritual can be a legitimate object of empirical research in liturgical studies. The comparative aspect lies not so much in the specific confession but in a theoretical vantage-point from which to study its sources. This does not imply indifference to specific religions and confessions. Quite the contrary: to really understand the normative perspectives implicit in a specific confession one is committed both by pragmatic reasons and, more importantly, by hermeneutic inclination. To grasp the kind of problems involved in liturgical quality one can—and must—make a validated choice of a specific tradition. It is always the study of a particular liturgy that counts, not because it predetermines one's comprehension of other liturgies, but because it challenges one's theoretical approach.

So much for the disciplinary perspective. Next we consider the intra-disciplinary aspect—the conceptual traffic between liturgical studies and other theological disciplines. When, why and how does liturgical studies incorporate insights of other theological disciplines into its own framework? The answers that come to mind tend to be pragmatic. Depending on the research aims and problems, theological cooperation is often appropriate. Reading religious texts calls for exegetical insight, at least to the extent that they help us understand the process of textual construction and reconstruction. Cooperation with theological ethics is helpful to understand the underlying normative codes, inasmuch as they help us to conceptualise these forms of meaning in liturgical practices. To understand the codified orders of the mass or canonical

texts, church history is indispensable in that it sheds light on the qual-
ity of liturgical practice. Comparing liturgical practices of different
religions requires expertise in phenomenological and religious studies,
to the extent that it facilitates the comparison of liturgical practices
undertaken in liturgical studies. Spirituality is needed to clarify forms
and structures of sermons and prayers, at least inasmuch as it sheds
light on the actual liturgical activities of praying and preaching. One
can safely say that intra-disciplinary transfer of theological insight is
necessary but not sufficient to define liturgical studies. It integrates
the various dimensions of liturgical studies as a theological discipline,
but one with its own interest in the competing theological issues of
adjacent disciplines.

Finally, an interdisciplinary perspective relates liturgical studies to
adjacent non-theological disciplines. There are many relevant candi-
dates for cooperation, many of which probably get selected by chance
or because of academic opportunity. But from the perspective we
have outlined above we can mention two obvious candidates: semiotic
studies and empirically oriented social and behavioural sciences. First
we consider semiotic studies. If one understands liturgical practices as
enacted forms of meaning, then analytical semiotic theories, such as
those of the pragmatic approaches, offer an obvious basis for coopera-
tion. Why? Firstly, because the sources of liturgical studies in terms of
enacted forms of meaning have a semiotic structure. The conceptu-
alisation of these forms, their interrelationship and their interaction in
practices have much to gain from semiotic analyses. In addition semiot-
ics, the science of signification, helps us to deal with issues of success
and failure in religious communication, which is crucial to clarify the
problem of quality in liturgical practices. Finally, semiotics analyses a
wide range of features of liturgy, such as reading of texts, ritualising,
architecture, music and art.

A second candidate for interdisciplinary cooperation is certain
empirical social sciences. At first sight psychology and sociology of
religion, anthropology and ritual studies seem obvious partners for
interdisciplinary cooperation, since they have some—though relatively
recent—*Wahlverwandschaft* with theology. However, this applies only up
to a point. From the argument so far, these disciplines are interesting
inasmuch as they are theoretically and empirically focussed on con-
temporary and modern ritual phenomena. While this applies in some
instances, they usually have a much broader focus. However, there are
other candidates for cooperation. The object of liturgical studies is

practices in the sense of 'performed actions', not just behaviour. Seen thus, interdisciplinary transfer of knowledge and insight from theatre sciences and the performing arts is equally if not more promising. Crucial for any cooperation, however, are liturgical studies' religious focus and normative perspective on its range of problems, and its practical-theological approach to these.

5   Proper Object Domain

Having described liturgical studies as a practical-theological discipline, we should consider what it actually studies from the perspectives outlined above. What is the proper object domain of liturgical studies? A proper object domain describes the scientific identity of a discipline in terms of its owns goals, as distinct from those of other disciplines. We will define the proper object domain in terms of liturgical actions, interactions and enactments.

Liturgical actions

The primary object domain of liturgical studies is liturgical actions. As noted already, the notion of practice assumes that liturgy is a coherent framework of value- or meaning-oriented actions. To analyse the meaningful structure of liturgical actions one can define liturgy in terms of three dimensions of liturgical practice in which meaning or value is expressed: belonging, believing and ritualising. Each of these dimensions is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to define liturgical practice.

What justifies the choice of belonging, believing and ritualising as dimensions of a definition? One basic argument is that the phenomenon of liturgy is found only in religions. The definition of liturgy has to take its religious nature into account. One of the classical authors who devoted his career to the study of ritual aspects of religion is Durkheim. His well-known definition of religion reads: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices, relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those that adhere to them" (Durkheim 1995, 44).[8] Durkheim's definition of religion mentions

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[8] '*Une religion est un système solidaire de croyances et de pratiques relatives à des choses sacrées,*

three concepts: beliefs, practices and community. He relates beliefs and practices to 'sacred things', and regards community as the binding moral structure. Practices like rites, according to his definition, have as their object a belief that discriminates between known and unknown; relative and absolute, reflected in apprehension and awe of 'sacred things'. Rites are the rules of conduct that prescribe human conduct towards these sacred things (Durkheim 1995, 33–39). Rites are beliefs in practice or 'enacted beliefs' (*attitudes rituelles*). Thus beliefs and rites are interconnected. However, community is just as closely linked to beliefs as rites are. In his discussion of totems Durkheim (1995, 208) identifies belief and community: "thus if the totem is the symbol of both the god and the society, is this not because the god and the society are one and the same?" One does not have to support Durkheim's notorious identification of God with society to acknowledge that belief is pre-eminently social. Liturgy can be defined by translating the basic concepts in the definition of religion into practical terms: it requires *acts* of believing, belonging and ritualising. These acts need not be formally defined in a rigid conceptual interdependence reflected in Durkheim's definition. Instead one can see them as analytical dimensions that characterise liturgy as practice.

The dimension of belonging refers to a necessary condition of liturgical practice: its reliance on a social and cultural structure for action with a public function of signification, a network to which people feel they belong. It requires bonds and associations in terms of which beliefs are expressed and attended to and which nourish them. Belonging refers to intimate relationships and social networks that people live in, and to stable, cohesive and collaborative associations, participation in which is marked by the perennial function of trust (Misztal 1996, 95–101). This sense of community may vary from weak to strong; it may consist in loosely or strictly ordered authority structures; it may rest on intimate or anonymous relationships; and it may be embedded in local or in global settings. Varieties of belonging make it a proper object of empirical research in liturgical studies.

The dimension of belief is a sine qua non for liturgical practice. Believing as a liturgical act assumes a distinction between religious and secular domains, which reside in space (things, artefacts, places) and

c'est-à-dire séparées, interdites, croyances et pratiques qui unissent en une même communauté morale, appelée Église, tous ceux qui y adhèrent' (Durkheim 1912, 44).

time (events, a calendar, feasts). These distinctions are made with explicit reference to some religious reality that is the focus of liturgy and to which a community feels attracted or devoted. The act of believing turns liturgy into action that is dedicated to a 'non-common-sense' reality.[9] One may experience acts of believing as weak or strong; as orthodox or liberal; as mainly emotional or predominantly cognitive; as private or publicly shared. These varieties, too, are fruitful and proper objects of empirical research in liturgical studies.

The ritualising dimension refers to the representation of beliefs in action. As such, ritualising entails formal, traditional, disciplined, invariant, rule-governed, sacredly symbolised performative action (Bell 1997, 138–169). The ritualising dimension ties in with the dimensions of belonging and believing in several ways. Ritual acts inculcate beliefs in a community. For instance, they express respect for something of ultimate concern with due regard to moral status in a community (Goffman 1997, 114). By paying respect people express their personal moral stance and adapt it to the social status structure of a community. In ritual acts each agent becomes part of this community, simultaneously becoming an object of ritual care to the community. This is experienced in *communitas*, being a temporary lifting of role and status differences in ritual activity (Turner 1969; 1982). Ritual acts also link beliefs and community with the aim of managing belief. Ritual turns liturgy into an exercise of faith. In ritualising one appropriates beliefs from the symbolic system of a culture. Ritual imposes or (since it is a bodily act) 'embodies' a rule-guided discipline to practise the mental and moral attitudes that characterise or reorganise the self (Asad 1993, 62–79; 125–167; 2003, 73–79). In other words, ritual acts embody liturgy as modelled and signified practice. Again this includes a wide range of expressions: ritual can be flexibly or strictly performed; experienced as accidental or as crucial; focus strongly on specific circumstances or serve as a general precept for conduct. These varieties, once again, are proper objects of empirical research in liturgical studies.

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[9] Here it is preferable to avoid definitions in terms of distinctions like transcendent/immanent that still form part of classic bipolar metaphysical schemes. More helpful is Schutz's term 'finite provinces of meaning', which allows religious reality to be contrasted with a 'paramount reality' of common sense.

Liturgical interaction

The three dimensions of belonging, believing and ritualising are analytical distinctions that characterise liturgical practice. In liturgical studies one may study varieties as separate dimensions, but one can also study their interrelationship and interaction. In fact, the proper object domain of liturgical studies should be this dynamics. There are non-communal and non-religious rites, just as there are non-religious or non-ritual communities, and there are probably non-ritual or non-communal religions. The varieties themselves can be studied in other disciplines as well. However, liturgy as the proper object of liturgical studies presupposes interaction of these dimensions. That is not to say that characteristics of belonging, believing and ritualising are always clearly present in a normative or empirical sense. In fact, assessment of the varieties within each dimension is the main task of liturgical studies as a discipline: to conceptualise, describe, compare and explain these dimensions of belonging, believing and ritualising in their interaction. The interactive dimensions of liturgical practices are reflected in the Venn diagram below, which depicts the interactions by way of overlapping circles:
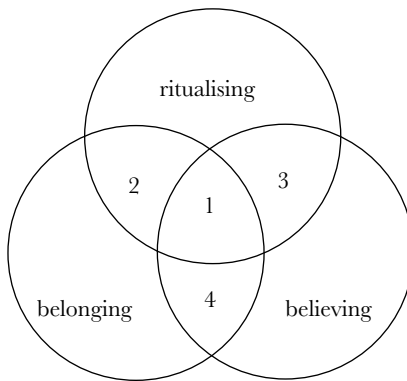
Ideally—that is according to Durkheim's definition—dimensions of belonging, believing and ritualising interact, resulting in an overlap (1). The varying extent of the overlap between the three dimensions indicates various phenomena that are crucial to describe and explain liturgical practices. Liturgical practices *'de-sacralise'* to the extent that the dimension of believing (2) disappears. They appear to become *'dis-embedded'* to the extent that the belonging dimension shrinks (Giddens

1990, 21–29) (3). And, finally, liturgy can be *'de-ritualised'* to the degree that its modelling or 'script' characteristics vanish (4).

By emphasising the interacting dimensions liturgical practices are studied as a dynamic process of continuous exchange with their environment and resultant adaptation to problems that the environment poses. The interactions may lead to integration, but also to de-sacralisation, dis-embedding or de-ritualisation. Questions about the when, why and how of these consequences are appropriate objects for research in liturgical studies.

Liturgical enactments

The notion of interactive dimensions of liturgical practices raises an important question. How can these interactions be adequately described in conceptual terms that allow for empirical research of such concrete liturgical phenomena as celebrating, narrating, making music, dramatic performance, preaching, reading, singing, et cetera? One of the answers to this question is semiotic and simply says that in liturgical practice actions are explicitly presented. In other words, liturgy is a form of *'enacted'* action.

At a basic level, one can describe liturgical practice in semiotic terms as a modelling process with four 'enacted' forms of meaning: signs, texts, codes and metaphors (Danesi & Perron 1999; Sebeok & Danesi 2000). The basic forms of signification are signs as executed, for instance, in liturgical gestures. Texts are composed of signs. Reading liturgical formulas, praying and singing combine linguistic and action signs. Codes are instructions for the use of signs and texts that are needed to achieve a representational objective. Codes are signification rules that guide participants' understanding of signs and texts. In liturgy these codes are usually very clear because of the conventional, established character of ritual. A metaphor is a concept that links an abstract notion with a concrete domain in real life. Metaphors are deeply ingrained in everyday communication and thus facilitate highly complex reasoning processes in a figurative way. In liturgy metaphoric action is a crucial means of relating the religious reality referred to by signs, represented in texts, and facilitated by codes to everyday life in appealing ways. Without metaphors liturgy would be repetitious and lose its significance for the context in which it is practised.[10]

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[10] For the moment we have to leave aside the complex semiotic discussion of these

The relationship of these forms of meaning that are enacted in liturgical practice can be described in two ways: as a signifying order and as a coding process. A signifying order is a structure of interrelated signs, texts, codes and metaphors that signify reality. It summons up the totality of this reality in a culturally preserved form. In the signifying order signs are ordered into texts, while texts are understood by following interpretive codes and are employed in action by way of metaphors. In liturgy the signifying order is usually the religious tradition that is handed down to each new generation by enacting the forms of meaning in which it is preserved. The relationship of these forms of meaning can be more specifically described in practical terms by understanding it as a coding process of signification. The term refers to the fact that our practices are closely linked to models of action. Liturgy in particular offers such a model of action in which signs are given, texts are read, codes are followed and metaphors are employed. In this practice of signification both decoding and encoding processes can be discerned. In the decoding process we understand reality by interpreting the forms of meaning and reconstructing their relationship. Relevant figures of speech in liturgy (metaphors) are understood according to established interpretive rules (codes) selected from religious narratives (texts) that make ritual actions (signs) transparent. In the encoding process we model reality by selecting forms of meaning and ordering them in such a way that they signify reality. Liturgy is practised by choosing those expressions (signs) from religious narratives (texts) that match interpretations of tradition (codes) and ascribing the traditional meaning to certain aspects of reality (metaphors). Decoding and encoding processes follow a signifying order.
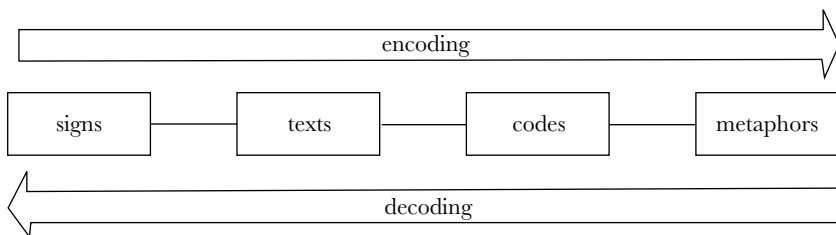
distinctions. Especially with regard to metaphors, for instance, one has to distinguish between comparison, interaction and speech act theories and infer other forms of meaning from these.

Liturgical practice may be described as a process of representing, modelling and signifying the aforementioned dimensions of belonging, believing and ritualising. Their coherence is reflected in forms of meaning that characterise a religious tradition as enacted in and by a liturgical practice. Thus signs, texts, codes and metaphors and their relationship in acts of decoding and encoding are the proper object domain of liturgical studies. The research should aim at empirical description, comparison and explanation.

6   Universe of Discourse

We have now indicated the range of problems in liturgical studies and the opportunities for interdisciplinary transfer. We have also defined the practice of liturgy in terms of belonging, believing and ritualising as the proper object of liturgical study. But at what level of conceptualisation should we study liturgical practice? What types of variables are we looking for? What is our universe of discourse? Answers to these questions have consequences for the sort of theory we work with and the choices we make in interdisciplinary transfer. These answers are provided by specifying a universe of discourse, that is, the range of (more or less quantifiable) variables that represent objects of study. Here we distinguish between a micro, a meso and a macro level of discourse, in which the variables of liturgical studies may differ.

Micro level

At micro level the universe of discourse is that of liturgical action by agents in their interaction in small groups. They engage in liturgical practices with their own perceptions, values and emotions. At this level actions are explained by describing their behaviour and elucidating their subjective meaning. One may even be able to identify the neurobiological structures responsible for certain aspects of ritual action. A cardinal task in micro level liturgical studies, then, is to describe, compare and explain liturgical actions in terms of personal dispositions. Dispositions relate to agents' attitudes, cognitive structures, emotions, values and norms that describe or explain their actual liturgical participation in terms of belonging, believing and ritualising. Let me give an example of the kind of theory one could use at the micro level of liturgical studies. The question why people participate in liturgy is important at a time when many established churches experience declining membership and

participation in their ritual services, while charismatic churches—though on a far smaller scale—are experiencing the reverse. How can we explain the reasons for these phenomena in terms of the intentions of liturgical participants?

In answering this question we regard intention as the basic characteristic to explain action. One may find that when church monopolies crumble and their socio-cultural plausibility weakens, intentions to participate in liturgy become questionable; they lose their self-evidence in everyday life. Hence a theory aimed at clarifying the quality issue requires insight into people's reasons for participating in liturgy when conventional motives are weakening. One approach to conceptualising this research question is the theory of planned behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). According to this established socio-psychological theory a study of intentions to maintain engagement requires insight into people's attitudes and norms, and their assessment of behaviour control. Attitudes stem from an evaluation of one's beliefs (positive or negative) and determining their intensity (weak or strong), thus evoking a disposition to act. What value do I derive from participating in a liturgical practice? Do I find participation dull or exciting? Do I expect it to be a casual activity or one of great significance to my life? The second factor in explaining behaviour is norms. How do I know what other agents expect me to do? Do I believe that they expect me to participate in liturgy, and if so, how? And do I want to comply with that norm? Finally, an explanation of behaviour includes some assessment of behaviour control. Will I actually be able to participate in liturgical services at a given moment and will it both satisfy my inclinations and accord with the norms of my environment?

These are examples of inquiry into micro level liturgical action. To serve as variables the questions can be conceptualised in terms of theological literature. Thus one can conceptualise relevant characteristics of believing by drawing on spiritual literature and operationalise them in terms of attitudes, norms and control.

Meso level

At the meso level the universe of discourse is that of liturgical action in the form of agents' organisational or institutional practices in their interaction within these organisations and institutions. One could ask whether this level really represents an appropriate universe of discourse in liturgical studies. Just as one could dismiss the micro level as mere

applied psychology, so one could reject the meso level as a reduction to sociology. There are various reasons, however, for defending the liturgical relevance of research at this level. One is that notions about religious institutions and ritual facilities usually have a status that is explicitly signified in liturgical practices. The church is referred to as a faith community that transcends and encompasses the individual participant. In Roman Catholicism the church gathered in liturgy can be understood as a sacrament or as the body of Christ. In liturgy the social and religious realities of the church are hermeneutically and semiotically connected by means of religious codes (Van der Ven 1996). Hence the practice of liturgy cannot be described and explained exhaustively at the micro level of liturgical studies but needs to be supplemented at a meso level of discourse.

What type of liturgical research is appropriate to meso level research? To answer this question we must first of all point out that the practical perspective requires us to speak of actions by agents. Institutions or organisations do not act: they organise agents that act within or on behalf of these structures. Empirical research focuses on these agents, but in their capacity as carriers of the social characteristics of organisations and institutions. Hence one would research the social structure in and from which they act, their positions, roles and responsibilities within that structure and their support for its goals, policies and self-images. An example of this type of research is a survey of Dutch Roman Catholic pastors that describes the characteristics of a liturgically important group, namely the officiants (Schilderman 2005). In that study we wanted to determine to what extent specific sacramental attitudes of pastors predict their views of improving the quality of their ministry. To this end we empirically described their views of sacramental activity, spiritual vocation and ordination and found that these views indeed influence attitudes towards professional interests. On the basis of these data we concluded that—to the extent that there are indications of a sacramental crisis in the Dutch Roman Catholic Church—this does not point so much to pastors' dissenting views of sacramental activity but to a lack of liturgical management of the various ritual views that are prevalent in church practices (Schilderman & Felling 2003, 268–273). Empirical research results like these are highly relevant to an *ars celebrandi*, as they highlight a specific and important aspect of what we defined as the problem range of liturgical studies, namely the quality of liturgical practice.

Macro level

Finally, at macro level the universe of discourse in liturgical studies is liturgical action in terms of the cultural and religious practices of agents within and between religions and cultures. The reason to research this level is that there are many liturgies. There are two basic positions in this regard. One is to understand liturgical practices as compartmentalised, and in two ways: both socio-culturally and religiously. Socio-culturally one can understand liturgical practices as private enterprises of religious communities in which they demarcate and even celebrate their boundaries with secular society. Religiously, liturgical practices can be understood as the inward side of a religion; they represent the shrine in which a community interiorises and expresses its religious identity by and for itself. The other basic position emphasises that liturgical practices are 'public services', not only open to the secular society in which they are embedded but also fulfilling a mission in that society. Liturgical practices are aimed not only at accommodating the faithful but also at offering a refuge for the needy. These two basic positions provide a continuum for a discussion of the quality of liturgy.

In addition to ideological views there is a more specific object for macro level research in liturgical studies. This is liturgical adaptation, which we discussed above as interreligious and secular problems of liturgical practices in terms of their viability and ecology. Liturgies are constantly interacting with their religious and cultural environment. Research at this level would focus on adaptation of liturgical practices to other religions and to secular environments. Forms of descriptive and comparative research are needed to gain insight into questions, such as why specific religions differ or correspond and how adaptive mechanisms explain the disparities or similarities. Finding answers to these research questions is never simple. It requires extremely complex international, cross-cultural and longitudinal studies that provide comparable empirical datasets. But they shed light on the reasons why dimensions of believing, belonging and ritualising in liturgical practices have such different profiles in various countries and how different levels of modernisation, variation in socio-cultural composition, and intensity of religious interaction may explain the diversity.[11]

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[11] Such research is indicated, since most measures of secularisation in sociological research are limited to simple questions such as the following: Do you consider yourself

7   Our Case

In retrospect, have we managed to respond to the challenge to provide premises for ritual studies that do not coincide with a legitimation of specific (confessional) forms of ritual? We have given a provisional answer. It is provisional, since our philosophical approach to the issue may—at best—have identified some initial underpinnings of liturgical studies but may not have shed much light on its actual practice. And it is actual research practice that ultimately decides the viability of such underpinnings. Nevertheless, our case offers a perspective for conducting liturgical studies in a way that substantiates the academic enterprise and opens up opportunities for interdisciplinary discourse with disciplines like ritual studies.

Our universe of discourse is both sufficiently broad and circumscribed to arouse academic interest. We differentiated three levels for a universe of discourse in liturgical studies. The micro level of ritually interacting agents explains ritual in terms of mental dispositions and overt behaviour; the meso level concerns the interrelationship of actions in and on behalf of institutions; and the macro level entails action perspectives in different cultural settings of ritual. These are possible levels of discourse for ritual studies of liturgy. This is where differing claims are raised on the basis of various theories, and different sources can be tapped by employing appropriate research methods. It means that the discourse is not based on just one approach. However, the action perspective does provide a focus in the form of processes of encoding and decoding forms of meaning embedded in what we consider to be dimensions of liturgy: interacting acts of believing, belonging and ritualising. Here disciplinary frontiers can be opened up, drawn and maintained by adopting an ideal type approach to ritual, making full use of theological, ethical and philosophical insights without conceptual dependence on their religious and moral prescriptions and legitimations. This justifies a study of the lived practice of ritual in its actual manifestations but does not favour a specific confessional conception of ritual as a standard for its research. At the same time we have made normative claims a focal research question, not only by selecting the quality of

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a member of a church? (belonging); Do you believe in God? (believing); Do you attend church? (ritualising). Further analysis of these dimensions is required, since research shows huge differences in combinations of answers to these questions. Liturgical studies is one way of clarifying this issue via the domain outlined in this article.

liturgy as a problem range, but also by suggesting that research should probe the religious and moral aspects of ritual practice with due regard to its intra-religious, interreligious and secular settings.

   The article thus outlines a perspective from which to meet the challenge facing ritual studies.

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RELIGION, MORALITY AND RITUAL IN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

Johannes A. van der Ven

The title of this article may cause surprise. What, after all, do religion, morality and ritual have to do with evolution? Is there something like an evolution of religion, morality and ritual? The question does not refer to evolution in a general sense, such as the development of religion, morality and ritual in the course of history, but in the specific, post-Darwinian sense, which links the concept of evolution with fitness as a condition for survival and reproduction. My reason for considering its relation to religion, morality and ritual is that the spirit of our time is marked by keen awareness of evolution. It is the 'in' thing, evidenced by innumerable publications, both scientific and popular. One could see it as a mega-theory penetrating every pore of scientific and cultural life, a hallmark of present-day culture (Häring 2000).

To my knowledge Ton Scheer, to whom I dedicate this article on the occasion of his retirement, has never published a work on evolution and rituality—in fact, I don't know if the relationship interests him at all. The golden thread that runs through his scientific thinking over the years is the relation between rituality and contextuality. And it is at this higher level of abstraction that I feel justified in drawing his attention, and that of other readers, to the focus on evolution in our day and age.

Let me cite two examples of Ton Scheer's way of dealing with the contextuality of ritual. His doctoral dissertation on the origin of the feast of the Annunciation on 25 March may be seen as a study of ritual contextuality. The date of the feast, the tension between Judaism and Christianity, Judaising and Hellenising trends, incarnationist and paschal connotations, and christological and Mariological orientations—all these indicate that ritual is determined by context and that it changes in changing contexts (Scheer 1991). That Scheer's interest is not confined to the historical but extends to present-day dimensions of ritual contextuality as well is evident in his later publications. In one of

these he laments the fact that the revitalisation of Catholic liturgy in the Netherlands has been stymied by the church leadership's approach, which rules out any fructification of liturgy by contemporary culture (Scheer 1998).

One could ask whether the study of present-day contextuality should not rather focus on more relevant, less voguish themes. Time will tell whether evolution is a relevant theme for the study of ritual (cf. Rappaport 2000). But it is certainly not just a vogue, since its roots can be traced to the 19th century, more particularly the publication of Darwin's *The origin of species* in 1859 and his *The descent of man* in 1871. These and other of his works triggered a spate of new ideas and startling research findings, so much so that 'evolution' has come to influence many branches of science, including anatomy, palaeontology, archaeology, neurology, biology, sociology, psychology, linguistics and science of religion. As a result of these scientific developments, not only the natural but also the cultural world has been increasingly explained in terms of evolution. Once one has embraced the concept of evolution, with the concomitant concepts of natural and cultural evolution, one cannot avoid asking whether cultural evolution does not entail religious, moral and ritual evolution as well.

At the same time one realises that these issues are full of pitfalls, for religion and morality have always had a strained relationship with evolution, to the extent that fundamental evolutionary concepts like chance and genetic determination are eyed askance. Often the relation between evolution and religion is countered with rival theories like creationism and intelligent design, and the relation between evolution and morality by referring to moral action as a human act (*actus humanus*), as distinct from the act of a human being (*actus hominis*) and definitely from the behaviour of (higher) animals. All this makes the question I seek to answer in this article intriguing. It reads: in how far does morality, religion and ritual fit into the context of the modern awareness of evolution?[1]

Obviously not all the controversies can be explored in a single article. At the same time I cannot omit to mention them, as if they were totally irrelevant to the question I want to investigate. In the first section I

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[1] As far as religion is concerned I do not go into the distinction made between five evolutionary phases, namely the primitive religion of nonliterate peoples, archaic religion, polytheism, monotheism, early modern religion (especially Protestantism) and modern religion with its emphasis on autonomy (Stolz 2001, 202–204).

mention a few aspects of the tense relation between evolution and religion, more specifically that between natural evolution and creation. In the second I look at the relation between evolution and morality on the basis of a specific interpretation of Genesis 1, in which the concept of justice (*ma'at*) is focal. Here I try to show how human rights, which have developed over several centuries by now, can be regarded as a new phase of justice in the process of cultural evolution. In the third and final section I apply this idea to the question of the course that religious ritual development should take in order to contribute to religious and moral evolution. I illustrate the question with reference to three elements in the ritual of the word in the Catholic Eucharist: penitential rite, the Bible readings and the sermon.

1 Evolution and Religion

Although Darwin is often thought to be the father of *the* theory of evolution, he wasn't the only one, nor the first. Researchers like Wallace, Spencer, Chambers, Lamarck and his own grandfather Erasmus Darwin had already paved the way. Neither was Darwin the first to become involved in, or actually cause, conflicts about evolution with the church. Out of prudence and consideration for his wife, who was a fervent believer, he tended to keep out of these.[2] Thus he was not the first to reject the notion of any special creation, special species or divine intervention in the evolution of life, or even any form of divinely directed evolution. "I cannot believe," he wrote in a letter, "that there is a bit more interference by the Creator in the construction of each species, than in the course of the planets" (Browne 2003, II, 176). At the time he wrote this, between 1860 and 1862, just after the publication of *The origin of species*, he still considered himself a theist. He still believed that the immense universe, including human beings with their capacity to look far back into the past and far into the future, could not be the result of blind chance (Darwin 1929, 149). Twenty years later, however, he referred to himself as agnostic, a term coined a few years

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[2] That this prudence sometimes led to a kind of (to his mind unscientific) compromise is evident in a rider he added to the last lines of his *The origin of species* (1985, 459–460), which read: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one", to which he added in the second edition: "the breath of the Creator"—a concession he later regretted (Browne 2003, II, 96).

earlier by Thomas Henry Huxley (Browne 1929, II, 310, 391). In his autobiography towards the end of his life he repeated that "one must be content to remain an Agnostic" (Darwin 1929, 149). How could it be otherwise in "the newly secularised world that he helped to create" (Browne 2003, II, 432)?

Creation as genesis?

Darwin's controversial status in the religious sphere during his lifetime arose from the reaction of readers, who felt that his theory conflicted with Christian belief. It boiled down to the question: "Are humans descended from monkeys or created by God?" (Browne 2003, II, 125, 252). Over against the notion that evolution depended on chance, they posited creationism and the theory of intelligent design, including an intelligent designer, some versions of which were already propounded in Darwin's day.[3]

In recent years this debate has hotted up, especially after Darwin's theory was augmented with tenets from genetics, culminating in what is known as neo-Darwinism. The following are key concepts in the new approach: heredity (which we now know to be genetic), variation, mutation, recombination, adaptation, selection, fitness, being a comparative concept, as it indicates 'better than' (Wilson 2002, 37–40) and finally, fitness as geared to survival and reproduction. Heredity implies correlation of characteristics between parents and offspring—not a 100 percent correlation, for then they would be identical, but a considerable degree of similarity. The fact that they are not identical is evident in variation, in the sense that all organisms display congenital differences. Mutation means that hereditary variations can lead to new kinds of organisms through recombination of genes in isolated populations. And selection means that new types are capable of surviving and reproducing over multiple generations when they adapt better to their changing environment than alternative types of organisms. Evolution proceeds by chance, with totally random variation and without any preconceived or pre-directed finality, progress or even pattern. This is not to deny the real, irrefutable increase in complexity, which can be reconstructed, but neither does it mean, as some variants of Darwinism claim, that randomness should be corrected by the notion

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[3] Browne 2003, II, 20–22, 50, 95, 124–125, 175–177, 194, 308, 326, 332.

of progressive development in the direction of humankind (Changeux & Ricoeur 2002, 180–187). It was this randomness that elicited such sharp reaction, even in Darwin's time, leading to the aforementioned advocacy of creationism and intelligent design theories.

Nowadays creationism assumes various forms. The first is known as young-earth creationism, according to which God created the earth several thousand years ago, literally as described in Genesis 1.[4] The second, known as old-earth creationism, sticks to the belief that the earth and all the planets around it were physically created by God, but not in such a way that Genesis 1 has to be taken literally, implying that it is up to physicists to determine the time of the origin of the cosmos and the earth. In addition to these two forms there is evolutionary creationism, which accepts evolution to the extent that the evolutionary formation of species was initiated, willed, directed and supervised by God and was moreover foreseen by him inasmuch as it forms part of divine law. This form is also known as creative, theistic or providential evolutionism. Many of its proponents hold that the origin of life, and certainly that of humankind, goes back to some sort of divine intervention, also called special creation. After all, the argument goes, humans were not created 'of every kind', the way plants and animals were, but were created in the image of God (Van den Brink 2006, 76). In the Catholic tradition this tenet is applied to the origin of every individual person: in Catholic creationism the child's body is a product of the parents' procreative act, but its soul is created from nothing by God himself and poured into the body (De Jong 2006). This doctrine rejects not only material generationism, according to which both body and soul are generated by the procreative act, but also spiritual generationism, which claims that the child's soul is generated by spiritual semen, by which means the parents beget the child's soul—a doctrine propounded, or at any rate tolerated, from Augustine's day up to the Middle Ages (Schulte 1995). A modern interpretation, indeed a defence, of Catholic creationism is that the procreation of the child's body relates to the child as an individual instance of the species, whereas the infusion of the soul within the divine creation of the child provides the basis for its uniqueness, its personhood (Smulders 1962, 114–119).

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[4] It can even include the so-called omphalos hypothesis: if God had created Adam directly, he would not have needed a navel; but he has one nonetheless, because that is how human beings are formed by God.

Besides these forms of creationism there is intelligent design theory. A key premise of this theory is what is known as fitness of the environment or the anthropic principle (Van den Beukel 2006). In this view the universe, according to the Big Bang model, could only have originated 15 billion years ago through the unlikely or miraculous coincidence of an infinite number of conditions, and that the planets, including planet Earth, could only have originated 4.5 billion years ago through a similar, seemingly incredible coincidence; by the same token the origin of life, and eventually human life, required equally infinite numbers of amazing coincidences. Earth's fitness to bring forth life, and human life to boot, meant that hundreds, possibly thousands of conditions had to be met. Thus the earth's distance from the sun had to be exactly right, no greater and no smaller. The same applies to earth's distance from the moon. The earth's daily rotation on its axis, too, had to be precisely geared to this end, and there had to be an abundance of water to keep temperatures more or less constant. One could cite many other instances, such as the boiling point and evaporation temperature of water, the salinity of the ocean, the composition of the atmosphere and the protective ozone layer. This endless series of coincidences calls for explanation, since the concept of chance does not offer one. At all events, the environment would not have attained the required fitness had the aforementioned conditions—and many others not mentioned here—not been met. The explanation is found in the notion that these innumerable coincidences must be based on an underlying intelligent design. Note that this is a metaphysical interpretation rather than a scientific explanation. In its strongest form the explanation is as follows: the cosmos and all conditions prevailing in it are there because human beings are there, or rather in order that human beings may be there—hence the term 'anthropic principle'.

Intelligent design theory is often linked with one of the aforementioned forms of creationism, but not necessarily so. Some proponents of intelligent design theory reject every form of creationism, and instead relate it to theism. They believe that the debate is not about evolution and creation, but rather between an atheistic and a theistic worldview. In their view evolution theory, upheld by physicists and biologists, is not just a purely scientific enterprise to be judged on its merits on scientific grounds, but actually an atheistic enterprise leading to a dogmatically atheistic worldview. In such a worldview matter is the ground of all that was, is and is to come, whereas in a theistic worldview ultimate reality is represented by a personal, transcendent God. In a theistic

perspective matter *cannot* have the last—or rather, the first—word, for the perennial question is: what preceded the primordial Big Bang at genesis, where did it come from? The origin of life, too, is scientifically enigmatic, since the genesis of the first self-reproducing cell, the basis of all vegetable and animal life, remains a mystery for now. And that takes us back to the problem of the route followed by amino acids, the building blocks of proteins that are in their turn crucial for life, before even one protein could be produced—and a single first cell would have required hundreds of them. The answer that the origin of life hinged on chance fails to satisfy, since the chances of producing the 2000 relevant proteins required for the most rudimentary bacterial cell are estimated at 1 in $10^{40.000}$—much the same as that a tornado ripping through a rubbish dump could piece together a Boeing 747 from the debris on the heap (Dekker 2006, 91). The hypothesis of an underlying design, it is argued, is at least as reasonable as the hypothesis that it is all based on chance. In this approach the argument applies even more to the origin of humankind. It seems virtually impossible to attribute that which makes humans what they are—personality, ethics, humour, faith, hope, love, artistic nature, abstract thought, problem-solving capacity—to a mere fluke in the material realm. On this point atheistic materialism and theistic design theory are diametrically opposed (Dekker 2006a).

Creation as order

The fundamental question is whether and to what extent the debate on the alternatives of chance on the one hand, and creationism and intelligent design on the other, is relevant to belief in creation in an exegetical and theological perspective. To start with theology, attempts to slot God into a causal chain with one link missing, which is then supplied by divine intervention, is a nonstarter: the god of the gaps (*Lückenbüsser*) is not an option. The reason is not so much that as science progresses it is bound at some point to find the missing link (e.g. the origin of the cosmos, life or human life), whereupon God will drop out of the equation. The theological reason is far rather that making God a link in a causal chain, or even a first cause of the chain, would put paid to his transcendence and hence his Godhead. It would make him just one cause among many others, an object among objects. Importing God to account for evolutionary leaps is to reduce him to a divine substitute for natural causality. In any case the term 'causality' is inappropriate to explain the significance of God's creation (Neuner

2004, 163). More pertinently, creation theology, in its language game, paradigms, concepts and methods, operates at a very different level from physics, biophysics and biology, which does not mean that dialogue between theology and the physical sciences is not necessary (Oomen 1999).[5] This stance invalidates the grounds of all creationism and all intelligent design theories.

The question is, at what level does creation theology operate? Modern exegesis of the creation metaphors in Genesis 1, on which this theology was traditionally based, could shed some light on the question. This pericope, after all, deals with the creation of the world, on the sixth day of which the creation of humankind—male and female—occurs.[6] In 1895 Hermann Gunkel was one of the first exegetes to make the narrative of Genesis 1 an object of religio-scientific research. Literary criticism and *formgeschichtliche Forschung* had been tried frequently, but research into the *Traditionsgeschichte* of this narrative was virtually unheard of. He tried to show that the creation story stemmed from the Babylonian narrative tradition of partly the pre-prophetic, partly the post-exilic period. More particularly he maintained that it had to be read against the background of chaos mythology, especially myths about the struggle against the dragon, leviathan, the snake and the primordial waters, the *Ur* flood. It not only has a hymnic character, in that God is praised for subduing the forces of chaos, but also an eschatological character, because in the end-time, when these forces will arise for the last time, he will destroy them. In this way the first book of the First Testament and the last of the Second Testament are

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[5] Reflections on this dialogue often remain confined to prolegomena or meta-theoretical discussions. Moreover, fundamental problems, such as that of the relation between freedom, action and first person perspective in creation theology on the one hand, and causality, event and third person perspective in the physical sciences on the other, are not taken seriously, as in the case of Moltmann and Pannenberg (Fischer 2004). Especially confusing is the attempt to solve these problems by transposing them from a natural scientific cosmology *about* the world to a cosmology *of the world in which we live and act together*, as in the case of Schoberth (2004).

[6] In the First Testament one finds various pericopes about the creation of the world and humankind, for instance in Genesis 1 and 2, deutero-Isaiah, Psalms and Job. As in Genesis 1, the creation of humans is sometimes a brief reference incorporated into the creation of the world. On the whole the creation of the world has no direct soteriological significance but rather eulogises God's power and majesty, whereas the creation of humans is fraught with soteriological connotations, albeit in a creaturely rather than a salvation history sense. That is rooted in the primordial, creaturely trust of human beings in God, which despite all political defeats, remains intact, independently of 'faith', 'sin', 'forgiveness', even of adherence to whatever faith one subscribes to (Albertz 1971).

linked (Gunkel 1895; Heidel 1951). Since then modern research into the relation between Genesis a and the *Enuma elish* epic has shown that the struggle against the forces of chaos, symbolised by the mythical figures of the dragon and the flood, features in various passages in the First Testament (Is 51:9–11; Ps 93:1–5; 104:1–11) but not in Genesis 1. There the emphasis is on the fact that God put creation on a firm foundation so the forces of chaos could not topple it, although they tried time and again to destroy the order God had created—but in vain. Probably this reflects Egyptian rather than Babylonian influence.

At all events, it does make one realise that the creation story in Genesis 1 is not a scientific account of the origin the world, life and human life, but a narrative about the victory over chaos by a cosmos that God established through his creation. God created by calling the forces of chaos to order. Through cosmos these forces are tamed, even though they may resurface time and again and have to be silenced all over again (Görg 1995, 40–85). Genesis 1 should be regarded as an introduction to the narrative complex of Genesis 1–11, which takes the reader through an aggravation of disorder between man and woman (Gen 3), between brothers (Gen 4), within the family (Gen 9:20–27) and between nations (Gen 11:1–9)—disorder that has to be quelled anew each time (LaCocque 1998). The story of Genesis 1 should be understood in terms of periods when God and his promises threatened to fall into discredit, the aim being to remind listeners or readers that God had transformed chaos into cosmos. It is not about the historical beginning of all that exists, but an a-temporal, primordial initiation and inauguration of God's founding power, as well as a promise that the order God created in the world, society and humankind will not be overwhelmed by the forces of chaos (Ricoeur 1998, 49–50). These forces are explicitly mentioned at the outset: "the earth was a formless void" (Gen 1:2a)—a formless void in which no life was possible; "darkness covered the face of the deep" (Gen 1:2b)—a darkness connoting death, the grave, the underworld; "while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2c), 'the waters' referring to the aforementioned primordial flood. The phrase 'a wind from God' is an object of exegetical debate. The original text, rendered as 'wind from God' in the *New Revised Standard Version*, can have a positive meaning (the bird of creation fluttering above the waters), but also a negative meaning (that of a howling tempest of unprecedented violence).

According to the foregoing interpretation God is not the creator of the formless earth, the primeval flood or the storm—in effect, of

chaos—but transforms these into cosmos. This cosmos emerges radiantly
at God's word: "'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw
that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness"
(Gen 1:3–4). Light is the fundamental symbol of the order established
through God's creation. It introduces the first separation that constitutes
that order: the separation of day from night. First God establishes order
via three cosmic areas (light and darkness; the firmament with the sky
below it; seas and continents), thus creating an 'exterior architecture'
(Gen 1:3–13); then he furnishes these areas with appropriate inhabit-
ants (heavenly bodies, birds and fish, plants, animals and humans), thus
creating an interior architecture (Gen 1:14–31). That brings creation
to its end and consummation (Gen 1:2:1), whereupon the sabbath can
be celebrated, a day of enjoyment, relaxation and rest for God and
humans alike (Gen 2:2–3). In short, God created everything well, but
he did not create everything. In particular he did not create chaos, and
the evil and suffering to which it gives rise.[7] Because Genesis 1 tells the
story of seven days' stability as victory over chaos, it is not a prescientific
counterpart of modern scientific cosmology, but concerns the meaning
of human life in a world marked by conflict, contradictions, danger
and decay, in which humans look for a foothold, foundation, meaning
and wholeness (Sedlmeier 2005).

   This is the framework in which to interpret the passage about the
creation of humans: "So God created humankind in his image, in the
image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God
blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill
the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and
over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon
the earth'" (Gen 1:27–28). The fact that God created humankind in
his image can only mean that humans, following his example, must also
create order. They, too, should protect earth and its denizens against
the forces of chaos. Hence human dominion over the rest of the earth
should be understood in light of this task of creating order. Initially the

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[7] Genesis should be understood against the background of Mesopotamian creation
myths, in which the contrast between chaos and cosmos is mythically symbolised by
the chaos attributable to strife between different gods. Since this was inconceivable in
P's monotheistic Israel at the end of, or shortly after, the exile, evil is isolated from
God's creation and presented as antedating creation. It does not alter the fact that the
First Testament contains texts in which God is depicted as the direct initiator of evil
(e.g. Isa 6:1–11; 45:7; Ps 88), unmodified by such interpretations as God permitting
evil, either by way of punishment or for therapeutic or pedagogic purposes (Gross &
Kuschel 1995).

task was a royal prerogative: in Egyptian and Babylonian texts only the monarch is referred to as the image of God. Later on priests, and in one unusual case, ordinary people, too, are accorded the title 'image of God' (Curtis 1984). Genesis 1 puts this title in a context of creation theology. It certainly does not mean that humans are given divine status; that would be counter to the idea of creation, which stresses the non-divinity of creation, including humankind. Neither does it imply an ontological qualification of humankind, as though it concerns their ontological destiny. The title far rather implies a God-given function that human beings are bound to fulfil (Gross 1995). The nature of this function may be inferred from God's order-creating activity in the creation story, and even more from the concept of justice, *ma'at*, that we know from Egyptian texts to depict humankind's function as images of God (Görg 1995, 65). This concept of *ma'at* has two dimensions: a vertical dimension implying a proper cultic relationship between people and God, and a horizontal dimension implying proper relations between people themselves, namely justice. That is the function of humankind as the image of God: not overpowering, depleting and terrorising earth, as these verses have sometimes been interpreted in the past, but subduing chaos by promoting proper relations with God and fellow humans, in justice (Assmann 1991, 201–204; 2000, 63–69; Groenwald 2003, 105–110).

In other words, the concept of creation in Genesis 1 refers to a social-anthropological and political-anthropological rather than a cosmological theme. It is not about the origin of the universe, inorganic matter, organic beings, not even of humankind, but about the organisation of the socio-political environment in which people live, and on that basis, the organisation of their natural environment.

2 Evolution and Morality

A creation story calling humankind to deal with their fellows from the perspective of justice, *ma'at*, in order to subdue chaos is one thing; the question whether human beings are capable of this justice is another. Is the subjugation of chaos through just relations between people a distant ideal, an outright illusion, or are people competent to realise it in practice? More pertinently, do human beings not in fact pursue their self-interest, perhaps quite wittingly their well-considered self-interest, or are they able to rise above this self-interest, cooperate with others, maybe even sacrifice themselves? Or are they at most capable

of pseudo-behaviour, aimed at promoting other people's happiness only to the extent that it adds to their own (Bentham 1984, 123)? That takes me back to evolution theory, since it provides information that can help to clarify these questions.

In a fascinating survey of the mental faculties of humans and lower animals Darwin repeatedly points out that they "do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree" (Darwin 2004, 173; also 86, 100). It is not feasible to summarise the many instances of such differences of degree here, but I mention a few that are relevant to the issue of the biological infrastructure of mental faculties, moral faculties and passions. Thus Darwin indicates that some higher animal species have at least some capacity for curiosity, imitation, attention, memory, imagination, reasoning, the use of tools, abstraction, and a sense of beauty (Darwin 2004, 92–119). It may seem strange to suppose that animals such as chimpanzees, bonobos and orang-utangs are capable of imagination, but that they display at least some signs of dreaming in their sleep has long been a plausible hypothesis. The same applies to their reasoning ability, even if only by way of combining various things and experiences through association. Neither can they be denied some form of concept building, even if restricted to an iconic and indexical level, whereas symbolic concept building is reserved for human beings (cf. Deacon 1997). Language, too, is the preserve of the human species. But language may be regarded as a form, albeit a very important form, of communication, which is classifiable into linguistic and non-linguistic categories. Animals are capable of the second variety. Even a sense of beauty cannot be denied—after all, "when we behold a male bird elaborately displaying his graceful plumes or splendid colours before the female (…), it is impossible to doubt that she admires the beauty of her male partner" (Darwin 2004, 115).[8]

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[8] Darwin concludes chapter 3 of his *The descent of man* with a note on religion. He indicates that it is a complex feeling, composed of love, complete submission, strong sense of dependence, fear, reverence, gratitude and hope for the future. The rest of his definition reveals two limitations: firstly, he concerns himself with the structure rather than the substance of religion and, secondly, with a particular configuration of that structure, namely that in which submission is focal. This is evident in the following quotation: "we see some distant approach to this state of mind in the deep love of a dog for his master, associated with complete submission, some fear, and perhaps other feelings" (Darwin 2004, 118–119). In his *The expression of emotions in man and animals* submission is again a focal aspect of religion, when he says that a "humble kneeling posture, with the hands upturned and palms joined appears to us…[to indicate] that the attitude is one of slavish subjection" (Darwin 1999, 217).

Humans and animals resemble each other not only in respect of mental faculties but also of moral faculties. It does not mean that the development of mental faculties we have traced among higher animals necessarily accompanies the emergence of moral faculties. Darwin warns us against this kind of reasoning: "It may be well first to premise that I do not wish to maintain that any strictly social animal, if its intellectual faculties were to become as active and highly developed as in man, would acquire exactly the same moral sense as ours" (Darwin 2004, 122). He even maintains "that of all differences between man and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important" (Darwin 2004, 120). But that does not preclude certain parallels. Thus Darwin points out that most animals prefer to live in groups, display mutual affection, warn each other of danger, perform services for each other (horses nibble, cows lick each other, monkeys search each other for external parasites) and come to the other's rescue when it is attacked (Darwin 2004, 124). They show sympathy for each other, probably because they know from memory how painful a particular incident can be for another animal and assisting the other helps to reduce their own painful recollection.

Research into sympathy among animals that are genetically close to human beings, such as chimpanzees, shows that they experience what their fellows experience, realise what the other realises, have the same emotions as their peers. Hence they have a theory of mind quite independent of linguistic ability, just as research has shown that in child development sympathy precedes the ability to use language. For animals like bonobos and chimpanzees to develop sympathy they probably have to be able to distinguish between their own emotions and those of others, thus enabling them to transpose themselves to the other's emotional state (De Waal 2005, 176–181).

Such sympathy is extended to individuals in their immediate physical environment who are members of their own group, rather than to those living at some distance and belonging to different groups. This applies not just to animals but also to humans. In this regard Darwin posits that virtues are practised primarily among members of one's own group, whereas wronging members of other groups is not considered criminal (Darwin 2004, 141). A cardinal example cited by Darwin—one which he opposed throughout his active life—is slavery. In most societies slaves are not recruited from their own race but from other races: "the slaves belonged in general to a race different from that of their masters" (Darwin 2004, 142). At a more general level this

probably relates to the fact that the suffering of others with whom one shares the same situation in the same group evokes emotions located in older brain areas dating to earlier evolutionary stages, hence exercising a more powerful emotional appeal. By contrast the suffering of others in distant regions, whom you only know from stories about them, has little or no emotional impact and appeals to reflective ability located in brain areas of later origin. Emotions form the basis of similarities between humans and animals, while reflection constitutes the difference between them (De Waal 2005, 182–187).

Moral reflection and co-evolution

Hence the principal difference between humans and animals (at least those that are genetically close to humans) lies not so much in the capacity for sympathy but rather in the human ability to reflect. Darwin makes the point that humans, unlike animals, are able to contemplate their impressions, experiences, feelings, memories, ideas, knowledge and behaviour, to compare and evaluate these, determine the implications of the comparisons and evaluations, internalise the moral requirements of these, set themselves certain obligations, and again reflect on the whole process. Humans cannot prevent or avoid such reflection (Darwin 2004, 136–140). The most distinctive feature is "that he reflects on such points, as whence he comes or whither he will go, or what is life and death, and so forth" (Darwin 2004, 105).

This reflection not only has a purely intra-individual dimension, in which people question the correctness of their behaviour and the meaning of their lives, but also an inter-individual, social dimension in which, as mentioned already, people can extend their attainment of morality to persons and groups that are not part of their immediate physical environment. That Darwin was keenly aware of this is evident in the following quotation: "As man advances in civilization, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him" (Darwin 2004, 147).

Moreover, in time the realisation dawned that there was a need to cross not just the boundaries of the tribe, but also those of the nation. It entailed extending morality, not merely for the benefit of 'useful workers' in our own nation but also for the sake of those who are 'useless', indigent and reliant on our solidarity with them, and even to lower

animal species. This is spelled out in the following quotation: "But as man gradually advanced in intellectual power, and was enabled to trace the more remote consequences of his actions (…); as (…) his sympathies became more and more tender and widely diffused, extending to men of all races, to the imbecile, maimed, and other useless members of society, and finally the lower animals,—so would the standard of his morality rise higher and higher" (Darwin 2004, 149). On the basis of our reflective ability the golden rule can be extended to all people, all humankind, including its 'useless' members, such as children, the jobless, the sick and the aged. For just as these needy human beings value our attention and concern, so we, if we were in need, would value acts of solidarity. In other words, morality in principle reaches out to everyone, without exception or discrimination. In this broad sense Darwin (2004, 151) invokes the golden rule: " 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them likewise' and this lies at the foundation of morality." According to this interpretation the golden rule is in fact the corner-stone or all morality and, more specifically, of the Kantian categorical imperative: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant 1964, 96).[9] And the categorical imperative can be seen, or at any rate reconstructed, as the basis of human rights thought, one principle of which is that everybody should be treated equally, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status", as article 2 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights puts it.

This raises the question of where this extension of morality and moral reflection comes from. The answer, broadly speaking, is that it is the outcome of an interplay of natural and cultural evolution, also known as co-evolution. To understand what that means we refer to our earlier definition of evolution, which centres on concepts like heredity and variation, adaptation and fitness. These concepts apply analogously to both natural and cultural evolution—analogously, because the trans-mission of genes in genetic evolution is the model for the transmission of mental representations (also called memes) in cultural evolution, although they differ in content, of course: "Although differing in many

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[9] For the connection between the golden rule and Kant's categorical imperative, see Ricoeur 1992, 218ff.

ways, such models [i.e. co-evolution models] are all in agreement that social learning and cultural transmission give rise to Darwinian-like processes in the selection of ideas and behaviors at the cultural level, in ways that parallel and sometimes diverge from processes of biological evolution at the level of genes" (Kirkpatrick 2005, 302). And just as one might ask whether, in what circumstances and to what extent natural evolution leads to adaptive fitness, so one could consider whether, in what circumstances and to what extent cultural evolution has any value for adaptive fitness. Besides, these considerations raise the question of what fitness itself is aimed at—is its object survival and reproduction in cultural evolution as well? One could look beyond purely parallel links between natural and cultural evolution, both aimed at fitness, and observe, with Changeux, that natural evolution is extended by cultural evolution, which entails "human beings trying to make better use of their brains in order to live better" (Changeux & Ricoeur 2002, 254). A bit more cautiously, he asks: "Might it be said then that nature and culture 'naturally' meet in the physical traces of cerebral memory?" To this he adds: "Our two heritages—biological and cultural—merge and mutually enrich each other in ways that at the level of human societies produce what are called civilizations" (Changeuz & Ricoeur 2002, 289).[10]

The literature on cultural evolution yields such a variegated picture that one needs to introduce some order by distinguishing between three processes: rational reflection, cultural transmission and memetic fitness (Kirkpatrick 2005, 335). As an example of cultural evolution I take human rights, which have been highlighted, formulated and codified at various times over the past few centuries (Marshal 1992; Van der Ven et al. 2004, 96–116). With the help of human rights the three processes of cultural evolution mentioned can be illustrated in a way, which might be relevant for our day and age.

The first process in cultural evolution may be termed, as I said, 'rational reflection'. It refers to the fact that people can distinguish between (anticipated) immediate and more distant effects of their actions. The

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[10] Anyway, it would be a mistake—which Changeux does not make—to confine cultural evolution exclusively to the human species. Just as natural evolutionary processes like attention, thought, concept formation and moral processes like sympathy reveal continuity between primates and humans, so do the processes in cultural evolution. Inasmuch as culture may be regarded as the socially mediated invention, diffusion and use of tools, the nut-cracking techniques among West African chimpanzees may be seen as part of the culture of these primates, albeit in a rudimentary sense of the word (Sperber & Hirschfeld 1999; Van Schaik 2004,139ff.)

simplest examples are eating and sex. Enjoying copious meals satisfies hunger and appetite, but consideration of long-term effects such as the risk of obesity and cardiovascular disease makes it possible to bring this impulsive tendency under rational control. Similarly, impulsive sex offers immediate gratification, but when one considers long-term effects like sexually transmitted diseases, such as aids that entails a fatal risk, this behaviour can be disciplined. This distinction in calculating short- and long-term consequences is essential for the rational reflection that sets humans apart from animals, not only under stable conditions but especially when the human environment changes.

This can be illustrated with the help of the development of human rights. In a general sense one could say that the expansion of Western economies from local need satisfaction to national and international trade since the start of the modern era led to the formulation of first generation human rights, known as civil liberties or 'blue' rights. As a result of changes in the economic structure in the 17th and 18th centuries they became a necessary political invention with a view to evolutionary survival and reproduction. After all, for trade to flourish not only freedom of assembly and association, but also freedom of conscience and religion had to be guaranteed (Alexy 1985, 194ff.). Trade had to be conducted worldwide, without respect to person and especially without religious restriction, with people and groups of any and every religious tradition. Super-local trade and religious tolerance, historical research has shown, go hand in hand (Groethuysen 1927; Goldman 1968; Israel 2001).

But that was not the end of it. It was increasingly realised that economic production on a super-local scale brought greater inter-dependence between the groups involved in such production, with a concomitant need to establish political entities on a super-local scale, including political rights on that scale (Durkheim 1984). Moreover, in the course of the 20th century growing awareness that for economic survival and reproduction not only civil and political rights had to be guaranteed led to second generation or 'red' human rights. These include the right to decent housing, food, water, employment, health care, social insurance and recreation.

During the era of decolonisation after World War II these rights were amplified, mainly at the insistence of developing countries, with a third generation, namely collective rights. They grew from the insight that the various needs that are essential for the survival and reproduc-tion of humankind have to be satisfied globally and not merely at a national level (Galenkamp 1993). Collective rights include the right to a

healthy environment, development and peace, as well as co-ownership of the common heritage of humankind (e.g. the erstwhile *terra nullius*, the world's oceans).

Apart from the first process in cultural evolution, rational reflection, there is a second that we referred to as cultural transmission. It has to do with the transmission of memes (e.g. first, second and third generation rights) from parents and other care givers to their offspring. For the recipients the process of cultural transmission is one of acquisition. According to Dawkins (1976) memes are transmitted via a structure paralleling that of the transmission of genes, even though the former are transmitted by way of social learning processes and the latter via sexual processes. The function of meme transmission likewise parallels that of gene transmission: both have a 'copy me' character. Cultural transmission is said to be the effect of many—in fact, innumerable—episodes of individual transmission of mental representations (memes) from one human generation to another. This approach has been criticised, because the alleged 'copy me' character of memes does not allow for changes occurring in them in the course of transmission (Boyer 1994, 278–283). After all, the process of cultural acquisition is subject to constraint by two so-called epigenetic rules that are rooted in the biological infrastructure: its penetrance and selectivity. Penetrance refers to the probability that certain memes will be given focal attention and others not, and selectivity means that choices are made between available variants of memes, which makes the process of cultural transmission a biased one (Boyer 1994, 268–274).

Human rights can serve as an illustration of cultural transmission processes as well. Not just the definition of first, second and third generation human rights but also their interpretation, evaluation, prioritisation and application display considerable variation, i.e. penetrance and selectivity, both diachronic in the course of history and synchronic in different contexts and situations. Thus the transmission of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 was manifestly biased. Virtually all countries signed the Declaration, but the priority assigned to first and second generation human rights differs between Western and developing countries, in the sense that the latter tend to give second generation rights priority over first generation rights, thus making democratisation secondary to socio-economic development.

The third and last process of cultural evolution I have called memetic fitness. It indicates the extent to which memes in a population are distributed and propagated and mental representations become public

representations. The question here is why some representations are more successful than others. Success is measurable by the greater positive effects and/or less mental energy needed to realise these effects, namely contribution to survival and reproduction. The effects are not unambivalent, since they can assume three modalities: they can either enhance or hinder fitness, or they can have no effect at all, neither positive nor negative, hence zero effect. To gain insight into the way memes spread in a population Sperber developed an epidemiological model. The premise is that memes are transmitted via social learning processes in much the same way that people are susceptible to viral infection resulting in illness. In similar fashion they are susceptible to 'infection' by mental representations and, through intentional and unintentional imitation and/or communication, they become carriers of these.

This approach means that the metaphor of replication underlying 'copy me' transmission is replaced by that of a process of contagion, in which there is no question of sameness between memes and copied memes but merely some degree of resemblance between the communicator's and the recipients' memes, or even of transformation. Transformation ranges between two extremes: duplication and total loss of information. This helps us to understand what is meant by terms like 'culture' and 'institution', although they indicate necessary conditions only, not sufficient ones for the process of contagion. Culture may be seen as the distribution of a set of mental representations which are both closely linked with representations their individual carriers already have, and formulated in such a way that they are only partly comprehended and can never be finally interpreted. Institution may be regarded as the distribution of mental representations, "which is governed by representations belonging to the set itself" (Sperber 1996, 76). One could say that culture and institution are products of human reflection, but at the same time they in their turn influence human reflection, implying some complementarity (Sperber & Hirschfeld 1999).

The distinction between culture and institution in the processes of cultural transmission and memetic fitness is also relevant to human rights. Because of a growing need to define, for instance, civil liberties, political rights or socio-economic rights at a particular time in a population's culture, institutions like states proceed to codify these in a bill of rights and/or a constitution. But for these official declarations to be effective an authentic human rights culture has to emerge, so that the population itself becomes instrumental in the broadening, deepening and application of human rights and combats violations, both in

their own country and elsewhere. Otherwise the official declarations are merely pieces of paper (Van der Ven et al. 2004, 81–96). Such a culture requires that human rights are congruent with notions already held by members of the population, although they need not be fully understood: some degree of freedom in their interpretation is a major condition for their distribution, otherwise they forfeit much of their inspirational power and imaginative functioning.

Finally I want to consider in how far the parallel between natural and cultural evolution applies. We have seen already that natural evolution is marked by complete randomness without any preconceived or predetermined finality or progress—which is not to deny the increasing complexity, but also does not mean that randomness has to be corrected by a notion of progressive development in the direction of human beings (Changeux & Ricoeur 2002, 180–187). Does the same randomness apply to cultural evolution? Or do human beings, in contrast to animals, transcend randomness by making moral choices with a view to a well-defined moral aim, such as the realisation of justice (*ma'at*) recounted in Genesis 1 and the realisation of human rights, which is the outcome of justice and the basis of many constitutions?

There is no simple yes or no answer to this question. That is because the reflective ability that distinguishes human beings from animals, including primates, does not come from a free floating mind, even if only because mind (whatever it may be) is embodied, its operation depending on processes that occur mostly automatically and unconsciously in the human brain. This entails two problems, one regarding the upward movement from brain to mind, the other concerning the downward movement from mind to brain. The first is how the operation of mind, which we assume to direct reflection, can be explained as emerging from physiological and chemical brain processes (emergentism) or as building on these processes (supervenience). The second problem is to explain how the mind in its turn influences the material processes which occur, in whatever connective patterns, in different parts of our brain. With our present scientific knowledge we cannot answer either of these questions, but in a very general sense we could say that the freedom of human reflection is confined by mostly automatic and unconscious brain processes. In other words, there is neither absolute lack of freedom (determinism) nor absolute freedom (libertarianism), but always degrees of freedom in such reflection. In other words, freedom of reflection ranges on a continuum (Den Boer 2004, 241–296). Inasmuch as it is tied to physiological and chemical brain processes the reflection is less

free; inasmuch as it transcends these processes and even influences them, it is more free. That rules out any talk of absolute chance and absolute randomness in reflection and implies that in principle there will always be some measure of teleological morality at work, with the concomitant possibility of goal-directed striving for justice (*ma'at*), and the consequent realisation of human rights.

3   Evolution and Rituality

In this final section of the article I want to apply the insight gained so far to an evaluation of rituals enacted in a religious context, more specifically in the service of the word within the Catholic Eucharist. My criterion for this evaluation is human rights, at any rate the three principles underlying these rights: human dignity, freedom and equality. From a religious perspective human rights—I trust I have made that clear—can be interpreted as a biblically informed standard, the outcome of the concept of justice, *ma'at*, in the creation story in Genesis 1 and, from a moral perspective as a normative informed standard which, in the perspective of human evolution, can be interpreted as imperative for our modern age (*Gebot der Stunde*) (Changeux & Ricoeur 2002, 293–294).

First let me explain the three principles underlying human rights, that is human dignity, freedom and equality. Of the three, human dignity is the most important, implying that the other two principles and all other human rights should be interpreted in terms of it (Chaskalson 2000). The significance of human dignity is evidenced by the fact that it features in the preambles and actual texts of the constitutions and bills of rights of many countries (Van der Ven et al. 2004, 265–280). In Kant's view human dignity is based on the idea that the person—each and every person—has intrinsic value and is an end in herself. It is accompanied by this wise Kantian maxim: a human being may never be used purely as a means but always at the same as an end in itself (Kant 1964, 96). Here we find the distinction in importance between the concepts of price and value: human beings have intrinsic value and cannot be sold at any price—"his dignity is above all price and admits of no equivalent" (Devenish 1999, 81). The is because human dignity is founded in the person's moral autonomy. If Pico della Mirandole had ever read Kant, he would probably have added that this makes it possible for people to see their lives as their own project: "We have

made you (…) that you, a free and sovereign artist, may sculpt and model yourself in the shape that you yourself prefer" (Pico 1968, 11). If Boethius had ever read Kant, he would probably have added that this makes humans as project-creating beings aesthetically beautiful (Wils 2002, 539). The principle of human dignity acquires religious depth when viewed against the background of their creation in God's image and the task of practising justice (*ma'at*) so as to honour the dignity of every human being.

Freedom is implicit in human dignity. It implies creating conditions in which people can set their own goals and accomplish their own projects in their private, professional, civic and recreational lives. This applies particularly to religious freedom, which means not only that people are "free in choosing to accept the Christian faith", as the Christian tradition has insisted since its inception, but that they are free to choose any religion they please. It also means that they are free to ask questions, think, argue, test and evaluate, even if it culminates in a decision to give up their faith, whether Christian or otherwise. In other words, religious freedom implies that one is free at the start of the religious process and at its (possible) end, hence in the intervening process as well. In this respect the Catholic Church still has a long way to go, since the Declaration of Religious Freedom of Vatican II in 1965 merely emphasises that the faith must be freely embraced, but does not mention the possibility of freedom to give it up or freedom in the intervening process (Van der Ven 2007). The principle underlying this Declaration is that the right of truth has priority over the right of freedom (Kasper 1988). But this notion bristles with hypostasised abstractions, for what is the right of truth and what is the right of freedom in concrete terms? It calls for ideological criticism, to which end it has to be rendered in terms of power. For the right of truth is in fact the right of those who wield doctrinal authority in the church, and the right of freedom is the right of individual persons with no institutional power. In effect it means that individual persons with nagging doubts or (partially) dissident views are bound to come off worst—in the name of the Declaration of Religious Freedom! It is, to put it bluntly, a case of the powerful versus the powerless (cf. Böckenförde 1990, 23–24, 63–64, 110–111).

The principle of equality means that people should be treated equally in equal cases. It is as old as democratic thought, which is rooted in Greek antiquity, notably in Aristotle's philosophy. According to his *Nicomachean ethics* such equality, in the sense of equal treatment in equal cases

and unequal treatment in unequal cases, is the cornerstone of justice. Of course, it is far from clear what the expression 'equal cases' means: what is the criterion of equality? Which cases are to be compared with which? Which cases and how many, in terms of time and place? At all events, equality is assigned a position of pre-eminence in human rights thought. The crux of equality is a prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination on grounds like age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnic origin, conscience or culture. This is not just formal but substantive equality, implying that people's context should be taken into account and on that basis affirmative action should be taken in regard to marginalised groups. It means that a distinction is made between fair discrimination and unfair discrimination, and that fair in the sense of 'benign' discrimination is permissible and may even be mandatory. Of course, benign discrimination from the point of view of one group may be 'malign' from the point of view of another. That is why one has to take context into account, for instance the ecclesiastic deprivation of women and homosexuals. It should be noted that 'malign' discrimination may be direct or indirect, the latter being discrimination that is neither conscious nor intended and may not even be discernible on the surface, for instance when something is taken for granted but still has a discriminatory impact and discriminatory effects. Significantly, those who discriminate have what is known as the onus of proof: they have to show that they are not discriminating, instead of those who feel discriminated against having to prove their case. This is what makes equality so important: it articulates the principle that all people have equal worth on the basis of their human dignity (Devenish 1999, 38). In religious communities, where one would expect equality to be paramount, there are numerous examples of indirect discrimination in the sense of being neither conscious nor intended. What should one make of the exclusion from communion of people who cohabit out of wedlock, divorcees who have remarried legally but without religious confirmation of the new union, people who are denied a religious funeral service if, after mature deliberation, they conscientiously and honourably decided on euthanasia?

Equality has implications not only for interaction *within* religions but also for dealings *between* religions. The interaction strategies most commonly applied in interreligious relations are those of particularism, namely exclusivism and inclusivism. Particularism means confining one's attention to one's own religion, putting it first and viewing other religions exclusively from its perspective. As a result what those religions

consider to be true and good from *their* perspective is pushed aside and disregarded. Exclusivism means that one's own religion is the only one to qualify as religion and the only one that brings divine salvation, while other religions are granted no share in either truth or goodness. Inclusivism does concede other religions such a share, at least in regard to elements of those religions that coincide with the tenets of one's own faith. The Vatican Declaration *Dominus Jesus* (2000), written by the current pope in his former position as prefect of the Congregation of Faith, employs both strategies. Exclusivism is apparent in the statement that God's unique, exclusive, universal, complete, absolute revelation was embodied in Jesus Christ (nos 6 and 15). Inclusivism is discernible in a pronouncement like, "Therefore, the sacred books of other religions, which in actual fact direct and nourish the existence of their followers, receive from the mystery of Christ the elements of goodness and grace which they contain" (no. 8). The Declaration explains what this implies in a perspective of both freedom and equality (no. 22). With regard to freedom it cites the Vatican II Declaration on Religious Freedom of 1965, to which we referred earlier: this freedom must be respected, the document states succinctly (see chapter 5). Equality, however, is qualified more precisely: "Equality, which is a presupposition of inter-religious dialogue, refers to the equal personal dignity of the parties in dialogue, not to doctrinal content, nor even less to the position of Jesus Christ—who is God himself made man—in relation to the founders of the other religions."

The focus on personal dignity, and especially 'equal personal dignity', should be seen as positive from a human rights perspective. But one observes that 'equal personal dignity' is disjoined from the beliefs people cherish and the practices embodying these beliefs, since the document specifies (Vatican documents need to be studied very closely) 'equal *personal* dignity'. This means that human dignity should be respected as far as the persons of representatives of other religions are concerned, but not when it comes to their beliefs and ideas: 'not to doctrinal content'. The purport seems to be that an attitude exuding appreciation of the personal equality of representatives of other religions is acceptable, even required. But a method that accords equal value to the texts and practices of Christianity and other religions is not acceptable. This document divorces respect for other people's human dignity from respect for the beliefs and ritual actions they identify with, which is all the more drastic when it affects religious beliefs and actions

that touch on the very meaning of people's existence and their actual personal identity.

The service of the word in the Catholic Eucharist that will be considered in terms of these three principles comprises the following elements: opening hymn, salutation, penitential rite; prayer; First and Second Testament readings; sermon; and intercession. Because of limitations of space I confine myself to only three elements: penitential rite, readings and sermon.

Penitential rite

After the opening hymn and the priest's salutation the service of the word starts with the penitential rite, the most popular form of which is commonly known as the *confiteor* or *mea culpa*. This is when members of the liturgical community confess to almighty God and to their brothers and sisters in that community that they have sinned through their own fault, in their thoughts and in their words, in what they have done and in what they have failed to do. After asking Mary, the angels and saints and all other members of the community for their prayers, the priest concludes with the blessing: "May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life."

The question is, how does the central theme of the *confiteor*—guilt—relate to the evolutionary principle of human dignity that forms the basis of human rights? In terms of cognitive psychology, which developed partly from evolutionary psychology, the question is: what kind of feeling is this guilt that is evoked right at the beginning of the service? According to the distinction between positive and negative feelings, guilt is not one of the positive feelings, such as enjoyment and surprise, but a negative feeling. Within this latter group guilt is not one of the primary negative feelings, which include sadness, fear, anger and disgust and which, like all primary feelings, are culturally invariant, but a secondary, complex negative feeling, along with embarrassment, jealousy and shame. These comprise a combination of various feelings and are partly a result of particular cultural influences (Ekman 1999, 376–377; Damasio 2000, 50–51).

In terms of evolutionary theory the substance of a sense of guilt can be defined more precisely by distinguishing between blushing, guilt and shame. Blushing relates to feelings of embarrassment and may be purely interactional, but can also accompany feelings of guilt and shame. Guilt stems from the realisation that one has wronged

and harmed somebody else, either physically, psychologically and/or socially. Shame is the guilt one feels when the harm one has done the person is discovered and witnessed by others, or has come to their ears and one knows that they know. Guilt has to do with the inner voice of conscience that, as it were, protests against the harm one has inflicted on the other party. Shame has to do with the fact that, as the bearer of the guilt one feels towards another person, one is exposed to the eyes of yet other people. To explain it sensorily in metaphoric terms: guilt expresses itself in blushing because of the voice of conscience; shame expresses itself in blushing because of discovered guilt. Put differently, guilt is from hearing, shame is from sight (Darwin 1999, 343).[11]

Why should the service of the word start with a secondary, complex, negative feeling rather than a primary positive feeling like enjoyment or surprise, or a complex positive feeling like gratitude or pride? In the earliest layers of the Second Testament the accent is not on the confession of individual guilt, but on the message of the kingdom of God, in its sapiential version the kingdom of nobodies like peasants, children, widows, orphans, strangers and paupers, and in its apocalyptic version the kingdom of divine power that will bring justice for all (Crossan 1992, 265–292). The fourth prayer about forgiveness of sin in the Our Father, which is focal in the sermon on the mount, does not make the person bow his head and beat his breast, but puts him squarely on his feet to grant forgiveness, as God forgives him, to those who are on the battlefield with him (Crossan 293–294). It is not a prayer expressing cultic penitence, humility and a crushed spirit, but one that calls on the person to make a fresh start and inspires an unambivalent, primary feeling of enjoyment.

What is remarkable is that the guilt in the confession at the beginning of the service of the word is referred to in the abstract and its content remains amorphous, qualified only by the classical 'thoughts, words

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[11] Counter to Darwin, Ekman (1999, 391) concurs with the widespread notion that guilt and shame are the same. Others make a different distinction by relating shame to a feeling that someone else is looking at you in your guiltless nakedness, limitation, mortality, against your will; and guilt to the feeling stemming from the voice of conscience that you have wittingly harmed someone else. Here, too, guilt is from hearing and shame from sight, but shame is not associated with guilt (Van der Ven 1998, 318–323). The diverse notions of the relation between shame and guilt derive from the fact that both are secondary, complex feelings that are not culturally invariant in that their substance is determined by particular cultural influences. The very distinction between shame and guilt is culturally determined.

and deeds', along with the distinction between sins of commission and omission. But this abstract reference conceals a historically and systematically specific concept of sin. Historically the *confiteor* stems from the *Apologiae*, which derives, not from early Roman, but from Gallic and later Roman-Frankish eucharistic liturgy, in which the priest prepares himself for the mass in silence. Its heyday was the period from the 9th to the 11th century, whereafter it disappeared, probably because of the introduction of regular confession and absolution (Meyer 1993). From this historical perspective the *confiteor* conceals what I would call a cultic, separate act-related concept of sin, that is to say when every individual act considered to be an individual transgression of a commandment is regarded as a sin. Added to this there is the distinction between mortal sin (*peccatum mortale*) and venial sin (*peccatum leve et veniale*), which reinforces the separate act-related interpretation of venial sin, for one cannot assume that a mortal sin like idolatry, homicide, adultery or sexual abuse is involved at the beginning of every daily mass. Such an separate act related interpretation of sin, with the accent on venial sin, creates a danger that the *confiteor* will degenerate into clandestine confessional bookkeeping. It fits into the broad pastoral programme of guilt, fear and penance imposed on lay parishioners by monks from their monastries ever since the 13th century until well into the 20th century, and possibly still persisting here and there (Delumeau 1971; 1978; 1983; Certeau 1990).

From an evolutionary point of view such a separate act related approach must be seen as an outdated interpretation, since it overlooks the ongoing process of moral rationalisation discernible in the history of our moral consciousness in Western society. It was replaced by a view in which the accent is not on the individual act, but on the attitude with which acts, plural, are committed (ethics of attitude or *Gesinnungsethik*) and, more than that, by the view that people appraise their situation morally and rationally, then responsibly choose between alternative courses of action with due regard to their respective effects and consequences (ethics of responsibility or *Verantwortungsethik*). According to a separate act related ethics of sin people record their sins in their confessional bookkeeping system and are left with a heavy, crushed spirit. According to an ethics of responsibility they diagnose and evaluate their real-life situation so that, they hope and trust, it can be corrected through their actions. Viewed thus, the *confiteor* is a relic from bygone times (Schluchter 1979).

Does this mean that the principle of human dignity and a sense of guilt are incompatible? It is a complex question, which can be approached from various angles. Some scientists aver that human beings are characterised by an uncontrollable aggressive drive and are the only primates bent on killing their own kind, even if this propensity is hidden by a veneer of civilisation. There are also scientists, such as Richard Dawkins, who claim that evolution is aimed at survival and reproduction, driven by the so-called selfish gene (Grafen & Ridley 2006). In the process the realisation of self-interest may in the long term assume the form of well-considered self-interest, which prompts people to modify the struggle for the survival of the fittest out of self-interest and display willingness to act altruistically.[12] Thus people are demons in disguise rather than angels. But there are also ethicists, evolutionists and cognitive scientists who maintain that people's propensity for goodness is as strong as their propensity for evil. Primates like chimpanzees, orang-utans and bonobos are characterised by both cooperation and competitiveness, aggression and empathy (De Waal 2005). Darwin, too, consistently stressed both sides among higher animals and human beings: both display wickedness, anger and disgust as well as concern and tenderness (Darwin 1999). Cognitive science likewise highlights both sides of human nature. The struggle for advancement in the economic, political and social pecking order, in which wealth, power and reputation vie for supremacy, can unleash a terrible race propelled by a fury almost as powerful as humans' genetic disposition that drives them to kin and reciprocal altruism (Pinker 1999; 2002). Even if both sides are inherent in human life, there is another aspect that we need to highlight yet again, and that is the human capacity to reflect so as to steer the behaviour arising from this dual inclination in the direction of the common good. As Kant puts it, even though humans have a predisposition (*Anlage*) to the good, as well as a propensity (*Hang*) for evil, "yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free" (Kant 1996, 32). Because of this freedom guilt ultimately leads to the future, not to the past; it does not point backwards but forwards. As Ricoeur puts it: "I am not what I did, I am what I can do" (Ricoeur 2000).

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[12] Initially Darwin used only the term 'natural selection', but from the fifth edition of *The origin of species*, under Wallace's influence, he also used Spencer's coinage, 'survival of the fittest' (Browne 2002, II, 59, 312).

Because the *Confiteor*, from a historical perspective, lacks this orientation to the future and can only fit into a separate act related interpretation of guilt in a pastoral approach of fear and punishment, it needs to be replaced by texts focused on human dignity as a future-oriented project in a transcendent perspective—a project that can naturally miscarry in guilt-ridden tragedy, but, partly as a result of religiously informed reflection, can well succeed. To which I want to add: if it is at all necessary to start the service of the word with the 'big guns' of guilt, however interpreted.

Readings

Having examined the rite of penitence from the angle of the principle of human dignity, let us proceed to the second major element in the service of the word in Catholic Eucharistic services: the readings. The Sunday lectionary prescribes three: one from the First Testament; one from the letters, Acts or the Apocalypse in the Second Testament; and one Gospel reading from the Second Testament. Here I am not considering their interrelationship, even though that in itself presents a homiletic problem, as Ton Scheer clearly indicated, so much so that one could ask: what is the homiletic significance of the standard phrase 'according to the scriptures' (*secundum Scripturas*) if they are not interrelated (Scheer 1994)? What concerns me is how one should appraise the readings in the Sunday lectionary in terms of the principle of equality, more particularly the interreligious equality referred to above.

This is not a purely historical, exegetic problem, pertaining only to what the relevant Bible texts tell us about the polarity between particularism (including exclusivism and inclusivism) and universalism, but also a theological problem that could even present something of a dilemma. One the one hand the literature contains the notion that the monotheism of the Bible and post-biblical tradition is preferable to any form of polytheism, because it is based on faith in just one God whose care extends to all people and nations, whatever their culture or religion. The concern of gods in polytheistic religions, by contrast, is confined to the particular community that worships those gods (Weber 1980, 348ff., 403). On the other hand it is pointed out that the polytheistic religions with which Israel was constantly rubbing shoulders were far more tolerant of each other and more receptive to mutual influencing than the monotheistic religions, which were more prone to ethnocentrism (Assmann 2000; 2001). The latter applies not only to

First Testament Judaism, evidenced by gruesome texts about gentile nations to be found there, but also to Christianity, evidenced by the anti-Judaic texts one encounters in the Second Testament, for instance in John's Gospel where Jesus' Jewish opponents are called children of the devil (John 8:44).[13]

I cannot deal with all the ramifications of this problem; nor can I discuss all the individual readings in the Catholic Sunday lectionary from this perspective. But I can illustrate it with First and Second Testament books and pericopes marked by severe tension between universalism and particularism, or merely displaying particularist features. I have elaborated on this in detail elsewhere, and also related it to human rights, which are based on the principle of equality and are applicable to all people of whatever culture or religion (Van der Ven et al. 2004, 141–214). By way of illustration I briefly consider the law books in the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Paul's letter to the Romans and the synoptic Gospels.

Probably the most particularistic pericopes are to be found in the law books in the Pentateuch in the First Testament: the book of the covenant (Ex 20:22–23:33), Deuteronomic law (Deut 12–28), and holiness law (Lev 17–26). All the commandments and prohibitions in these law books are marked by an attitude of justice and goodwill towards the neighbour, slaves, and the *personae miserae*: widows, orphans, aliens and (other) poor people, such as debt-burdened peasants. In this respect the law books concur with earlier, similar law books from Egypt and Mesopotamia. But this solidarity—however heart-warming it may sound—is steeped in local particularism. This is very evident in the attitude towards foreign slaves and aliens from abroad. They are not treated on an equal footing with local slaves or strangers but are discriminated against. The same particularism is even more pronounced in relations with other nations—not friendly ones but those with whom Israel had been at war. It is not said that vengeance against them actually continued to the tenth generation—that would be a descriptive utterance—but that it *should* continue to the tenth generation, hence a normative utterance. This is evident in Deuteronomic law: "Even to the tenth generation, none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the Lord" (Deut 23:3). As for other nations, they are given short shrift: the

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[13] This is but one anti-Judaic text among many in the Second Testament—see: Dautzenberg 1993, 749–750; Nicklas 2006.

Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites are to be exterminated, and God will also send a plague on the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites (Ex 23:20–28). Here there is no vestige of universalism at all. On the contrary, particularism assumes the form of an almost eternal vengeance of belligerent exclusiveness—what might be called hegemonic particularism—which abounds in the First Testament, even in the most social law book in the Pentateuch: the Deuteronomic code.

In contrast to the hegemonic particularism of the law books we have the openness of the book of Isaiah, of all First Testament texts probably the most receptive to other cultures and religions. On this issue it is perhaps also the most militant in settling the score with particularism once and for all, evidenced by the conflict with the groups associated with Ezra and Nehemiah. These groups propounded all manner of social and religious restrictions, such as ethnic cleansing (Ezra 9–10; Neh 13:1–3), prohibition of mixed marriages (Ezra 9–10; Neh 13:23–27) and some sort of separatist politics (Groenewald 2003, 169–175). Isaiah, however, held that the criterion of membership of Zion was no longer ethnicity but ethics and liturgy. Hence not the entire population of Zion would receive salvation; instead there was a dichotomy in the Zion community between those who practised justice and upheld the YHWH cult and those who did not. By the same token those individuals among the nations who actively concerned themselves about widows and orphans and foreswore the worship of foreign gods, converting to the Torah of YHWH, would be admitted to Zion and were allowed to enter it, whereas the rest had to stay outside.[14] This universalism is depicted in sweeping images: "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. (...) And I will also take some of them as priests and as Levites, says the Lord" (Isa 66:18–21). Even eunuchs are accommodated (Isa 56:4–5), as well as foreigners (Isa 56:6–8). In that sense one could speak of an eschatological perspective encompassing the whole of humankind and, indeed, the whole cosmos: "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth" (Isa 65:17); and: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt

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[14] Here the concept of *ma'at* applies again: its vertical dimension relates to liturgy, its horizontal dimension to justice.

or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lord" (Isa 65:25). The question is, what kind of universalism underlies this? One could argue that ultimately it is a missionary universalism, centring on pilgrimage to Zion. Even more pertinently one might say that this missionary universalism is characterised by inclusive exclusiveness. Inclusiveness refers to the fact that the Torah does not remain restricted to Israel but is open to those individuals among the nations who convert to it. Exclusiveness relates to the focal position in the nations' pilgrimage of the Torah and Zion, which shine as a light to the nations (Berges 1998, 533). Put differently: it is a kind of centripetal universalism, in which the periphery converts to the centre (cf. Vogels 1986, 111–122). It could also be called a particular or monopolar universalism, because no matter how open it may be to the nations, it remains focused on the one true religion.

From Isaiah to Paul's letter to the Romans is quite a big step on account of the fundamentally different historical, political and religious backgrounds and the contents of the two biblical books. Nonetheless, when it comes to the relation between religious particularism and universalism there are some similarities. Like Isaiah, Paul emphasises the distinction between Israel and the remnant of Israel. Like Isaiah, Paul opens the door to gentiles and their participation in divine salvation, in Isaiah's case for individual gentiles, in Paul's for gentiles as both individuals and—at least implicitly—collectivities. And finally, like Isaiah, Paul also admits gentiles to the Jewish religion without demanding that they be circumcised. In this regard Paul points out the continuity between Jewish religious identity and that of people who are 'in Christ'. To this end he uses the image of the olive tree to represent Israel (Rom 11:17–25). The cultivated olive tree represents Israel and the wild olive shoot the gentiles. The cultivated olive tree is not chopped down nor is it replaced by another: there is only one Israel. To be sure, some branches of the tree were broken off through unbelief, and in their place a wild shoot has been grafted that shares the fertile root of the cultivated tree, that is to say the blessings promised to Abraham and the other patriarchs. The meaning here is that once gentiles have converted to Christianity, to which end they are grafted into the cultivated olive tree of Judaism, the Jewish olive tree itself will flourish once more: "For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree" (Rom 11:24). That is the eschatological vision: not only will gentile Christians be saved, but all Israel, that is to say, that

"the newly believing natural branches could be, and will be, reengrafted" (Dunn 1998, 525). This analysis shows that Jewish particularism had definitely been opened up to universalism, founded on participation in Christ. In this universalism there is room for both Israel and gentiles: ultimately they are two branches of the same tree. Here one discerns a significant difference from Isaiah. Although Isaiah opens up Judaism to individual gentiles and Paul to both individual gentiles and gentiles generally, Isaiah's universalism is what we have called monopolar, whereas Paul's is bipolar.

Whatever one calls the various orientations in the polarity between particularism and universalism in the aforementioned biblical books, from hegemonic particularism in the law books to bipolar universalism in Paul's letter to the Romans, when we come to Jesus' message as recounted in some early texts from the synoptic Gospels we enter totally new territory. The stories about Jesus' words and deeds unmistakably show that the message of the kingdom of God entails breaking down bigoted religious and moral particularism and opening up a broad perspective of universalism. This universalism is based partly on the concept of creation—which implies a space of limitless length and breadth of humankind and nature—and partly on God's promise and his covenant, of which the kingdom of God is the fulfilment. The images used in the Gospels and other Second Testament texts are: the 'new human being', an anthropological metaphor; the 'new Jerusalem', an urban metaphor; and 'a new heaven and a new earth', a cosmic metaphor. The message of universal justice and love embraces each and everyone: the rich alien (beyond ethnic conditioning), tax collectors (beyond political correctness), destitutes and prostitutes (beyond social respectability), the good Samaritan (beyond the religious community). Since this is an expanding universality, consistently reaching out towards individuals and groups with a disadvantaged, violated identity, needing help, acceptance and fellowship, we might call it 'multipolar universality'. In these stories Jesus does not proceed apodictically, as if the proclamation of God's universal kingdom—the rule of God's love and justice—alone would be sufficient to activate such universalism. In fact, they tell us that he engaged in dialogue with the people he invited to enter into this universality: he looked them in the eye, touched them and allowed them to touch him, wash his feet, kiss and perfume them.

The stories about Jesus' dialogic universalism are an inexhaustible source of inspiration and motivation to transcend every conceivable difference and put an end to discrimination on grounds of gender, race, class, political orientation, social convention and religious commitment.

"Even if Jesus' attitude cannot ultimately be pinned down to legal cat-
egories, because his real motivation is God's salvific will and love, one
must still—or rather for that very reason—conclude that this attitude
moves conclusively in the direction of full recognition of human rights
in church and society" (Blank 1979, 38; our translation). This dialogic
pluralism has not been actualised to any significant extent in the course
of Christian history—at any rate not sufficiently, if one considers how
focal it is in the stories about Jesus' message and ministry. It contrasts
shrilly with the hegemonial universalism that manifested itself far more
often, especially in Christianity under imperialism.

This brief survey of biblical texts that are representative of paral-
lel readings in the Sunday lectionary used in the eucharistic service
confronts us with a fundamental problem, at least from the angle of
the universalism of human rights. How should pastors deal with these
readings in the Sunday ritual?

Two strategies come to mind: either go ahead and read biblical texts
that bristle with hegemonic particularism and retribution for pagan
peoples, or select for liturgical use only those readings that do not
display brutal ethnocentrism. The first strategy has three sub-strategies
in homiletic practice: not mention these texts in the sermon at all, or
provide either a literary historical or a symbolic exposition of them.
When one considers the three sub-strategies none of them is satisfac-
tory. Failure to mention the offensive texts in the sermon means that
(observant) believers are left to their fate. If one provides a literary his-
torical exposition, one runs the risk of getting bogged down in (popular
scientific) teaching, which is not the purpose of preaching in a ritual
context. And a symbolic exposition entails a risk of getting trapped in
individually or socially therapeutic moralism, on the lines of 'let us not
behave like the characters in the readings'. That will further intensify
the guilt feelings already aroused to some extent by the *confiteor*. In
effect the three sub-strategies all entail some sort of tempering, even
immunisation of texts marked by harsh hegemony, retribution or at
any rate ethnocentrism and, whichever way one looks at them, conflict
with Jesus' multipolar, dialogic universalism.

I am more and more inclined to opt for the second strategy: choos-
ing for liturgical use only those readings that observe the principle of
non-discriminatory equality, both individual and collective.[15] I realise full

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[15] In the past I was hesitant to do so (Van der Ven 1998a).

well that this puts the biblical canon at issue, that is the ecclesiastically sanctioned collection of texts which, for all its heterogeneity, should be read as a unified work. But on this point I ask myself whether an appeal to the canon is in fact valid. Let me briefly list some arguments.

Historically the provisional closure of the canonising process dates back only to the last few decades of the 4th century, while final closure did not happen until the council of Trent, even though the earliest roots, in the case of the First Testament, go back to the 4th century BC and, in that of Second Testament, to the late 2nd century AD.

Systematically the question is how the diversity of views in the Bible as a whole can actually be reconciled, for instance the hegemonic law books and Jesus' universal message. Expressions like 'unity in diversity' and 'discontinuity in continuity' strike me as magic formulas when they cannot be concretely realised in theological exegesis, catechesis and sermons. Reference to the letter to the Hebrews, which says that "God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways", is not a sufficient answer but in fact pinpoints the problem. Put differently, on contextual grounds there is no getting away from the need for a 'canon within the canon', to be realised anew in each era. After all, every age has such a 'canon within the canon', a selection of texts adapted to the times people are living in. That is to say, is there indeed a 'centre' (*Mitte*) to be found in the actual biblical texts, independent of their reception that is always contextually determined?

The objection has been raised that the notion of a desired or actually existing 'canon within the canon' overlooks the religious insight that the Bible is about the primacy of God's salvific acts over human belief, which is nourished by Scripture. But that strikes me as a false antithesis, no more than a variation on the equally false antithesis between revelation and faith or between transcendence and immanence. In abstract terms, transcendence only occurs in and by way of immanence, not distinct and apart from it.

There are also grounds in the history of liturgy that justify the second strategy. The Catholic and Protestant traditions—both of which invoke the Bible as the basic norm (*norma normans*) of the Christian faith, as opposed to the tradition that is regulated by it (*norma normata*)—part ways when it comes to the selection of canonical books: the books considered apocryphal in Protestantism, like Wisdom and Sirach, are not read in official Protestant liturgy, whereas in Catholicism they are considered deutero-canonical books and are used in liturgy. But that does not mean that *all* canonical and deutero-canonical books are

read in Catholic liturgy. In the period prior to the liturgical reform of Vatican II only a relatively small number of pericopes were used. The Constitution on the sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of Vatican II, states that "a more representative portion of the holy scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years" (no. 51), implying that there was some—if wider—selection. Even more interestingly, in the rites of some Eastern Catholic Churches associated with the patriarchate of Rome, e.g. the Ethiopian Rite of the Alexandrine-Ethiopian Church) the First Testament, apart from the Psalter, remains closed throughout the year and is only opened during services in Holy Week.[16] Here we cite the Decree on the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* of Vatican II, which reads: "All members of the Eastern Rite should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their legitimate liturgical rite and their established way of life, and that these may not be altered except to obtain for themselves an organic improvement. All these, then, must be observed by the members of the Eastern rites themselves" (no. 6).

Last but not least is an empirical argument in favour of the second strategy. Research has shown that narratives and views on intolerance, retribution and violence towards other cultures and religions featuring in a religious context such as the liturgy (also in catechesis and pastoral counselling) meet with outright dislike and rejection, not only among non-believers but especially among Christians. Such narratives and views do not initiate people into the mystery of God's closeness to humankind but actually alienate them from it. They function anti-mystagogically rather than mystagogically (Van der Ven & Vossen 1995; Van der Ven 1998b, 205–232).

In advocating a preference for the second strategy on these grounds I don't want to lapse into the simplistic evolutionary progress thinking that characterised the 19th century, as if the entire First Testament is an imperfect part of the Bible as a whole (Hegel), or that the date for discarding the First Testament has been already exceeded (Harnack). All that I am proposing is omitting from liturgy those texts in the First Testament, and in principle the Second Testament as well, that affect the equality of people, cultures and religions. Let me add that in Bible study, catechesis and religious education—which, unlike preaching in

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[16] See *The Ethiopian Rite Missal*. English language edition. Published with the permission of the ecclesiastic authorities. Addis Ababa 2002.

a ritual context, are aimed at instruction and critical reflection—they obviously can, and should be, discussed.

Preaching

I have already referred to preaching in the context of how pastors should deal with biblical readings that trample roughshod over the equality of human beings, both individuals and groups. Now I want to look at the sermon as such. I do so from the angle of the principle of freedom that underlies human rights. I do not discuss every facet of that freedom but only the one mentioned in relation to religious freedom: the freedom to think, search, explore and doubt in the process of believing. The question is whether and to what extent sermons contribute to this freedom of religious quest.

This brings us up against a sharp division in homiletic literature and the preaching practices based on it, or which produce that literature in the form of reflections on praxis. My problem is the following. All things being equal, both homileticist and preacher ask themselves what is the aim of the sermon, the homily, in liturgy. But that is where the problem starts: is that aim located on the preacher's side or on that of the listener?

As a rule it is located on the preacher's side, implying that one has to consider what the preacher's aim is, what task should be inferred from that and what he has to do to accomplish it. Here there are various options. One could adopt a fundamental theological approach, arguing that the preacher's task is to interpret God's self-revelation and, via his words, become the intermediary of God's Word. One could also proceed in a dogmatic theological manner, assigning preachers the task of proclaiming God's message as recounted in the books of the First and Second Testaments. Various themes could be focal in that message, for instance creation, alienation, salvation or consummation. Preachers can also be told to base their sermons directly on the preceding readings. In such a text-oriented sermon preachers can seek to provide a popularised version of the results of exegetical research and mix that with some sort of contemporary paraphrase of the text. But, which scientific probing should they explore—those of biblical theology, diachronic and/or synchronic, structuralism or pragmatic analysis? Ton Scheer (1994) has rightly pointed out that this presents the average preacher with a complex, if not impossible task. But whatever approach one adopts—fundamental theological, dogmatic, exegetical and/or

paraphrase (the latter, my intuition tells me, is most common)—the preacher's task is paramount, the listener is secondary.

To my mind it should be the other way round: the goal of preaching should be located on the listener's side. Why? Because otherwise the listeners' freedom is in jeopardy, and there is a risk that they will be seen as empty vessels, to be filled with all the ideas rated in fundamental theology, dogmatics or exegesis; or, if not as empty vessels, then still as ones needing constant replenishment. But the listeners are not empty vessels, they do not need constant replenishment. They have their own emotional, cognitive, thinking and volitive capacity that needs to be activated if they are to experience and actualise their faith freely. Of course, my metaphor of an empty vessel is unfair on those preachers—and, my intuition tells me, they are the majority—who genuinely try to relate the message of their sermons to the listeners' situation and in so doing take the latter's experience seriously.

Nonetheless it would be better to locate the goal of preaching squarely on the listeners' side. If that is what one decides to do, one can no longer be content simply to communicate the message of revelation, religious themes or the meanings of texts. One's aim would be to stimulate bible-related processes in one's listeners. And it is not a matter of what bible-related processes preachers should trigger in their listeners, but what conditions they should create that will enable their listeners to initiate these processes for themselves in freedom, without (unintentional) outside religious pressure or (gentle) religious coercion. By bible-related processes I mean psychological processes in listeners' minds, in interaction with meanings residing in the reception of biblical texts.[17]

Let us consider the psychological processes at issue. On the basis of evolutionary and cognitive psychology I distinguish between four major groups: attention, surprise and curiosity, thought, and volition. They

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[17] I am assuming that the biblical pericopes, at least in principle, are received by listeners with the help of the implicit steering actively present in these pericopes, in such a way that the recipients grasp their meaning in and through the psychological processes triggered by this implicit steering. What needs to be specified more precisely in this definition are the relations between the concepts of listening and reading, implicit steering, meaning, reception processes and psychological processes. The separate mention of the two kinds of processes, i.e. reception processes and psychological processes, implies some criticism of reception-related or reader-oriented exegesis, which usually disregards the psychological processes of the actual or 'empirical' reader (for an illustration, see Van der Woude 2005, 43).

are relevant, because they help to discover meanings in the reception of biblical texts in a way that is conducive to a free religious experiential process, a free religious appraisal and evaluation process, and free religious choice by the listener.

The first group, attention, comprises sensory processes that pertain more to the conditions of preaching than the actual sermon. These include not just hearing (and following) the readings, however important that is, as is evident when the readers' rendering of the texts is inadequate, for instance as regards volume, modulation, tone or resonance, and the readings are not understood auditorily. It also concerns perceptions of the material and social space in which the readings take place, including the architecture, objects and décor, the persons occupying this overall scene and their interrelationships. Aspects of this scene can heighten attention to the readings, and hence to the subsequent sermon, and turn it into focused attention, but they can also distract attention and weaken concentration. For a sermon to succeed, whatever the purpose envisioned, focusing the listeners' attention is clearly a sine qua non. When people are looking around them, shifting in their seats, clearing their throats and are clearly bored the necessary attention is lacking, no matter what the aim of the preaching, and certainly if that aim is the freedom of the listener.

The best way to approach the second group of psychological processes, surprise and curiosity, is to realise that they have to do with emotions. It may sound remarkable that after explaining attention as a condition for preaching I should focus on emotions at the actual start of the sermon, and especially these two emotions. That is because the psychological processes at work in listeners—be they stimulated by metaphors, stories, images, concepts, information or arguments in the sermon—are coordinated by emotions, whatever they may be. It is the operation of emotions that stimulates, produces, directs, harmonises and integrates the psychological processes in the listener (Tooby & Cosmides 2005).

What kind of emotions are the two that I have in mind here, surprise and curiosity? I have already distinguished between positive and negative emotions and between primary and complex ones. In addition one can distinguish between self-directed and other-directed emotions (Hermans 1993). Surprise and curiosity may be seen as primary, positive emotions that can be both self-directed and other-directed. They are aroused by new, unexpected information that prompts closer exploration and investigation. In particular they are evoked by an unexpected question

or problem that breaks through familiar routines and habits and is used not simply as a motivating mechanism at the beginning but is pursued like a golden thread running throughout the sermon. In other words, the contents of the sermon are not determined by a particular theme or a particular meaning of a text but by a question or problem. That can make the sermon absorbing, creating a certain fascination and a desire to answer the question or examine some sides of the problem. This in its turn stimulates enjoyment, another of the primary, positive emotions mentioned above (Frijda 1986, 347–347).

To arouse the emotions of surprise and curiosity preachers have various rhetorical techniques at their disposal, such as outlining a paradox, dilemma or even aporia contained in the reception of (one of) the readings. The aporia could be religious, for instance faith or doubt, belief or unbelief, certainty or illusion, fate or destiny, meaning or meaninglessness, religion or violence; or it could be moral, such as tragedy or guilt, good or evil, self-regard or other-regard, sex or love, life or death. Religion is not about solving such aporias, for they are insoluble, but it can help people to suffer and endure them without succumbing to them, to tolerate and even accept them. Confronting the aporias that every person faces and assimilating them emotionally and cognitively can contribute to a more wholesome, more mature faith—faith that no longer fulfils a primarily instrumental function but displays features of faith as a quest, a mystagogic quest.

In fostering such a religious attitude of quest a third group of processes is needed, namely thought. On the whole preachers tend not to devote much time to thought in their sermons. In recent times they have been accustomed to hear advocacy of metaphoric and, even more often, narrative preaching. Now yet another requirement is fired at them: thought. Probably they are involuntarily reminded of catchetic preaching or, even worse, catechism-related preaching, in which the preacher tries to extend the listeners' knowledge by instilling and explaining to them the dogmatic principles of the trinity, the incarnation, Jesus' divine and human nature, the virgin birth and the empty tomb. But in terms of evolutionary and cognitive psychology thought is a different kettle of fish. In the homiletic context I have in mind it may be regarded as a kind of expansion of the emotions of surprise and curiosity, including the resultant exploration, which entails weighing the alternatives for a proper approach to the aporias outlined above. Hence it is not a matter of traversing for the umpteenth time more or less dreary and irrelevant roads that have already been travelled ad

nauseam (convergent dogmatic thought), but of hunting for a match between the question raised and the individual and collective memory from which it can be approached, to which end all sorts of intersections have to be crossed and side roads to the right and the left have to be tried, without knowing beforehand where one will end up (divergent exploratory thought). This entails not so much consulting semantic memory, which consists of representational knowledge, but delving into rhapsodic memory that is associated with one's individual, cultural and social biography. The thought processes that are stimulated are, moreover, largely unconscious and only to a far lesser extent conscious. In other words, we think regardless, whether we want to or not, even whether we know it or not.

I consider stimulating such emotionally driven thought to be a major component of preaching. To this end the preacher has to lead the way in the thought process, explaining that he, too, is taking a risk in exploring alternative ways and so shedding every vestige of infallibility. A sermon may be regarded as a kind of experimental laboratory with apparatus for testing surmises without knowing the outcome in advance. And if the surmises are confirmed, they do not become absolute truths but merely have the status of confirmed surmises that can always be subjected to further scrutiny. What is faith other than confirmed surmises? In addition it is important to stimulate the imagination. That means getting beyond mental habits like what-happened-when and augmenting these, or even (partly) replacing them, with what-will-happen-if procedures. In the process metaphors and narrative are not taboo. On the contrary, inasmuch as metaphors stand our everyday knowledge on its head and stories about people beyond our life world broaden our perspective and horizons, they play an important role in the creative thought process that a sermon ought to be.

The last group of processes I want to consider relate to the will. The mention of this group, too, may mislead contemporary preachers. It could remind them of the moralistic, ascetic sermons of yore, with the accent on training the will and the iron discipline of making resolutions, seeing them through, checking and keeping track of them, all of which leads to religious unfreedom and not the religious freedom that I have in mind. What I am talking about is not the moral (or moralistic) will but the religious will. It brings the prior emotional and thought processes, characterised by exploration of new roads and byways, to a provisional end without reaching any final conclusion. Hence the volitive process is not directed from above—neither directly by God,

nor by some ecclesiastic authority or prescribed dogmatic notion—but from below by feeling, thinking individuals. It is as if they are asking themselves, consciously or unconsciously: considering the aporia I have been cogitating on, how do I now see my life, both individually and collectively? What of all this can I incorporate into my life and what cannot (yet) be accommodated? Can I agree with the (relatively) new insight I've come up with, or shall I leave it aside (for now)? What does it imply for my actions, both individual and collective? Do I have to change them, or do I continue the old pattern (for now) without making that a choice for all time?

Experienced readers may well have noticed that in analysing the four processes (attention, emotion, thought and volition) I was following one of the most striking definitions of the act of faith in scholastic theology: that of Thomas Aquinas. He defines faith as a combination of thought and will-related assent (*credere est cum assentione cogitare*).[18] In applying the definition I naturally did not use traditional scholastic terminology, and in addition I expanded it by accentuating attention and especially emotion, which are implicit in the scholastic will-related assent (*assensio*) anyway. But inspired by this scholastic tradition I have indicated what I consider to be the proper goal of preaching: located on the listeners' side, in a perspective of religious freedom.

Conclusion

This article has been a lengthy discourse. If we reconstruct it backwards from the end to the beginning, it advocates changing the service of the word in Catholic Eucharistic services, at any rate as regards the elements of the penitential rite, the readings and the sermon. This change, I argued, should be based on the three principles underlying human rights: human dignity, freedom and equality. Why human rights? Because they may be regarded as a phase in the cultural evolution we have been passing through for the past three centuries, which affords a moral orientation to a more humane society: justice for all, without discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, status, nation, culture, religion or whatever. It means breaking away from any group-bound, national, cultural and religious ethnocentrism. That is the

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[18] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica II–II, 2, 1.

justice that is focal in the creation story in Genesis 1. The story does not conflict with evolution theory, for its purport is social-anthropological and political-anthropological, not cosmological. Humankind is the image of God insofar as people practise justice, *ma'at*. That insight should permeate the entire service of the word.

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TOWARDS A LITURGICAL THEORY OF THE INCARNATED MIND. A NON-REDUCTIVE NATURALIST VIEW

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1   INTRODUCTION

Since the Second Vatican Council, there has been an anthropological shift in liturgical science, as in Catholic theology generally (Lukken 1999, 311). The focus shifted to the embodied human actor. The intention is to close the gap between transcendence and immanence, between divine actions and human actions. At the same time we need to recognise God's free and merciful initiative in coming to our world (Lukken 2001, 160). But how do we do this without opening up a new gap between the gift of God's grace (*opus operatus*) and human actions (*opus operantis*) in Christian ritual? This is a crucial problem of sacramental theology. It can only be solved if the ritual itself is the mediation of God's free gift (Schillebeeckx 2000, 178). The *opus operantis* (i.e. the ritual performed by human beings) must be part of the *opus operatus* and not merely an appendage to it.[1] The gap between God's actions and human actions will never be bridged completely. Every bridge we build will be secondary to the gap, which is fundamental.

Cognitive science of religion offers a new theory of ritual activity, which might provide a sounder anthropological basis for this theological problem.[2] It anchors ritual actions in people's mental functioning,

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[1] According to Chauvet, an objectivist interpretation of the sacraments was developed in the Scholastic period (12th–13th century. 'The sacraments are regarded less as *revelatory signs* than as *operative means* of salvation' (Chauvet 2001, xiv). This has led to questionable representations of the *ex opere operato* of sacraments as instrumental, remedial or germinal. The term '*ex opere operato*' is difficult to translate. Chauvet suggests rendering it as 'by the very fact that the (sacramental) act is (understood: validly, legitimately) accomplished' (Chauvet 2001, xv, note 1). Chauvet warns that this formula should not be misinterpreted as referring to some sort of magic. It indicates that God is sovereignly free to give his grace to humankind.

[2] Most Catholic liturgists who want to renew sacramental theology in the spirit of the post-Vatican II anthropological shift draw their anthropological insights from philosophy

that is "deeply into the bone" (Grimes 2000a). Cognitive science of religion takes a naturalistic view of an incarnated mind, which expresses itself in rituals and ritualising processes. We use the term 'incarnated mind' because it offers both a theological and an anthropological slant on ritual actions. Incarnation refers to the body (*carnis*) as the ground of all human actions, and to the theological notion of God becoming human in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Not all naturalistic views of religion are open to the idea of divine action within human action. One has to distinguish between reductive and non-reductive naturalist views of religion in general, and ritual actions in particular (Chesnik 2002; Goodson 2003). Reductive views in cognitive science of religion 'reduce' religion to the mind (see e.g. Newberg & D'Aquili 2001). We will discuss this approach at the end of the chapter. For the moment it suffices to say that we settle for a non-reductive naturalist view capable of accommodating the insider perspective of the religious ritual participant, who relates to some divine actor in embodied ritual actions.

The chapter is structured as follows. First we define religious rituals as the coalescence of divine and human action—or, more precisely, as divine actions working through human actions (section 2). Here we dwell on the aforementioned theological problem of anchoring God's act of grace in human ritual activity. Next, we present a theory of the way the incarnated mind works in ritual actions. We draw on the cognitive theory of participants' competence at ritual forms, developed by E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley (Lawson & McCauley 1990; McCauley & Lawson 2002) (section 3). On the basis of Lawson and McCauley's theoretical assumptions we formulate research questions regarding to the role of emotions in rituals. We gathered data from Dutch participants in the (Catholic) World Youth Days in Toronto in July 2002. We focussed on their experience of the open air mass celebrated by the pope at the end of World Youth Days. In January 2003 a retention test was administered to the same participants. The results of this research are reported in section 4. The chapter ends with an evaluation and discussion of the results (section 5). We evaluate some assumptions of Lawson and McCauley's cognitive theory of ritual competence (5.1), and consider the possibility of a non-reductive naturalist view of ritual competence in liturgical science (5.2).

(e.g. semiotics, phenomenology). Cognitive science of religion has the advantage of providing a solid empirical foundation for theories of ritual actions.

2 Divine Action Through Human Action

What do we mean by ritual actions? There appears to be broad consensus among scholars in both ritual studies (Bell 1992; 1997) and liturgics (Lukken 1999; Post 2001) that ritual actions cannot be sharply defined. The term refers to a category of human actions which, on the basis of a family likeness (in Wittgenstein's sense), belong together. The problem of definition relates partly to the fact that rituals always occur in a specific socio-cultural context (Schillebeeckx 2000). Because of the interplay between ritual and context there is a potentially infinite range of ritual activities.

Ritual is an activity, and as such it should be distinguished from reflective thought (Bell 1992, ix). It is not directed to reflection on religious ideas and values, but to human experience. It is a specific form of action, namely symbolic action. Ritual actions involve all the senses: vision, touch, smell, hearing, taste, as well as verbal expression (symbolic language) (Lukken 1999, 56). The source of the ritual process is the human body, in interaction with a symbolically constituted, spatio-temporal social environment. Any space can be assigned to this symbolic function, but it must be on the basis of a tradition embraced by the participants (Hermans 2003). Symbolic actions create a world of meaning, with which participants are integrated and from which they can reconstruct their personal life and the life of the community. In ritual the meaning lies in the actual activities, also known as the performance.

Tambiah mentions three attributes of ritual performance (quoted in Bell 1992, 41–42). Firstly, a ritual is 'acted', even when it entails speech. Speech in rituals should be seen as performative speech acts, in which utterances realise their own truth (Searle 1998, 115). The utterance, 'I forgive you', accomplishes the forgiveness. Secondly, the performance is located in a setting that addresses as many senses as possible so as to intensify the participants' experience. Thirdly, particular symbolic elements of the ritual refer to the natural and the social world. Bell warns, however, that the term 'performance' can give rise to misunderstanding. A performance is not a drama in a theatre where the actors are distinct from the audience. All participants in a ritual take part in the performance. Finally we stress the attribute of repetition. Rituals create structure in life: in the rhythm of a day, the annual rhythm of seasons and the life cycle (Lukken 1999). The repetitive aspect also relates to the social dimension of ritual activities. Human beings

look for order and that is exactly what rituals create. Through rituals people fit into an order peculiar to their particular socio-historical context. Rituals not only derive from the social order, but help to create and maintain it (cf. Durkheim).

Religious rituals establish a relation between the (social and natural) world and transcendent reality. Conceptions of this transcendent reality (God) differ widely (Van der Ven 1998), but however one conceives of it, faith in a transcendent reality is essential for religion to exist. This transcendent reality is linked with the mundane world (immanence). Rituals can evoke religious experience (Lukken 1999, 101). In other words, they can make people experience God's activity in their own lives and those of other people, in society and in nature. A characteristic of religious experience is that participants in rituals ascribe their experience to a non-natural, superhuman agent (God). They are not merely doing things themselves (active dimension), but something is being done to them (passive dimension). God can do things that human beings can never accomplish either by themselves, through other people, or through some other natural cause. A distinctive feature of Christian ritual is that it refers to God's unique, salvific history with his people in Jesus of Nazareth (Lukken 2001). Christian rituals (including the sacraments) have the same anthropological basis as rituals generally. God's activity (*opus operatum*) is accomplished in the ritual mediation (*opus operantis*) (Schillebeeckx 2000, 178).[3] This does not mean that God's grace is caused by human actions. Essential for an understanding of Christian rituals is that God's activity is conceived of as a free gift of grace initiated by God. God's grace works through ritual mediation, not by virtue of human action. Without mediation, God could not work in the life of people, history or nature. How could we experience God's agency without mediation? At the same time we should avoid a mechanistic view of religious rituals which sees human actions as causing divine action.

This intervention of divine grace and human action in the community lies at the heart of the renewal of Catholic sacramental theology after Vatican II. This is not the place for an elaborate account of the development of sacramental theology. We merely highlight some

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[3] More precisely, the *opus operantis* is already part of the *opus operatum*, because the combination of the two aspects is the performance that mediates the free gift of God's grace (Schillebeeckx 2000, 178).

characteristics of this renewal. The council did not develop a formal sacramental model, but corrected the Scholastic model which had been the standard at the Council of Trent (Chauvet 2001, xxi). Chauvet (2001, xxvii) describes it as a model centred on the objective efficacy of the sacraments as a 'source' of salvation. God sanctifies and saves human beings through the sacraments, which are sources or operative expressions (means or cause) of sanctification. Thus sanctified, human daily life becomes a spiritual offering to God's glory (Chauvet 2001, xxv). Characteristic of this objective model is the stress on a unilateral movement from God, via the sacraments, to humankind. As mentioned above, Vatican II does not relinquish this perspective but balances it with a reverse process: from humankind to God. From the human perspective the sacraments are the acme of a life sanctified by God's grace and the revelatory expression of this sanctification. This presupposes that God already acts salvifically in people's lives, and not only through sacraments.

For Chauvet this is a fundamental departure from the linearity of the objectivist model. It is in fact a triangular model: God acts towards humankind (and vice versa), the sacraments affect humankind (and vice versa), and God acts through the sacraments (and vice versa) (Chauvet 2001, xxiv). It is this fundamental interaction of God's free gift of grace with communal ritual action which constitutes Chauvet's new model of sacramental theology.[4] If this is what sacramental theology wants to express, how can modern cognitive science of religion help us to fathom the working of the human mind when God's free gift of grace makes itself felt within human ritual action?

3   How does the Incarnated Mind Work in Ritual Actions?

The approach to ritual known as cognitive science of religion does not focus on the question of which specific symbolic actions are rituals.

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[4] To avoid misunderstanding, the great Scholastics (e.g. Thomas Aquinas) acknowledge the twofold circuit from God to humankind, and from humankind to God. The second movement is poorly developed in their sacramental discourse, although not absent. Every period in history has to use the theoretical models available at the time. In this sense, modern cognitive science of religion offers new avenues for theology to express its views on sacraments. Maybe it can help us to express more accurately what sacraments are. At the same time future generations are sure to challenge our efforts, as we challenge those of past generations.

"Evolution does not create specific behaviours; it creates mental organisation that makes people behave in a particular way" (Boyer 2001, 268). How does the human mind function to permit rituals to operate in the manner they manifestly do? Rituals lend plausibility to counter-intuitive images (Boyer 2001, 271). The ritual action violates natural intuitive causal expectations.

> The action must be cognitively tagged as more than it seems. If the tag is some connection or appeal to superhuman agency, then the action qualifies as a religious ritual (Barrat & Lawson 2001, 185).

For example, a religious ritual can link people together 'for eternity'. Intuitively we know that human beings cannot conceive of anything that endures eternally. Participants in a religious ritual can pick up a signal that there is more to it than just human work. At the same time the breach of our normal, intuitive expectations must not be such that participants in the ritual are unable to accept the non-natural cause. Rituals are activities (or performances) which make participants experience the active presence and agency of God or some non-natural cause, or that God is the active recipient of our ritual activity. How does that happen? Rituals are not 'talk shows' *about* counter-intuitive agents (Pyysiainen 2001a). They are directed to religious experience: to be plausible and leave a lasting imprint in memory the experience has to be emotionally charged. Rituals have a deep impact if they evoke strong feelings and are sensorily remarkable. These attributes powerfully affect episodic memory, in which experiences are stored.

Rituals are effective if they turn up the emotional volume and provide a pageant for the senses. How do they achieve this? In the literature one finds two rival theories hypotheses:

– the *ritual frequency hypothesis* (Whitehouse 1995)
– the *ritual form hypothesis* (Lawson & McCauley 1990), or the *theory of religious ritual competence* (McCauley & Lawson 2002).

What is the crux of these theories? First we consider the ritual frequency hypothesis. Whitehouse (1995, 197) lists various attributes of rituals, of which we mention just three. Firstly, memory storage of rituals differs from that of ritual concepts. Religious concepts are stored in semantic memory; religious experience, on the other hand, is stored in episodic memory. Secondly, the frequency of transmission is important. Religious ideas, values and attitudes are lodged in memory through repetition. That is why religions put such emphasis

on reciting sacred texts. Experience, however, derives from specific events, often from special events in human life (e.g. birth and death). Thirdly, information processing of religious experience differs from that of religious concepts. In the case of concepts one must ensure that they are solidly anchored in the structure of semantic memory. What are the main attributes of a concept? What similarities are there with other ideas? To which umbrella category does the idea belong? In the case of religious experience it has to be emotionally 'carved' in episodic memory rather than gradually 'engraved' in semantic memory. The force of an experience does not depend on constant repetition but on the power of feelings. The extent to which a person is moved emotionally determines whether an experience is meaningful. Feelings can be reinforced by excessive sensory stimulation. That gives a signal that something special is happening.

In the *ritual form hypothesis* strong emotional effect depends not so much on frequent repetition as on implicit knowledge of the form of the ritual (Lawson & McCauley 1990). In addition to 'ritual form hypothesis' the authors also call it a '*theory of religious ritual competence*' (see McCauley & Lawson 2002, 8). This name underscores the point that their theory is about the human actor in religious rituals and not about ritual forms as such. It is a theory about how the incarnated mind works in religious ritual actions. We prefer the second name, but will also use the first (ritual form hypothesis) because it is better known.[5] What does the theory entail? Participants in a ritual recognise a particular form and respond to it (e.g. more or less emotionally). Lawson and McCauley emphasise that the recognition occurs unconsciously. This relates to the idea that people have an intuitive ontology when it comes to agency. For example, agency involves intentionality; an agent cannot be in two places at the same time; an agent has some, but not all, knowledge about the situation. The main reason for focussing on agency in ritual actions is that rituals are a form of social interaction (Barret & Lawson 2001, 186). This involves interaction not only between human agents but also between human (or immanent) agents and a divine (or transcendent) agent.

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[5] This could be because ritual *form* hypothesis stresses the aspect which differs from the rival theory developed by Whitehouse, namely ritual *frequency* hypothesis.

According to Lawson and McCauley, two principles of a ritual determine its form.[6] Both principles relate to the manner in which the 'superhuman' agent is involved in the ritual. What clues does the form of the ritual offer to the working of a transcendent actor? The authors use the term 'CPS agent', which stands for 'culturally postulated superhuman agent'. This could be God, but also angels, ancestors, et cetera. We prefer the term 'CPC agents'[7] or 'transcendent agents'. This agent is considered to be a non-natural cause which affects the life of an individual, a community or nature. What are the two principles which determine the form of rituals?

1. The first principle pertains to the primary manifestation of a transcendent agent in the structure of the ritual activity. This agent can operate either through the people performing the ritual, or through some other element (e.g. a sacred object like a rosary or a sacred place like the cave at Lourdes). This is known as the principle of superhuman agency (PSA): "which connection with the CPS-agents in the representation of a religious ritual constitutes the initial entry, i.e. the entry with the 'most direct connection' with the ritual at hand" (McCauley & Lawson 2002, 27). Rituals seek to make people experience God's activity. That is why the role of the ritual element closest to the CPC agent determines the form of the ritual. That could be either the ritual actor (priest, shaman, pandit) who acts as an intermediary between the participants and God (CPC agent), or some other ritual element such as the holy water that a person brings home from church or some place of pilgrimage.

2. The second principle relates to that which serves as a primary manifestation of the CPC agent in the structure of a ritual. Ultimately there is always a CPC agent operative in a ritual, but

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[6] The effect of the ritual can be seen as a logically necessary outcome of its form (Rappaport 1999, 138). From this perspective, one can agree with Lawson and McCauley's focus on form.

[7] The category of 'superhuman' is not without problems (e.g. super as 'more than human'). The concept of 'counter-intuitive agents' or 'counter-ontological agents' is preferable, because it locates the difference in the way the mind processes different kinds of agency (Pyysiainen 2003). Counter-intuitive agents have some properties which violate default assumptions of agency. For example, the agent may pass through solid objects or be in more than one place at the same time (McCauley & Lawson 2002, 25). They cannot violate all default assumptions, because this would make them incredible. That is why we opt for the term 'culturally postulated counter-intuitive agents' (CPC agents).

some rituals build on other rituals that are considered necessary for the operation of the CPC agent. The CPC agent has his or her primary manifestation in these underlying rituals, where he or she is 'immediately' present. The longer the chain of rituals to get to the 'immediate' presence of a CPC agent, the less important a ritual is in a religious system. A ritual that puts the believer in direct contact with God is more important than a ritual that does not. This is known as the principle of superhuman immediacy (PSI).

A decisive factor in the *ritual form hypothesis* is the location of the CPC agent. Where does 'God' crop up in the ritual system? Of the two principles cited above the first is decisive for the difference between ritual forms (Lawson & McCauley 1990, 128–130). Firstly, there are rituals in which the CPC agent is present in the structure of the action. This aspect can be reinforced by the sacred person who performs the ritual (e.g. priest, pandit, shaman). These rituals are called 'odd-numbered' type rituals (ON-type)[8] or 'special agent rituals' (McCauley & Lawson 2002). Secondly, there are rituals in which the presence of the CPC agent is associated with ritual tools (symbols, spaces, vestments, objects) or the recipients of the rituals. Often the role of the CPC agents is passive, hence their presence in the ritual less vital (Lawson & McCauley 1990, 135). Lawson and McCauley call them 'even-numbered' type rituals (EN-type), or 'special patient' and 'special instrument' rituals. ON-type and EN-type rituals may offer the same level of sensory stimulation. But in that case the ritual form hypothesis predicts that ON-type rituals will have a more powerful emotional impact on participants than EN-type rituals. After all, in the former the CPC agent is considered to be immediately present. The nearness of the transcendent agent (God or the divine) evokes strong emotions. Something is happening that is not the work of human hands.

The distinction in ritual types manifests itself in three characteristics of ritual, namely repeatability, reversibility and substitutability (McCauley & Lawson 2002, 30–33). Some rituals do not require repetition in the lifetime of the ritual participant. Rites of passage are an example of ON-type rituals (McCauley 2001, 131). Initiation into adulthood only happens once for each participant; it does not need

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[8] Lawson and McCauley distinguish several types of rituals in this category of ON-type of rituals. We omit this part of the theory because it is not crucial to our argument.

to be done over and over again. These rituals are typically connected with special ritual agents who mediate the power of CPC agents. This property of the ritual form must convince the participants that whatever is accomplished, is accomplished by God. The baptismal water has been blessed by the priest, and in the holy oil (*charisma*) that has been blessed by the bishop God himself is actively present. Such a rite does not have to be repeated. God's activity is at a different level from human activity: God accomplishes something for all eternity (McCauley 2001, 132). This special meaning of the ritual evokes powerful emotions in the participants. Something of inestimable existential value has actually happened.

EN-type rituals are different. Their form is that of rituals that are repeatable. Thus a believer may use a rosary to pray at a fixed time of day or of the week, read the Bible after dinner, or light a candle for a statue of a saint or the Holy Mother Mary. In these rituals the agents' actions carry no such finality as they do in special agent rituals (McCauley & Lawson 2002, 31). The CPC agent is also more remote from the ritual, as a result of which its emotional effect is less powerful. The expectations of the participants (active and passive) are less powerfully emotional. It does not have to happen at that very moment,[9] there will be another ritual which will be a repeat of this one. The second characteristic, reversibility, refers to the question whether a ritual's consequences can be reversed or not. "Because the consequences of special patient and special instrument rituals are temporary only, it is unnecessary to have procedures (ritual or otherwise) for their reversal" (McCauley & Lawson 2002, 31). We would tell somebody who says that his or her prayer has not been fulfilled to pray again (and light another candle). But there is no need to reconstruct the ritual that has been enacted. The consequences of special agent rituals need to be reversed. For example, marriage is considered to be a permanent bond between man and wife. If this bond breaks, some reconstruction is necessary with regard to the special agent ritual in which the permanent bond was established. Retrospectively, that ritual is not considered to have had a super-permanent effect because the ritual-as-intended did not take place. The third characteristic is substitutability. Ritual substitution often arises in EN-type rituals, because no religiously indispensable element hinges on any particular performance. One can light a candle for this specific

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[9] "Their effects are not super-permanent" (Lawson & McCauley 1990, 135).

saint, or for that one; one can go on a pilgrimage to Lourdes (France) or Santiago de Compostella (Spain). Because EN-type rituals have a temporary effect, they permit greater latitude in regard to instruments (e.g. a candle, a crucifix or a rosary) and patients (e.g. this saint or that one). Special agent rituals that are closely connected with the power of the CPC agent tend to resist substitution. The special ritual agent must be present to mediate between the participants and God, the correct procedures must be followed, the right words spoken and the correct gestures made. In the Catholic Church this applies to the consecration of bread and wine in the Eucharist. Because that bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, this can only be done by a special agent, the priest. The holy bread establishes close contact with God, because it is the body of Christ. The ritual act cannot be substituted by something else. As God is really present in the bread, this can evoke strong emotions in participants.[10]

If one compares the two theories, one finds that the ritual form hypothesis is more comprehensive than the ritual frequency hypothesis. The ritual form hypothesis can explain the same phenomenon as the ritual frequency hypothesis (McCauley 2001). The power of a religious ritual does not lie in repetition but in turning up the emotional volume, causing participants to have a profound experience that sticks in their memory. But the ritual form hypothesis goes further in that it links this explanation with the unique nature of religious rituals, namely the agency of a transcendent agent ('God'). In this way the theory tries to do justice to the distinctive character of religious rituals. The form of the ritual is designed to persuade participants of that divine agency or, to use the term of sacramental theology, of God's free grace.

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[10] At the same time the communion of bread and wine is repeatable (see first characteristic). Repeatability is a property of EN-type rituals. In the history of the Catholic Church there was a time (roughly before the synod of Trent) when ordinary believers only took communion once a year, preferably at Easter. There are also orthodox Protestant denominations which only have communion on very special occasions. For Catholics who take communion every Sunday this could mean that the ritual loses its significance as an ON-type ritual.

4   Research

4.1   *Research questions*

1. Compared to participants in an EN-type ritual, do participants in an ON-type ritual have:
   a. a stronger experience of God's presence, and
   b. stronger positive and weaker negative emotions?
2. a. Which elements of an ON-type ritual are reported to be connected with the experience of God?
   b. Do participants remember the same ritual elements as being connected with the experience of God?
3. Do participants in an ON-type ritual who experienced God retain:
   a. the same level of experience of God's presence, and
   b. the same level of positive and negative emotions?

According to the ritual form hypothesis we would expect participants to have a more powerful experience of God (CPC agent) in an ON-type ritual and, as a result, stronger emotions.

The second research question reflects the expectation that ritual elements which are connected with the CPC agent feature most prominently in the experience of participants. This applies especially when the CPC agent's immediate presence is experienced. Where does the CPC agent 'crop up' in the ritual? In which ritual element is that agent's presence and power experienced? In an ON-type ritual the experience of the CPC agent must be connected with the special agent. This experience of the CPC agent must still be remembered after some time, because it is the specific characteristic of the ritual. Participants will refer to the same ritual elements in which they experienced God and not to other elements.

The third research question pertains to the idea that powerful experiences and emotions are stored in episodic memory. They are easily retrieved and retain their power. The situation which made a strong (emotional) impression is easily recalled.

4.2   *Research design and instruments*

Lawson and McCauley's theory rests on two principles: the principle of superhuman agency (PSA) and the principle of superhuman immediacy (PSI). To test their theory we have to study the effect of an ON-type ritual, and compare it with the effects of an EN-type ritual. To answer

Figure 1: Research design

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        [2]                                      [3]
Post-test Experimental Treatment  ──────────▶  Retention test
    (ON-type ritual = Toronto)                     (back in the Netherlands)
        [1]        ▲
                   │
                   ▼
Post-test Control Treatment
    (EN-type ritual = Rotterdam)
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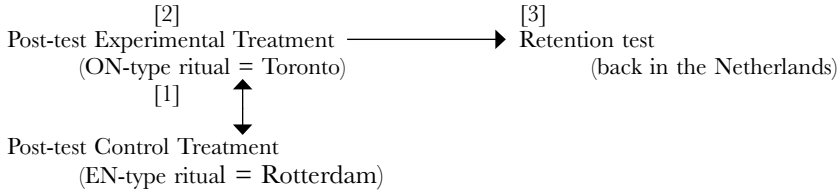
our research questions we used a non-equivalent post-test control group design (Campbell & Stanley 1963).[11]

The experimental treatment was the celebration of the Eucharist with the pope at the end of the World Youth Days (WYD) in Toronto in July 2003. This celebration has marked characteristics of an ON-type ritual. First there is the pope, who for Catholics is the successor of St Peter, hence close to God (PSA). Secondly, it is the pope who consecrates the bread and wine, which are believed to be the real presence of Jesus Christ. A Eucharist is an ON-type ritual in which God (or the CPC agent) is immediately present (PSI). There is no long chain of enabling acts between the ritual and the manifestation of God's power. In the bread and wine God is really present. The presence of the pope as main actor enhances this ritual quality. For Catholics who go to communion every Sunday, there can be a tedium effect. But when the pope has consecrated the bread and wine, it gives the ritual special poignancy. The Eucharist was held at Downsfieldpark at the end of a ten-day period. During this period all kinds of meetings took place: meeting with other young people from all over the world and with local parishes, catechetic meetings, other rituals (mass). Before taking part in the Eucharist, the youths slept in the park. The service is a sensory feast with music, colours of liturgical vestments, smell of incense, et cetera.[12]

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[11] The content and structure of the ritual were determined by members of the Catholic organising committee. We videotaped the experimental and control treatments in order to confirm our hypothesis that the experimental treatment is indeed an ON-type ritual and the control treatment an EN-type. The treatments themselves in this quasi-experimental design are not subjects of research. We presuppose that they have a causal effect on the experiences of the participants (i.e. experience of God, emotions), because the treatments precede (in time) the measurement of the experiences (post-test).
[12] The Dutch participants were not very close to the altar (centre of liturgical actions). They depended to a large extent on television screens and sound installations to follow the ritual actions.

The control treatment is an EN-type ritual. This is also a collective ritual action but there is no special position for the priest as intermediary between people and God. Ritual elements are readings of biblical texts, prayer, singing and meditation. All kinds of ritual tools are connected with the CPC agent: symbols, the space (a church), objects (candles, holy book), texts. But the CPC agent plays a passive role: the participants pray to God, light candles in God's honour, read texts in remembrance of God's actions. The participants in the EN-type ritual (n = 26) were WYD participants in a particular diocese in the Netherlands. Thus their religious background was the same as that of the WYD participants. As will be seen below, this equivalence is especially important in view of the specificity of the research population. The prayer service was held one month before the service at Downsfieldpark (Toronto). It was held in advance to ensure that the experience of the service at Downsfieldpark would not influence the experience of the EN-type ritual participants.

After the experimental (ON-type ritual) and control (EN-type ritual) treatment, the participants completed a questionnaire consisting of both closed and open items. Before going to Canada they completed a questionnaire giving their background variables. Participants in the experimental treatment (ON-type ritual) underwent the retention test more than six months after the experience at Downsfieldpark (February 2004). The open questions were categorised by two persons. Interrater reliability is >95%.

The first research question can be answered by comparing the effects of the experimental treatment (ON-type ritual) with those of the control treatment (EN-type ritual). The second research question requires an analysis of the content of the experience of God (CPC agent) at Downsfieldpark (experimental treatment). A similar analysis is made of the retention test scores six months later, concerning the ritual elements connected with the experience of God. The third research question can be answered by comparing the effects of the experimental treatment and the retention test.

We used the mysticism scale developed by Hood (1975; 1977) to measure the experience of the nearness of God (CPC agent). Mystical experiences are defined as experiences in which the person has a sense of union with God or some higher power. These experiences are triggered by incongruity between the individual and her limits. The mystical experience resolves the incongruity: "limits are transcended and the person is relatively suddenly made aware of particular aspects

of self in a classic spiritual manner" (Hood 1978, 285). Some features of this experience are: *a feeling of loss of self, a perception of everything as being 'One', an experience of timelessness and spacelessness, inexpressibility of the experience in conventional language.* We combined this scale with 'open' questions so people could express what they experienced in their own words. For example: "Have you ever had an experience which you would call 'holy'? If so, could you describe this feeling? Could you tell us when and how it happened?"

We developed a scale to measure emotions during the mass with the pope at the end of the WYD. This scale was based on two types of emotions by the personality psychologist H. Hermans. On the basis of his research, Hermans distinguishes four categories of emotions: positive, negative, other-directed and self-directed (Hermans & Janssen-Hermans 1995). In our research, we only used the categories of positive and negative emotions. Each category was measured by four indicators (affect terms). For example, the indicators of positive feelings are: joy, happiness, enjoyment and inner calm. The respondents were asked to rate their experience during moments in the ritual which they found very appealing according to these affect terms. We left it open if these were moments of experience of God's nearness or not. In addition the questionnaire contained open questions regarding emotions during the ritual in general, and specific emotions regarding the experience of God's nearness. For example: "Which moments in the service were most appealing to you? What kind of feelings did these moments arouse? Did you experience God as very near during this service? What did you feel?"

4.3   *Sample*

Our sample consisted of young Catholics who participated in the World Youth Days in Toronto from 18 to 28 July 2003. The total group comprised just over 450 people. We sent a questionnaire with a letter to all participants in June 2003. One third of the participants returned the questionnaire (n = 152). Of this group, only 49 returned the questionnaires after the Eucharist with the pope in Toronto. Of this number, nine respondents did not take part in the papal mass at Downsfield-park due to the weather or logistical problems. This left us with a sample of 40 respondents. The reason for the loss of so many respondents lies in the complexity of the data collection. The circumstances made it impossible to complete the questionnaire at Downsfieldpark.

Respondents had to complete it later, put it in a sealed envelope and give it to one of the group leaders or send it to our university. Only one third of the respondents did so. There were no significant differences between the sample for the experimental condition and the whole group of WYD participants.

In this section we describe the WYD participants and compare them with the overall Catholic population in the Netherlands. The data for all Dutch Catholics are taken from the Socon study in 2000. Where there are significant differences between our research sample (n = 40) and the total group of WYD participants (n = 152), we specify it. The average age of the participants was 23: the youngest was 15, the oldest 31. There were 42.2% female and 57.2% male participants.

The WYD participants have a far higher percentage for church attendance than the average Dutch Catholic (see table 1).[13] More than 70 percent of our sample go to church every Sunday, in comparison with only 8.2% of all Catholics in the Netherlands. We also compared WYD participants with the average Dutch Catholic regarding belief in a theistic God, which is a 'classic' or 'traditional' Christian image of God: a God who is above the world and controls it. Belief in a theistic God does not differ significantly between Catholics generally and WYD participants (see table 2). Finally, WYD participants differ from other Catholics as regards the experience of God's nearness (see table 3). WYD participants report more experiences of God's nearness.

Table 1: Comparison of church attendance (in %) between all Catholics
in the Netherlands and WYD participants

Church attendance	Dutch Catholics (%)	WYD participants (%)
At least 1x per week	8.3	72.4
At least 1x per month	53.0	13.8
A few times a year	20.3	13.2
Seldom or never	18.4	0.7

= 172.23 (p<.001)

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[13] Only 12 people in the Socon data fall in the 15–29 age group. This is a poor basis to test difference of church attendance with the Socon data. If we take these results as an indication of church attendance among this age group, the WYD participants go to church more frequently than other young Catholics.

Table 2: Comparison of belief in a theistic God (in %) between all
Catholics in the Netherlands and WYD participants

	m	sd.
Dutch Catholics	3.39	.83
WYD participants	3.45	1.08

Scale ranges from 1 (strong disbelief) to 5 (strong belief)
t = .58 (n.s.)

Table 3: Comparison of mean scores on the mysticism scale between all
Catholics in the Netherlands and WYD participants

	m	sd.
Dutch Catholics	1.53	.42
WYD participants	2.08	.52

Scale ranges from 3 (yes), 2 (to some extent), to 1 (no)
t = 10.90 (p<.001)

To summarise: our sample consists of young Catholics (15–31 years)
who go to church frequently (1x a week), who believe in a God who
rules the world, and who have had more experiences of God in their
lives than other Catholics. The WYD participants are both strong
believers and strong belongers. This is a good group to answer our
research questions, because they are familiar with the ON-type ritual
of the experimental treatment. If the chosen ritual has the expected
effect, it would be on such a group.

4.4   *Results*

4.4.1   *First research question*

Do participants in an ON-type ritual have a stronger experience of
God's presence and stronger emotions than participants in an EN-type
ritual? Participants in the ON-type ritual (i.e. the Eucharist in Toronto)
report a significantly stronger experience of God than participants in
the EN-type ritual (see table 4). For the descriptive statistics, see table
9 (appendix). Only one type of emotion differed significantly, namely
positive emotions. Participants in the Eucharist at Downsfieldpark (EN-
type ritual) report stronger positive emotions roused by that ritual than
by the prayer ritual in Rotterdam (ON-type ritual). They also reported
weaker negative emotions, but this difference is not significant.

Table 4: Comparison of mean scores (t-test) on experience of God and emotions between post-tests of the Control Treatment (EN-type ritual) and the Experimental Treatment (ON-type ritual)

| | ON-type ritual EN-type ritual | | | | | | |
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	t	df	sig.
Experience of God	2.06^1	.52	1.75^1	.39	2.52	58	.01
Emotions							
– Positive	4.26^2	.75	3.77^2	.58	2.84	60	.01
– Negative	1.51^2	.78	1.78^2	.71	−1.47	59	.15

[1] scale ranging from 1 (no), 2 (to some extent), to 3 (yes)
[2] scale ranging from 1 (completely absent) to 5 (very strong)

4.4.2 *Second research question*

The second research question concerns the contents of the experiences stored in the memories of participants in the ON-type ritual at Downsfieldpark. Which ritual elements are mentioned in relation to the presence and efficacy of the CPC actor? Where is the CPC agent located in the ritual? Firstly, according to the principle of superhuman agency (PSA) the primary manifestation of the CPC agent is decisive for experience of that agent's presence. In an ON-type ritual a ritual agent (priest) is the intermediary for the presence of the CPC agent. Secondly, according to the principle of superhuman immediacy (PSI) some ritual forms make participants experience the CPC agent directly. All the information that the participant derives from the ritual form suggests that the CPC agent is working here and now. The Eucharist is such a ritual, because Christ (CPC agent) is present in the bread and the wine.

   In order to answer the research question, we analysed the words connected with the experience of God's nearness during the ritual. For our analysis we used the answers to the following questions:

– Could you mention the moments in the celebration which appealed most to you?
– What feeling did these moments evoke?
– Did you feel very near to God in these moments?
– Did you feel close to God in this Eucharist?
– How did it happen?

All the answers to these question were combined in our analysis. This means that a respondent could mention a ritual element in answer to one question, and God's nearness in response to another question. In the analysis, all the statements are considered to be part of one overall view of the meaning of this Eucharist (ON-type ritual). We first listed all the ritual elements connected with an experience of God's nearness. Next we reduced the answers of the respondents to four categories: the pope, consecration/holy bread, togetherness and the weather (see table 5). The pope is very strongly connected with words (his words, his sermon, when he addressed us), but participants also refer to his charisma. The pope only has to be there to radiate God's nearness. The contrast with the pope's physical frailty (can hardly walk, speaks softly) makes this experience even more powerful. The holy bread is sometimes mentioned in connection with the consecration. The verbs most often associated with the holy bread are 'receiving' and 'eating'. God (CPC agent) is experienced as near when the person is brought into contact with the holy bread (see table 5). 'Togetherness' refers to the bond with other participants as a ritual characteristic: singing together, praying together, standing in the rain together, passing the peace together. This togetherness is a source of experience of God's nearness. On the face of it the last category, 'weather', might seem strange as a ritual element. The organisers of the papal mass probably did not include it as a factor in their planning of the service, although anyone organising an open-air ritual should allow for it. In the words of the respondents, it was not just the weather but the unexpected change in the weather. Respondents experienced the sudden change of the weather as a limit experience. This unexpected change is very often connected with some ritual element: during the Bible reading; at the beginning of the service; on the arrival of the pope; during the singing of 'Hallelujah' (see table 5).

With the aid of these categories we can answer our second research question. Which ritual elements are reported to be connected with the experience of the CPC agent? The role of the ritual element that is closest to the CPC agent determines the form of the ritual (see the principle of superhuman agency (PSA)). Four elements are mentioned by our participants in the mass at Downsfieldpark. Half of the respondents mention the pope, which was to be expected, as he is seen as the successor of St Peter (see table 6). A quarter mentions the holy bread, which is likewise to be expected from the form of the ritual. The pope as intermediary between humans and God and the holy

Table 5: Statements of respondents in four categories of ritual elements connected with the experience of God (experimental condition, n = 40)

Pope	The pope's entrance; his words; his sermon; as if the pope was addressing me personally; the pope's strength despite his physical frailty; through the vocation of the pope; by listening to the pope; when the pope left; when the pope drove past right next to me; the pope's strong spirit; the pope speaks the words of God; when the pope asked to wear the cross; the pope began to speak at a moment when we had lost courage; the Eucharist with the pope
Holy bread	Receiving the holy bread; like eating a piece of heaven; communion rite; in the consecration and communion; the consecration (when it became very quiet in the field); consecration; the giving of the bread; when I received the bread
Togetherness	Going to communion together; to sing together, singing hand in hand; to experience God in others, a feeling of unity with others; if you help others; in love for others; togetherness of all the people standing in the rain; passing the peace to those next to me; God was there in the person next to me/in others who helped me
Weather	When the weather changed suddenly; when the sun suddenly broke through the clouds; when the sky cleared; when the sun started to shine during the Bible reading; when it stopped raining at the beginning of the service; when the rain stopped on the arrival of the pope; during the 'Hallelujah' the clouds cleared

bread are also ritual elements in which the CPC agent is immediately present (see the principle of superhuman immediacy (PSI)). The two other elements are rather unexpected in the context of Lawson and McCauley's ritual form hypothesis. How can togetherness and the weather be ritual elements through which people experience the CPC agent as immediately present?

The second part of the second research question was: do participants consistently refer to the same ritual elements in the tests after the experimental treatment and the retention treatment? We expect this to be the case because of the emotional overtones of the experience. A person who has had a powerful emotional experience will know exactly how and where it happened.[14] Retrieval of the situation is facilitated

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[14] For example, everyone will know where he or she heard the news of the 9/11 disaster in New York.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of the number of ritual elements connected with experience of God (experimental condition, n = 40)

	Pope	Holy bread	Togetherness	Weather
Post-test				
Experim. treatment	20	10	13	17
Retention test	17	14	18	16

Table 7: Association (*Kramers V*) between different categories of ritual elements connected with experience of God (experimental condition)

		Retention test			
		Pope	Holy bread	Weather	Togetherness
Post-test	Pope	.35*			
Experimental	Holy bread		.42*	.47*	
treatment	Togetherness				.45*

* significant at .05 level (p<.05).

by the emotions connected with the experience. Table 6 shows that there are differences in the ritual elements which respondents mention in the tests after the experimental treatment and the retention test, but the consistency of their responses is relatively high (see table 7). People who mention the pope, holy bread and togetherness after their experience at Downsfieldpark do so again six months later (retention test). There is only one exception. There is no significant association between weather in the test after the experimental treatment and the retention test. Instead, people who refer to the holy bread as signifying God's nearness mention the weather significantly more in the retention test. This may be explained by the exceptional weather conditions at the time of the Eucharist (ON-type ritual). Respondents connect the weather with other ritual elements, such as the holy bread.

4.4.3   *Third research question*

The third research question concerns the experiential quality of the memory of the ON-type ritual at Downsfieldpark. Do participants in an ON-type ritual who experienced God retain the same level of experience of God's presence, and the same level of emotions? If not, there would be significant differences between the test after the experimental treatment and the retention test. This is not the case (see table 8). The

Table 8: Comparison of mean scores (T-test) on experience of God and emotions between the post-test and the retention test of the experimental treatment (ON-type ritual)

	Post-test Retention Test						
	mean	s.d.	mean	s.d.	t	df	sig.
Experience of God	2.06^1	.52	2.08^1	.50	−.14	36	.89
Emotions							
− Positive	4.26^2	.75	4.22^2	.76	−.34	36	.73
− Negative	1.51^2	.78	1.66^2	.71	1.14	34	.26

[1] scale ranging from 1 (no), 2 (to some extent), to 3 (yes)
[2] scale ranging from 1 (completely absent) to 5 (very strong)

experience of the CPC agent remains as powerful six months later as it was in Toronto. The experience of God's nearness did not fade in the episodic memory of the respondents, but remained as intense as it was immediately after the ON-type ritual in Toronto. And there is no change in the quality of the emotions after six months, nor in positive and negative emotions. The experience of God's nearness is emotionally highly charged, as predicted by the ritual form hypothesis. These emotions remain as strong in the episodic memory as during the 'original' event when they were stored in memory.

5   Conclusion and Discussion

In the exploratory study described above we formulated three research questions. We first present our conclusions from the research results summarised in section 4. Then we discuss two issues. In section 5.1 we reflect on two unexpected research results against the background of the ritual form hypothesis. We consider whether this theory does not need to be supplemented with other theories, while acknowledging that it seems to be able to predict some major effects of ritual competence. In section 5.2 we reflect on the possibility of developing a non-reductive naturalist view of ritual actions in liturgical science.

Three research questions were formulated. The first concerned differences in the experience of participants in an ON-type and an EN-type ritual. The research results confirmed our expectations. Participants in an ON-type ritual report a stronger experience of God's nearness, as well as stronger positive emotions. There is also a difference in negative emotions, but this is not significant. This could have been caused by

our small sample, but also by the fact that participants hardly mention negative feelings at all (ceiling effect).

The second research question relates to the characteristics of an ON-type ritual. The participants mention four ritual elements that are connected with the CPC agent: the pope, the holy bread/consecration, togetherness (with others) and the weather. The first two elements are to be expected on the basis of the ritual form hypothesis. In the discussion we return to the last two elements, which are not included in the ritual form hypothesis.

The third research question relates to the expectation that experience of God and strong emotions would not be extinguished over time. Six months after the papal mass at Toronto participants reported the same level of experience of God and the same level of emotions. This emotional information, which was stored in episodic memory, is easily retrievable. As predicted by the ritual form hypothesis, it did not lose its experiential and emotional intensity.

5.1   *Reflection on the ritual form hypothesis*

Not every research finding was corroborated by the ritual form hypothesis. Two elements (togetherness and weather), which were connected with the experience of God, are not part of this theory. Although the ritual form hypothesis offers good predictors of human experience, it does not fully explain the intensity of religious experience in rituals. We think it needs to be supplemented with other theories that take more elements into account than just the role of the CPC agent. The two principles of PSA (principle of superhuman agency) and PSI (principle of superhuman immediacy) are confined to the role of the CPC agent. This is the strength of the ritual form hypothesis, but also its weakness.

Firstly, various authors have pointed out that this theory needs to be augmented by the social dimension of ritual. Thus Pyysiäinen (2001b, 93) indicates that the emotional effect of rites of passage cannot be associated exclusively with the CPC agent. Such rituals derive a powerful emotional impact from the uniqueness of the social event (e.g. birth, marriage, death) (Boyer 2001). One can make the same assumption about the mass at Downsfieldpark. The participants went on an excursion to attend a unique event. They spent ten days together with other young people (both from the Netherlands and from other countries), to whom they came to relate closely. Then, with all their new and old friends, they go to Downsfieldpark. After spending a night in the open,

they celebrate mass. This social dimension is reflected in the category of togetherness as a ritual element. From the perspective of liturgical science, this social dimension is at the heart of every Eucharist. "The agent of celebration is the church as church understood as the primary meaning of assembly" (Chauvet 1999, 32–33). The ritual form hypothesis completely ignores this community dimension. From a theological perspective it is not only "erroneous to say that 'such and such a priest celebrates' (what the priest does is preside 'in the name of Christ'), but it is insufficient to think that the community celebrates only by uniting itself to what the priest does" (Chauvet 1999, 33).

Secondly, the weather was very bad before the ritual. Then, when the ritual started, the clouds cleared and the sun began to shine. This situation has all the characteristics of a contrast experience, which Hood (1977, 1978) mentions as a trigger of mystical experiences. The bad weather must have caused stress among the respondents. We have some proof of this in the reports of nine respondents, which we had to remove from our sample because they did not participate in the service. Three respondents who did attend report frustration because of the weather and bad circumstances. The change in the weather is a contrast experience which evoked an experience of God for some respondents. It becomes a ritual element, not on its own but in conjunction with other ritual elements, for example: 'the clouds cleared when the pope arrived', 'the sun began to shine during the Bible reading'.

Thirdly, other authors point out that the body, too, strongly influences the emotional impact of a ritual. Thus Newberg and D'Aquili (2001, 87) maintain that some rituals entail rhythmic activities that are repeated automatically (e.g. song, monotonous sound, bodily movements). Such behaviours affect people's neuro-physiological system in such a manner that they feel they are being enveloped in (ultimate) reality. Rituals also often entail physical actions that capture attention because they deviate from normal actions (e.g. deep genuflection; rapid, uncontrolled movements). Such deviant actions give a signal (through a part of the brain known as the amygdala) that something extraordinary is happening. That, too, can evoke strong feeling. Such deviant actions are common in religious rituals, but cults and sects in particular use them extensively (see Poloma & Hoelter 1999).[15]

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[15] One of the participants reports fainting during the mass. The respondent knows that this was connected with the heat and lack of food. At the same time she sees God's hand in this event.

5.2   *Contribution of a non-reductive naturalist theory of ritual competence to liturgical science*

We have gone to great lengths to show the fruitfulness of the ritual form hypothesis for understanding people's ritual competence. It may be fruitful, but is it relevant to liturgical science as a theological discipline? The fact that this is a naturalist theory of ritual actions makes it suspect in some theological circles. Should we not leave naturalist theories to the social sciences and religious studies, and construct theological theories about the Christian liturgy? We would argue that there is no contradiction if the naturalist theory of ritual competence is non-reductive. This type of theory is theologically legitimate from a transcendence-in-immanence perspective. A non-reductive naturalist theory equips liturgical science for interdisciplinary debate (especially with ritual studies) and comparative research. In this debate liturgists (theologians) are needed because of their inside knowledge of the semantics of Christian liturgy.

Firstly, naturalist theories understand religion as a natural human category, not a supernatural category. The latter is characterised as 'theological', that is belief in the supernatural. Theology is about something 'over there' in contrast with 'over here' (Chesnik 2002). Naturalism restricts the study of religion to what can be researched in natural categories, that is something experienced by people. The ground for naturalism is found in the canon of criteria for good academic research. One criterion is the need to restrict research to what is observable. It is impossible to test statements about a reality 'over there'. How does one decide whether a proposition about this reality is false or true? Scientific knowledge is fallible. All knowledge is constructed by human beings and can never escape the human condition, implying that it could be falsified. Naturalism, in this view, has always been characteristic of the social sciences and the discipline of religious studies, which researches religion.

But is naturalism compatible with theology? The answer is yes, but not every form of naturalism and not every type of theology. Theology can be understood as a science about God (*theologia*) but also as science about the human experience of God's manifestation in individual lives, society, history and nature (*oikonomia*) (Beinert 1985). Catholic theology after the anthropological "shift" adopts the second definition as the subject of theology. Theology reflects on the way people experience God in rituals, such as the Eucharist or a rite of absolution. This form

of theology can be compatible with naturalism without falling into the pitfall of (neo-)pelagianism. There are two types of naturalism: a reductive and a non-reductive type. Reductive naturalism wants to restrict the study of religion in general, and rituals in particular, to observable reality. For example, if people pray and say that they feel freed from anxiety, than the meaning of the prayer is this freedom from anxiety. Whether or not a person has experienced this effect, can be tested empirically. This theory is reductive because it reduces religion to 'natural causes' and ignores the insider perspective of the religious person who refers to some non-natural cause (God). Non-reductive naturalism wants to do justice to the religious person's experience of a situation as divinely caused. Religious experience (like prayer) is different from other experiences precisely because it assumes the involvement of some non-natural cause. This non-natural cause is not studied in isolation from human action but as God acting through human action. Religious practices and experience have a characteristic that distinguishes them from other practices and experience. They cannot be reduced to psychological, neurological, sociological or whatever origins. A psychologist recognised for his non-reductive naturalist view of religion is William James (Chesnik 2002; Goodson 2003).[16] For James, religious experience is part of nature. In experience (as a natural category) religious people feel themselves connected with some non-natural cause which imparts order to existence. The objective truth of religion to which an empirical psychologist can assent is a continuation of our natural life, not an addition to it (Goodson 2002, 12).[17]

The second point we want to discuss is the theological justification of a non-reductive naturalist view. Can Christianity be regarded as 'a religion' which can be studied alongside other religions? Can the Christian liturgy be studied from the perspective of religious rituals? Some theologians fear that experiential features common to all religion will become the norm for Christianity. Thus a human category becomes a straitjacket for the Christian tradition when it speaks about God. Christianity cannot be regarded as 'a religion', but is a category

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[16] James also has theological critics, most notably Stanley Hauerwas (see: *With the grain of the universe: the church witness and natural theology*, Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001). Hauerwas's position is grounded in a *sui generis* claim of Christianity. We will criticise this position below.

[17] For James religious experience is grounded in a pre-conceptual level, which has logical and chronological priority. This idea presents many difficulties (see Hermans 2002, 164–168). We omit this critique, because it is not pertinent to our argument.

sui generis. God, who above all is known in the life and death of Jesus Christ, is Totally Other, not to be slotted into what is defined as religion in human terms (Schüssler-Fiorenza 2000, 10–12). The dilemma seems to be that either Christianity is a *sui generis* concept (incommensurable with all other phenomena), or it ceases to be distinct from the rest of personal and societal life. However, the dilemma is false, because it introduces a dichotomy between transcendence and immanence. Once this dichotomy has been introduced it can never be bridged. But the theological model of incarnation opposes such a gap. Human beings are 'themselves' by virtue of 'being from God' (Houtepen 1998). Incarnation refers to the fact that human beings participate in God, and this is seen as a gift of God's grace. The antithesis of God's actions versus human actions is false. In the act of faith the initiative is reversed: God takes over, leading human beings into infinite time and space, which is God. Finitude is not infinitude, but it is open to it. Hence we opt for a theological model of transcendence-in-immanence. There are traces and signs of a transcendent reality in our immanent reality. On the one hand we should avoid making Christian religion an isolated category, on the other we should avoid reducing it to a phenomenon in personal and societal life.

Thirdly, we want to stress that a non-reductive naturalist theory of religious rituals equips liturgical science for interdisciplinary debate (especially with ritual studies) and for comparative research. A non-reductive naturalist theory opens up common ground for liturgical science to enter the interdisciplinary debate on rituals and ritual actions with other sciences, in particular the socials sciences and ritual studies (Grimes 2000b). It also is one of the best theories for engaging in comparative research into Christian rituals and rituals of other religions. Cognitive theories like ritual form hypothesis are especially promising, because they identify mental structures which act as trans-historical and cross-cultural constraints on ritual competence (Martin 2000, 54–44). For liturgical science it is important to be able to participate in this interdisciplinary debate, not only with a view to its own theorising but also its place in the university. To be recognised as an academic discipline, liturgical science must be able to take part in the public debate within the university. To participate in this public debate about religious rituals in general, and Christian rituals in particular, liturgical science must speak a conceptual language which permits academic partnership with other disciplines. A non-reductive naturalist theory of ritual competence can fulfil this condition.

Fourthly, in line with the foregoing arguments, let us explain the specific contribution that liturgical sciences can make to the development of a non-reductive naturalist theory of religious rituals. What kind of expertise can liturgical sciences bring to the theorising process? To answer this question, we make a distinction between the semantics and structure of religion as a cognitive system, and the use or practice of the system in various societies and cultures (Penner 2000, 70). Rituals need to be understood via the religious codes (semantics) that are used and the practice of rituals in various contexts (pragmatics). The theoretical task of developing a non-reductive naturalist theory of religious rituals can be divided into explanation of the semantics of rituals, and explanation of their pragmatics. Penner (2000, 70–71) points out that we cannot derive semantics—that is language—from a study of pragmatics, that is speech, performance or use. Both are needed for theory building about religious rituals. Liturgists are specialists in the semantics of Christian rituals. In the present research, this is particularly evident in regard to the ritual elements connected with experience of God in the Eucharist (section 4.4.2). Specific knowledge of the semantics of the Eucharist is needed to analyse and categorise the participants' comments. One needs hermeneutic insight to do justice to the insider perspective of participants in the Eucharist. This hermeneutic understanding (*Verstehen*) is the specific expertise of liturgists. This is exemplified in section 5.1, when we remarked that the ritual form hypothesis wrongly ignores the community dimension of rituals and disconnects the special ritual agent (priest) from the community. A hermeneutic understanding of the Eucharist can reveal this dimension and broaden our perspective on this Christian rite.

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LITURGICAL ACTION FROM A LANGUAGE PERSPECTIVE ABOUT PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVES IN LITURGY

Aad de Jong

Since the 1970s notions like performance, performativeness and performatives have featured quite prominently in various scientific approaches to ritual and liturgy (cf. Tambiah 1979; Werlen 1984; Bell 1997, 72–76). They have an impact on practical-theological theorising about liturgical activities, especially when the focus is on linguistic aspects of liturgy (e.g. Ladrière 1973; Ware 1981; Hug 1985; Schermann 1987; Schaller 1988; Merz 1988). A major source of inspiration for these approaches was J. L. Austin's linguistic theory. In the 1940s he found that language does not merely consist of statements about reality, but that people could use words to create realities, as in the utterance, "I baptise you…" (cf. De Clerck 1992) or "I herewith declare the meeting open". He called such utterances performatives. To what extent the term is a fortunate choice remains to be seen. Austin himself eventually abandoned the distinction between constatives and performatives. He increasingly realised that all language is a form of action, hence he looked for a more exact distinction between different kinds of speech acts.

What is known as speech act theory, which grew from this approach, did introduce certain nuances and refinements. Nonetheless there have been many misconceptions and some confusion about the notions of performance, performativeness and performatives in recent times. Habermas (1991, 28), for instance, refers to the 'performative character of all speech acts'. In this article I will show why it is incorrect and dangerous to regard all linguistic communicative acts, for example in liturgy, as 'implicit performatives', since that makes it difficult to explain why liturgy should include so many typical performative speech acts such as 'we thank God' and 'therefore we ask you'. And how does one explain the specific power of the consecration formula in a eucharistic service, whereas it does not contain a single performative speech act? Hence the main purpose of this article is to help clear up actual and possible misconceptions and confusion in liturgical science about the notions of performance, performativeness and performatives.

To this end I draw on J. R. Searle's philosophical ideas on language as a form of collective activity. I shall use these ideas to develop an analytical instrument for liturgy as a performance, inasmuch as it is conducted via speech acts. In so doing I shall pay special attention to the kind of speech acts that can legitimately be called performatives. On that basis I make some recommendations for liturgical studies as a practical-theological discipline. Hence the cardinal question in this article is: how can an approach to the language of liturgy as a totality of speech act performances help to achieve the goal of liturgical science as a practical-theological discipline more effectively, especially when it comes to liturgical language? The first sub-question is what the language of liturgy entails when viewed as a totality of speech act performances. The second is what (the aim of) liturgical science as a practical-theological discipline can and should be, especially in regard to liturgical language.

In so doing I rely mainly on J. R. Searle's version of speech act theory, which he bases on his theory of intentionality and, more specifically, his theory of collective action. His key concepts are not performance or performativeness, but action, speech act and performative. This article is built round these three concepts. First I explore what liturgical performance entails as an action, at least in so far as that applies to language as a form of action, and what it implies for liturgical research (section 1). Then I deal in more detail with the various types of speech acts which (may) be performed in liturgy, and on which liturgical science could focus (section 2). I then apply these ideas to the specific type of speech acts that can legitimately be called performatives. Since they are strikingly common in liturgy, they call for special attention from liturgists (section 3). Finally I try to determine the nature and goal of liturgical research into liturgical language in light of the insights from speech act theory (section 4).

1 LITURGICAL PERFORMANCE AS ACTION

'Performance' in a general sense means putting on stage or executing something. In this sense one can distinguish between performance and competence (ability). In ritual studies and liturgical science the term 'performance' often indicates that religious rituals do not serve some extrinsic purpose such as the construction of social identity, but rather that rites and liturgy are collective activities with intrinsic value. That

value could be, for instance, that they induce intense experience of the religious dimension of current events. The performative approach is usually accompanied by close attention to the active, creative role of participants and non-intellectual aspects of their participation, more particularly emotive, physical and sensory aspects. A key concept in this approach is 'ritual as an event', while the concept of framing sometimes plays an important role. Framing refers to the emergence of stylised structures that form the framework within which actions are meaningful (cf. Bell 1997, 72–76).

Nonetheless performance remains a fuzzy concept. In this section, therefore, I shall first clarify what liturgical action entails. To this end I examine what the concept of performance could mean if one conceives of it as a form of action, at least inasmuch as this pertains to liturgy and liturgical research into linguistic aspects of liturgy. Key concepts here are intention, collective action, expression and communication. The section is structured round these concepts, to which I add the concepts of communication with God and communication from God, since these are the specific concern of linguistic liturgical actions.

Action as performance of intentions

Liturgy, even the so-called eucharistic prayer, can obviously be seen as an event (cf. Merz 1988). Likewise liturgical action can be regarded as a form of behaviour. But such approaches are inadequate for a scientific description and explanation of that behaviour or event, at any rate when they are confined to attributes or qualities ascribed to the event or behaviour from an observer's angle. Satisfactory description and explanation require us to discover the intentions of the actual participants, which cause the event or behaviour as an activity. Hence approaching liturgy as performance means looking into activities in the sense of a performance of intentions. This approach has the advantage that liturgists can distinguish more clearly, not only between intentional 'action' and unintentional 'behaviour', but also between actions and non-actions such as understanding, receiving and undergoing.

To grasp this approach it is essential to determine what exactly an intention entails. Whatever it is not, it is a particular psychological state, distinct from, for example, a belief or a memory. These two intentional states are cognitions. What cognitions and intentions have in common is that both are directed to something in the real world. But the real distinction between the volitive intentional state that we call intention

and cognitive intentional states like perceptions, memories and beliefs is what is known as the direction of fit. When someone observes something like, say, a candle, a fit occurs between her mind and the candle. Its direction is mind-to-reality. When a person has the intention to light a candle, on the other hand, his mind does not establish a fit with reality but the other way round. Hence the direction of fit in his volitive intentional state is reality-to-mind. But direction of fit is not the sole difference between the two kinds of intentionality. The direction of causation, too, differs. After all, it's the candle that causes the person to perceive it. But it is the intention that causes him to light it. Thus the direction of causation of a mental intentional state such as an intention is the direct opposite of the direction of fit.

This insight is vital for the explanation of liturgical activities. To explain the activities performed in liturgy one should in the first place look for the intentions of the participants and not so much, for instance, for possible 'objective' factors outside them. One could still rightly distinguish between intentions-in-action and prior intentions or plans, and between prior intentions and desires. Although the last distinction and the relations between these volitive intentional states are pertinent to the preparation for liturgy, I shall not dwell on them here. Firstly, in principle they merely indicate a difference in the directness of the volitions: an intention is a more direct form of intentionality to activities than a plan or a desire. The second difference is that an intention-in-action aims at performing one particular aspect of the activity, whereas planning and desires envisage performing the entire activity, albeit concentrating more on a particular aspect of it.

My point is that actions are realisations of intentions, and possibly of plans and desires. Here the concept of realisation is crucial. It is a fulfilment, no less than the fulfilment of a wish, the accuracy of an observation or the granting of a request. Just as truth is correspondence between the content of a cognitive intentional state or representation on the one hand and the reality represented in the intentional state on the other, so realisation is the correspondence between the actual activity and its representation in the intention. Hence two types of success or failure are involved. If we do not realise an intention or a plan, we call it failure; if a belief is untrue, we call it a falsehood or lie. By the same token there are two terms for as yet unfulfilled beliefs and intentions. Unfulfilled or unrealised intentions are called attempts; unfulfilled or unproved beliefs are called conjectures or surmises. Only the method of verification or falsification and the method of explanation will differ

in the two cases, because of the aforementioned difference in direction of fit and causation. To determine the truth of a conjecture one has to check whether it tallies with reality, for instance by observing that reality more closely. But to discover whether an intention has been realised one must establish, not whether the intention tallies with the actual activity or activities, but whether the activity corresponds with the intention. For the falsehood of a cognition lies in the psychological state, not in the reality of which it is a (mis)representation. And the failure of an intention is a result of the activity and not of the intention, which the activity represents.

This, too, is of paramount importance for liturgical research. It makes a huge difference whether 'empirical' research is conducted in order to falsify conjectures about actual states of affairs or processes, or in order to realise desired plans and intentions, or whether it seeks to determine how one can observe norms such as policy engagements, commitments and the like. Norms have the same direction of fit and causation as intentions, hence activities—including liturgical activities—can be explained normatively, whereas beliefs—including religious beliefs in liturgy—are explicable in terms of non-normative causes and reasons.

Liturgy as collective action

Liturgy is not concerned only with the participants' particular intentions. Liturgy is 'people's work'. That does not mean that the community is the subject of the intentions and their realisation. Intentions and activities, including those in liturgical gatherings, are always intended and performed by individual human beings. But there can be no liturgy in the sense of a collective church service or communal celebration unless the participants have and realise collective intentions. By collective intentions we do not mean the aggregate of individual intentions and actions. It is not a matter of situations in which different people have the same particular intentions. If a group of people sitting in a church all rise to their feet simultaneously, that in itself is not a collective activity. It would not suffice even if the participants knew or believed that the others are also doing what they themselves must or want to do. A collective activity in our sense only happens if they all do something together that cannot be done by each participant alone. To perform a collective activity they must cooperate and coordinate their activities with a view to a common goal that they can only achieve as a group

and from which their individual contributions derive. This is an important insight in relation to the *actuosa participatio* problem in liturgy (cf. Palombella 2002). But that is not the point we are making here.

What is vitally important is that such collective intentions and activities have a distinctive structure. They always have two components that cannot be reduced to each other. The first is the particular component, the activity that each individual participant tries to perform as his contribution to the collective activity. The second is the collective component, the collective activity performed in conjunction with others. A eucharistic service is such a collective activity. Ideally each participant has the intention to celebrate the eucharist along with other people (collective component) and to make her own distinctive contribution to it and have her share in it (particular component). The two components cannot be reduced to each other without succumbing to either an individualistic or a collectivist concept of the eucharist. The particular component relates to the collective component as a means to an end, at any rate in collective intentions and activities. This, too, is highly pertinent to liturgical research. Thus if one wants to determine how people would like to celebrate the liturgy, one has to establish not only what each participant would like to do personally, but also what they want to see done collectively and what exactly they want to contribute to it.

Liturgical activities in a collective sense, like all collective activities, are only possible if all participants have a particular background comprising at least three elements. Firstly, they need to have an adequate sense of 'us'. This is perhaps the main problem in ecumenical or interreligious services; but even in services attended by members of the same church with widely divergent attitudes it can present real difficulties. The second requirement is a cooperative attitude. Individualists cannot celebrate a liturgy. This is a major problem for liturgy in Western society, which is becoming highly individualised, specifically in the sphere of religion and morality. The third background element is a certain degree of social and especially communicative skills. It is difficult to cooperate and perform a collective activity like a religious ritual if one cannot explain to others what one means. That applies not only to officiants but also to other participants. And it applies above all to collective activity that consists in communication, verbal or otherwise. Research into how to comply better with these preconditions for liturgical activities could well be one of the most urgent mandates of present-day liturgical science, especially in the West.

Liturgy as collective expression

Liturgy is a special type of collective activity, often described as 'expression'. That certainly applies to linguistic activities in liturgy. It means that in these activities two psychological states have to be combined: the psychological state that one wants to express, and the intention to express it. The second psychological state is an intention, a volitive form of intentionality, but the first can be of diverse kinds. In liturgy one can express faith, but also desires, resolves and all manner of feelings. By expression we usually mean that people impose on physical forms the meaning that they have in mind. Hence expression entails imposing meaning on sounds, gesture, objects or physical phenomena of whatever kind. These become symbols or signs of the content of the psychological state one wants to express. That is why liturgy is tied up with symbolisation to an appreciable extent.

Liturgy has to be a collective expression, although it is not essential that all participants express their faith in the same way. What matters is that each wants to make a distinctive contribution to an expression that is more than the sum of the individual expressions. Liturgy as a collective expression also requires cooperation and coordination of the participants' forms of expression and their individual expressions should be in a means-end relation to the collective component. In how far the things people want to express in liturgy have to be equally collective is a moot point. One would imagine that they want to express collectively in liturgy what each participant finds important in an individual, particular sense. A good example is the moment when everybody prays aloud for their own 'intention', but the fact that it is explicitly done in a collective service indicates that the idea is to collectivise the contents of that prayer to some extent.

At all events, in collective expressions in liturgy the realisation of the collective expression-intention must concur with the psychological state, whether collective or not, that participants want to express collectively. To put it more simply: in liturgy the expressive form must accord optimally with the contents the participants want to express. To put it radically, there can be no expressive form without content, and liturgy has no content if it is not expressed in some physical form. That is why theorists in liturgical science pay a great deal of attention to the best way to merge the form and content of collective expression in liturgy.

Liturgy as collective communication

But liturgical activity cannot be described simply as collective expression. It is that and more. For besides being expressive action it is also communicative action. That means that one wants to express faith, reverence, joy or other psychological states in such a way that others will recognise that one has these feelings and intentional states. In addition one wants to convey to them that one wants them to know it. This is important, especially when it comes to Habermas's misconception about performative speech acts that we mentioned in the introduction, which we shall examine more closely in due course.

Habermas assumes that every form of communicative action is an attempt to reach consensus on the truth claims expressed in that action. That would imply that the greater the consensus achieved, the more successful the action. But that is hardly tenable, certainly not in the case of communicative activity in liturgy. What, for instance, is the truth claim in the prayer, 'Lord, have mercy upon us'? If it were to lie in the claim to efficacy in the objective world, as Habermas appears to assume in his approach to what he calls imperatives, it still begs the question of how one could communicate that claim intelligibly. After all, the claim constitutes the content that one wants to communicate, but that cannot be reduced to the intention to communicate it. As to how the intention to communicate can succeed, Habermas provides no answer.

In principle the answer is simple, although fairly complicated to explain. When expressive intentions, including collective ones, 'merely' seek to give meaning to physical forms that one has in mind, hence 'merely' require correspondence between form and content, communicative intentions imply that others can also recognise these intentions in the physical forms to which one gives this meaning. That requires executing the intentions according to the rules of meaning imposition prevalent in the communication community concerned. In this sense communication is by definition always a form of—rule-governed—collective activity. Hence if liturgists want to discover why communication in liturgical activities succeeds or fails, or how communication can be improved, they have to study the rules that apply and how they can be observed.

Thus although all communication is a form of collective activity, when it comes to liturgy one can still distinguish between communication in an interpersonal sense and communication in a collective sense.

By collective communication I mean that people pray, sing or perform other communicative actions together, and in so doing intend not only to make something intelligible *themselves*, but also to 'convey' something intelligibly *along with other people*. The form in which they do so is often characterised by 'we' utterances, that is using the first person plural. Choral singing and prayer are good examples. Again there is a particular and a collective component in a means-end relationship. And again it requires a sense of 'us', a cooperative attitude and adequate social and communicative skills.

Collective communication with God

Collective communication in liturgy has another element: the person one seeks to communicate with is primarily God. There is a lot of 'horizontal' communication in liturgy as well, especially between the officiant(s) and 'the people'. But as a rule it still serves the purpose of the 'vertical' communication with God, or at any rate the human attempts at it. Yet in the administration of sacraments there is also communication on God's behalf, addressed specifically to those who receive the sacrament. And scripture readings often conclude with 'this is the word of the Lord', indicating that God speaks to human beings. I shall return to this point presently.

   All the communication occurs in human communicative forms according to the applicable rules, at least according to the constitutive rules for giving meaning to physical phenomena. That is inevitable, for the only communication system we have is the human one. In this sense there is no secret liturgical language or specifically religious form of communication. That is why it is good to conduct liturgy in the vernacular as far as possible.

   On the other hand there are three factors that make collective communication in liturgy distinctive. The first is that it centres on communication with God, which gives it a sacred character, at least in the sense that banality is to be avoided. A second, related factor is the substance one wants to communicate. It is usually serious and often concerns an experience of 'the observable and beyond that'. That requires language that can communicate such experience, often using models derived from ordinary, mundane reality. But these are qualified in a manner that indicates an experience 'beyond that'. Thus God is called 'all powerful', in which the everyday-world model 'power' is qualified by the extraordinary 'all' to indicate that this power surpasses ordinary,

earthly power (Ramsey 1957). The third factor that imparts a distinctive character to liturgical communication is the formal, ritual nature of liturgy. This is governed by regulative rather than constitutive rules. As a result liturgical communication is marked by a considerable degree of formalisation, with all the risks attached to formalism. That applies not merely to the communicative activities in liturgy but to liturgical performance as a specific form of collective activity in general.

Communicative acts of God

In this context it is extremely important to realise that liturgy entails not just human activity and human beings' attempts to realise their communicative intentions, but that God himself joins in the activity. That, at any rate, is what the participants believe, or are thought to believe. But what does it mean? Can God in fact act in the sense that we explored above—that of realising intentions? And if so, can he possibly have collective intentions that he realises together with human beings who participate in liturgy? Could these also be communicative intentions?

To my mind the key to the answer lies in the notion of ascribing status functions. God is not a human being, hence he cannot have intentions in the human way. For the same reason he cannot communicate and speak the way humans do. But the phrase, 'this is the word of the Lord', is not merely a model-based or metaphorical expression, like believers' declaration that God is all powerful. It is a statement, not about God, but about a biblical text or a sermon. The text is assigned the quality of being God's own words, his way of speaking. Hence a certain status function is ascribed to it. It means that in the context of the liturgy that text 'counts as' the way the Lord speaks. To participants in the liturgy the officiant reaffirms this status function.

What about God himself? Does he, too, recognise this status function? And does it mean that God does not actually speak in the Bible or in sermons? It depends, firstly, on whether institutional realities are acknowledged as real. It seems to me there is much to be gained by doing so. After all, in human society we usually have no problem with recognising the value of money, marriage, the presidency and all sorts of institutional facts as realities. Why should it not also be possible in liturgy and in dealings between God and human beings generally? Covenant theology in particular provides sound reasons for doing so. It does mean that people have to believe that God also recognises the

status function of biblical texts and sermons. And if that is what the expression 'this is the word of the Lord' means, we need not believe that God himself is the direct or indirect agent causing this human language. For instance, we can visualise it the way Wolterstorff proposes, namely by viewing God's words in the Bible as his 'appropriation' of human speech (Wolterstorff 1995). Just as a cabinet minister may 'appropriate' a speech written by an official, God can 'appropriate' certain texts written by human beings.

In regard to the question of performativeness in liturgy Wolterstorff makes another interesting point: he categorically rejects what he calls 'performance interpretation of biblical texts and sermons'. By this he means the view that readers' or listeners' interpretation of texts is comparable to the interpretation of a script by actors, who perform the play in their own way; or to that of a person at a meeting who merely says that she fully agrees with the previous speaker, thus appropriating that person's words; or to the interpretation of a musical score by performing artists. In Wolterstorff's view this does not do justice to the authors and their intentions. For this very reason he rejects both Ricoeur's and Derrida's interpretive theories, and the use of these in theology and liturgical science (Wolterstorff 1995). In view of what I have said above I would concur with him. The meaning of Bible readings and sermons does not depend on the people listening to these communicative acts but on the authors, the preacher and especially God, inasmuch as he is acknowledged as the one who speaks in this way.

2   Liturgical Performance of Speech Acts

What I have said so far does not really concern specific linguistic aspects of liturgical activities. I confined it to liturgical activities in general, albeit focusing on collective, and more especially communicative activities of participants in liturgy. This is a necessary preliminary to linguistic perspectives on liturgy, since in our approach language is regarded primarily as a form of (communicative) action. Our next question is how these general insights can be focused and applied to the various kinds of linguistic communicative acts that can be performed and used in liturgy.

One can identify at least four aspects or dimensions of these acts (cf. Searle 1973). Firstly, communication is effected by producing sounds, whether sung or otherwise. One could call these phonetic acts. The

sounds, moreover, are shaped into certain vocables or words. These are phatic acts. Often the words are used to refer to some person or object, to which something is ascribed. These are statements or propositional acts. Finally, in these sounds, words and (usually) statements one always performs such actions as confessing faith, praying, promising, praising and blessing. These are usually called illocutionary acts. For a detailed analysis of liturgical activity from a linguistic perspective the last two aspects are particularly important, so I shall explain them in more detail.

Before doing so, however, I should point out that illocutionary acts are not to be confused with so-called perlocutionary acts. These include acts like persuading, consoling or frightening someone *through* what one says or writes. That means causing psychological effects in listeners or readers, which go beyond understanding or recognition of meaning and are not subject to rules such as the semantic rules one has to observe in order to understand illocutionary acts. I shall not dwell on perlocutionary acts here, although I'm fully aware that it would make very good sense for liturgists to study such things as the persuasive power of sermons or the consoling effect of funeral services. My reason for not discussing perlocutionary acts is simply that they concern effects caused predominantly by all sorts of non-linguistic, psycho-social factors rather than by purely linguistic factors. Whether liturgical language speaks to people often depends less on the language than on the listeners' past experience, their mood, expectations, et cetera. That does not mean the language is not important. But what really matters is the illocutionary act, which makes possible rather than causes such effects. Hence I concentrate mainly on illocutionary acts in liturgy.

Serious speech acts

Here we must realise that not all (illocutionary) speech acts are used to make propositions. A greeting ('good day') or a cry of joy ('hurrah', 'hosanna'), for example, has no propositional content. It merely expresses a state of mind. But most speech acts in liturgy do contain propositions, and these always comprise two inseparable components. A proposition indicates something or someone (reference) and it ascribes something to that person or object (predication). In the words, "he took bread…", for instance, the word 'he' indicates Jesus Christ, and 'took bread' ascribes the performance of a particular act to him. Hence indicating or referring is to identify who or what the statement

is about. One can do so by calling the object or person by a proper name (e.g. 'God', 'Allah'), or by providing a description (e.g. 'the mother of Jesus'). Predication, however, is another component of the act. It is the part of the statement that determines the content one applies to the person or thing one refers to. Hence giving meaning should not be reduced to referring to someone or something, as proponents of a symbolic approach to liturgical language tend to do. Predication is a different component of a statement from reference. And one cannot predicate something without referring what or whom one is predicating it to. Thus symbols can be used both to refer to something or someone and to predicate something to that referent. And when one predicates something by means of a symbol, this should not be reduced to a kind of reference. Symbols on their own say nothing. They only become meaningful if they are used to refer or predicate something, and the two kinds of meaning differ.

But statements cannot be made without simultaneously performing an act that we have called an illocutionary act. Statements are always part of, for example, a judgment, a request, a promise, an expression of gratitude or a blessing. In these acts we predicate something to the referent of the statement in a particular way. In questions one does so in way that expresses that one wants to know whether one's predication is true (e.g. 'Is God the one with whom my future lies?'). In supplications one does it in a way that expresses that one wants the other to make the predication come true (e.g. 'Lord have mercy on us'). And in a consecration it is done in a way expressing that what one is stating becomes true at that moment by virtue of the statement (e.g. 'This is my body') (cf. Manders 1968). I have pointed out already that one can also perform illocutionary acts without making any proposition. In that case one merely expresses a state of mind without any form of intentionality, although it usually has a motive ('hallelujah').

Although there are many kinds of illocutionary acts and all manner of speech acts occur in liturgy, I confine myself to just a few of the most important ones. To this end I classify them under the five main types identified by Searle (1979, 1–29): assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. The classification is based on three kinds of differences. The first kind concerns the intentional state one wishes to communicate: a belief or some other cognition such as a judgment, or a desire or some other volition, as when communicating a request. The second kind of difference concerns the direction of fit of the speech act: are the words fitting reality as in an affirmation, or is reality fitting

the words as in a command, or does the fit operate in both directions at once, as when a head of state declares war on another country? The third kind of difference underlying Searle's classification into types of illocutionary acts are differences in what he calls the illocutionary point of the speech act: is the utterance a commitment to truth as in the case of a judgment; an attempt to get someone else to do something as in a request; a commitment to do something oneself in the future as in a promise; an expression of a feeling such as a felicitation; or the realisation of an institutional fact such as a declaration of war? According to Searle all possible illocutionary acts can be classified into the five main types on the basis of these criteria.

In each case I shall elaborate on the specific type, focusing on the types that are most relevant to liturgical language. In view of the distinctive nature of performatives the most important categories are assertives (the first main type) and declarations (the fifth main type). For, to anticipate the crux of this whole article, I believe that so-called performative speech acts do not belong to the main category of assertives, but are a sub-category of declarations.

Assertives or affirmations

This main type includes all illocutionary acts expressing a belief, memory or perception—hence a cognitive intentional state. Here words fit things in reality that are experienced or believed, thus the direction of fit is word-to-reality. That means that the statement made in an assertive can be true or false, but the person making the statement is considered to be committed to its truthfulness. The category also includes denials. Subtypes of assertives that occur commonly in liturgy are the following.

Announcements

An announcement (e.g. 'Now we proceed to the ministry of the word') affirms that something is about to happen in the (near) future—often that somebody is about to do something. This illocutionary act is typical of masters of ceremonies. Officiants in liturgy sometimes tend to behave like MCs.

Reminders

These are affirmations of something that the listener once knew but may have forgotten (e.g. 'Nobody lives for herself, nobody dies for herself …). Reminders need not necessarily be speech acts in themselves. Nonverbal acts can serve the same purpose. In addition reminders can

have a directive as well as an assertive meaning. Thus one can remind somebody to do something.

Reporting

Reporting (e.g. 'and when they had eaten, he took bread, broke it…') is to assert something about the past, sometimes about the present, but never about the future.

Confessing

Confessing (e.g. 'I believe in God, the almighty father…') is to affirm that something is (was) so, for which the speaker is (was) responsible or of which he is firmly convinced. Confessing one's faith means that one is firmly convinced that the state of affairs forming the substance of the assertion is true. Confession of sin implies that the state of affairs and the person responsible for it are bad (e.g. 'I confess to almighty God that I have sinned…').

Praising and glorifying

Praising someone or something affirms that some state of affairs associated with the other is good, while expressing approval of it (e.g. 'Lord our God, you are holy and good…'). Praise naturally features frequently in liturgy (cf. Blijlevens 1968).

Lamenting

Lamenting can have both assertive and expressive meaning. In an assertive sense lamenting something implies that one affirms it but is unhappy about it and that it is bad (e.g. Psalm 79:1. 'God, the heathen have come into thy inheritance…'). In an expressive sense lamenting is simply to express dissatisfaction about something.

Directives

A second main category of illocutionary acts is directives or guidelines, in which one expresses the wish, or at any rate a volitive intentional state, that the other should do something. In these acts words do not fit reality; instead real actions fit the words. Thus the direction of fit is not word-to-reality but reality-to-word. It also means that whatever is asserted in directives is not true or false, but is to be realised or not. And the illocutionary point of a directive is that it is an attempt to get the other to do something. Common sub-categories of directives in liturgy are the following.

Requests
A request is a directive that leaves the listener the option not to heed it, hence not to perform the future act that the speaker proposes in the statement. Hence it is a courteous directive (e.g. 'May I ask you to stand?').

Suggesting
This is really just a weak directive (e.g. 'Let us pray').

Questioning
Questioning is also a form of issuing directives. Questions express the speaker's wish that the listener will give a response that satisfies the speaker's desire to find out something that she does not yet know (for sure). Here one distinguishes between genuine questions and test questions (e.g. 'Do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife?').

Entreating
These are very serious, humble requests, expressing a very strong desire (e.g. 'Hear me, hear my prayer, o Lord my God...').

Praying
Prayer is usually understood as asking God (or some other holy person or entity) to fulfil some desire of the speaker's (e.g. 'Give us today our daily bread').

Commissives

A third main category of illocutionary acts is commitments. Here the speaker expresses an intention, or at any rate a volitive intentional state to perform an action in the future. As in the case of directives, the direction of fit is reality-to-word. In the case of commissives it also means that what one says cannot be true or false, but is something to be realised or not. They are called commissives because the illocutionary point lies in the speaker committing himself to some future action. On the whole liturgy does not contain many commissives, except for the following.

(Solemnly) promising
Promises are paradigmatic for commitments. They differ from many other commissives, however, in that the speaker always promises the listener to do something that will benefit her and takes on an obligation to do so (e.g. 'Yes, I promise...')

Expressives

The fourth main type of illocutionary act is expressions of states of mind like congratulations, apologies, condolences and the like. They express feelings and have no direction of fit. In these speech acts the speaker does not have to bring reality into line with her words, nor make the words correspond with reality. Instead the truth of a statement expressing such a state of mind is assumed. The illocutionary point, therefore, is that one expresses the feeling as specified in the conditions for sincerity about a state of affairs that is circumscribed in the substance of the assertion. Liturgy contains many expressives, such as the following.

Thanking
An expression of gratitude conveys happiness about something beneficial to the speaker for which the listener is responsible (e.g. 'We thank you for this unforgettable person').

Praising and lauding
Praising and lauding express approval, which presupposes that the one (or the thing) being praised is good ('Holy, holy, holy, Lord'). In liturgy this speech act is often performed in hymns.

Honouring
Honouring someone verbally expresses esteem for the listener (e.g. 'Glory to God in the highest').

Welcoming and greeting
Welcoming people is to receive them hospitably. It expresses pleasure at their presence or arrival. Welcoming and greeting are essentially directed to the listener (e.g. 'I welcome you all to this communion service')

Declarations

The final main category of illocutionary act comprises declarations, such as declarations of war or canonisations. To anticipate the crux of this article, I believe—following Searle—that so-called performatives fall in this very category. Declarations are remarkable speech acts that must be clearly distinguished from assertives. They are illocutionary acts expressing both a desire and a belief, and their successful performance in itself effects correspondence between their substance and reality. Thus they have a dual direction of fit: reality-to-word and word-to-reality. That

means that what is stated in a declaration is not actually true or false, but counts as the truth. A declaration creates an institutional reality. And its illocutionary point is that its successful accomplishment establishes a correspondence between its substance and reality. A successful declaration guarantees that. When a pope canonises somebody, that person is a saint. Subcategories of declarations that feature commonly in liturgy are the following.

Confirming
In a declarative sense confirming is to state officially that a prior speech act remains valid. A good example is confirmation in Protestant churches, in which a church representative confirms the original baptism.

Blessing
Blessing officially puts a person in a situation of divine grace by declaring him to be in that situation. The expression conveys God's grace (e.g. 'I bless you in the name of the Father…').

Consecrating and ordaining
To consecrate something is to declare officially that it now has sacred status (cf. Manders 1968). The same applies to ordaining. Usually the consecrated status is conferred for a religious purpose (e.g. 'This is my body…'.).

Baptising
Baptising is to declare officially that someone will bear a particular name, is freed from original sin and has been received into the church. It is a declaration that confers a name and a status on a person through baptism (e.g. 'I baptise you in the name of the Father…').

I have pointed out already that illocutionary acts should be clearly distinguished from perlocutionary acts, which can be performed via them. I cited consoling, frightening and persuading as examples of perlocutionary acts. These entail psychological effects, intentional or otherwise, on the listener which go beyond mere recognition of the communicative intention. Any number of other perlocutionary acts are performed in liturgy. Liturgical language can make people rejoice, anger them, unsettle them and so on. In effect one can facilitate any psychological state by way of illocutionary acts in liturgy. Although they are (partly) facilitated by illocutionary acts, they do not coincide with these and should not be confused with, or reduced to, them. Often they

are totally unintended, and besides, they do not observe the semantic rules that apply to illocutionary acts. That is why the distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts is so important.

Indirect speech acts

So far I have confined myself to serious illocutionary acts with a literal, unambiguous meaning. But alongside these one can, indirectly, posit other illocutionary acts (cf. Searle 1979, 30–57). Take the hackneyed example, 'Could you pass me the salt please?' Via the speaker's literal question about the possibility of the listener doing something for her, she requests the listener to do it. Such indirect speech acts also occur in liturgy, as when the officiant asks, 'will you please stand?' or, even more complex, 'may I ask you to stand?'. By and large one can give indirect guidelines (e.g. make requests or pray) by—

(1) asking or affirming that the listener is able to do what the speaker wants (e.g. 'God, you can…')
(2) asking or affirming that the listener in fact performs the desired action
(3) affirming (not asking) that one really wants something done
(4) affirming that, or asking whether, there are good reasons for doing what the speaker wants the listener to do.

By the same token one can also make indirect promises.

To understand indirect speech acts the listener in the particular context must have relevant background information based on generally accepted principles of conversation, such as the principle of cooperation, and on the basis of logical reasoning must infer something else. He must conclude that the affirmation or question in this situation has not merely the literal meaning conveyed, but is indirectly intended as a request or a promise. The main motives for indirect requests or indirect prayer are courtesy and respect for those to whom the request or the prayer is addressed. Because of reverence for God and courtesy towards other participants indirect speech acts are not uncommon in liturgy.

Metaphorical speech acts

There is another way in which illocutionary acts can be used to convey an intention other than the literal meaning. That is by using metaphoric language. Metaphors are widely used in religious language, hence in liturgy as well (cf. Ramshaw 2000). It amounts to implicit comparison,

as in the statement, 'You are the light of the world'. In a literal sense
God is not light, but in this metaphoric expression he is compared to
it without explicitly making the comparison.

There are various principles involved. Things or people that, by
definition, usually have a particular attribute can be compared on
that point. A king, for example, is powerful. So when we say, 'Christ
is king' the statement means that Christ is powerful. Metaphors can
also function on the principle of associations that one has with the
thing or person with whom one compares something (e.g. 'for the
Lord is my shepherd…'). Even comparisons with something that is a
condition for that thing or relates to it in some way can be a basis for
metaphoric comparison (e.g. 'Our Father…'). Thus metonymy is based
on part-whole relations and analogy on proportional relations, although
some linguists feel that they should not be regarded as a specific type
of metaphor (cf. Soskice 1985, 54–66). Over time, however, many
metaphors in liturgy 'die'. As a result they lose their original meaning
and acquire a new, literal meaning identical to the original metaphoric
meaning (e.g. 'give me your hand…').

Why does religious language generally, and liturgical language in par-
ticular, contain so many metaphors? Part of the reason is that we often
use metaphors when it is impossible to express our meaning literally.
That often happens in liturgy. The only way we can speak about God
and the divine is by way of comparison. Besides, good metaphors have
great expressive power. And even when a literal expression is available,
a metaphor often speaks much more immediately and powerfully.

Fictional speech acts

Apart from metaphorical speech acts liturgy also makes use of another
'language game', namely fictional language. Sermons, for instance,
sometimes contain invented stories, or the preacher 'acts' the charac-
ters in the story of Jesus' passion. What happens, in effect, is that one
pretends to perform the speech acts by going through the exact same
phatic and phonetic acts in which serious speech acts are conveyed,
but without adhering to the semantic rules governing the meaningful-
ness of sounds and words. Thus one might tell an anecdote about two
people called John and Clare when the names do not refer to two living
people, whereas one can only seriously refer to something or someone
if the thing or person really exists. Besides this, play also differs from
narration. In liturgy play is not a fabricated representation of a state

of affairs but the actual state of affairs. Those who play a part in it act as though they really are those characters. Often serious speech acts are built into the framework of fictional narratives and performances in order to make the message one seeks to convey more plausible.

In fictional language, then, one does not observe the same semantic rules applicable to intelligible verbal communication. Their place is taken by other rules, in the form of what we may call horizontal conventions between a speaker (or writer) and her listeners (or readers). Often this is not explicitly stated, because it is easy to gather from the context that this is fiction; but sometimes it is spelled out (e.g. the expression 'once upon a time...').

Motives for using fictional language, also in liturgy, are many and varied. Usually a major factor is that one wants to represent something abstract or abstruse concretely. That often happens in religion. People apparently have a need to form a concrete picture of that which transcends the empirical world. That is why religions have so many myths, and stories about gods are sometimes 'performed' all over again in liturgy. It also has to do with relations, feelings and things that are not readily accessible or comprehensible, that exist below the surface or are beyond human understanding. To verbalise these in some way we often resort to fictional language. People still want to imagine the unimaginable. That helps to explain why liturgy has so much in common with drama and theatre generally, and why liturgical language resembles that of the stage. And it could well be one of the reasons why present-day liturgists are so fond of the term 'performance'. After all, to a great extent liturgy can be described as a show or performance.

3   Liturgical Performance of Performatives

The fact that speech acts are performed in liturgy does not mean that all liturgical speech acts are performative in nature or performative expressions. Speech acts of a performative nature, performative expressions or simply 'performatives' are a very specific kind of speech act with very specific characteristics and a very specific effect (cf. Searle 1989). They are speech acts like 'we give hearty thanks...' or simply 'we thank you'. They are expressions in which the speaker ascribes to himself the function of performing a particular speech act at that moment. Although they occur commonly in liturgy, their distinctive character and force are not sufficiently recognised in liturgical science.

Because of the many misconceptions in this regard I examine them more closely in this section. In the process I shall elaborate further on the ideas discussed in the previous two sections and amplify them with an analysis of performatives in the context of liturgy.

Performatives as declarations

Most analyses wrongly take performatives to be indirect speech acts. Their premise is that performatives are intentional speech acts in which people explicitly affirm that they are performing them. When participants in a liturgical service say, 'we praise and worship you' they clearly affirm that they are performing both these speech acts. In this sense such an assertive refers to the speakers and predicates the performance of the speech act to them. The affirmation implies that the performative has the force of a speech act performed by the speakers. But at the same time they give an assurance, which such a speech act would not have without performative expression. On the face of it, then, the self-referential nature of performative speech acts appears sufficient to guarantee that it is truly so that one is performing this intentional speech act. But that doesn't hold water. It confuses *being committed to an intention* with *having the intention* at that moment. If we describe our utterance as praise, we are committed to making that utterance with the intention that it should be praise. But it does not guarantee that this is the intention in making the utterance at that moment. The constitutive semantic rule is not the existence of the intention, but 'merely' a commitment to the intention.

So how does one guarantee in a performative speech act that one indeed has the intention to perform the speech act that one ascribes to oneself? The only way is not just to affirm it in the sense of an assertive, but to declare it in the sense of a declaration. As noted already, a declaration is an illocutionary speech act that simultaneously expresses a wish and a belief, and whose successful performance effects correspondence between its propositional substance and reality. In this sense a declaration has a dual direction of fit, namely reality-to-word and word-to-reality. It implies that what is said in a declaration is valid rather than true or false.

This is a more satisfactory explanation of how declarations and performatives work. Like other declarations, performatives function on the basis of an institution. What is peculiar to performatives, however, is that they function on the basis of an institution that we call language. Their

success does not depend on any extra-linguistic institution—judicial, political or religious office—but purely on the institution of language. That is the first difference between performatives and other declarations. The second difference is that performatives establish a new *linguistic* fact, not some extra-linguistic fact like a declaration of war, a verdict or a canonisation. It is a difference, not between declarations that are performatives and ones that are not, but between declarations that create a linguistic entity like praise and ones that create non-linguistic entities like a war, a marriage or a sacrament. Both the institutional condition and the institutional effect of performatives explain why they occur so frequently in liturgy. Because of their collective, ritual and religious nature liturgical activities are highly institutionalised. This applies equally to the speech acts performed in them. And performatives not only presuppose an institution, but also create an institutional fact, namely a speech act.

Performative declarations of expressives

When it comes to performatives liturgical language has a remarkable feature. This is the fact that, especially in classical forms of liturgy, most performative utterances are used in relation to expressives (e.g. 'I confess my sins', 'we praise you', 'we praise and worship you', 'we glorify and thank you'). Although this sometimes applies to directives as well, it is much less common (e.g. 'we pray you to give us peace and daily bread'). Proportionately, commissives are fairly rare in liturgy, and in any case they usually do not take the form of performatives (e.g. 'I promise'). Assertive speech acts even more rarely take the form of performatives, and declarations hardly ever.

This phenomenon is readily explicable on the basis of our analysis of performatives as declarations. Declarations are the most powerful speech acts and expressives the weakest. The power of declarations is that one can create a concrete fact simply by declaring that it is so. In this respect expressives are weak, in that they often do not even contain a proposition about reality (e.g. 'thank you very much'), and when they contain a proposition it merely pertains to the reason for the expressive and is not the substance of the feeling expressed (e.g. 'we thank you for your great glory'). By communicating a 'weak' expressive in a 'powerful' declaration the expression itself is reinforced. It is reinforced not only in the sense that it acquires greater truth value in the world beyond its performers. In a way it also reinforces the

truth value of the psychological state one seeks to express and of the intention to communicate it. That, then, is what is meant by the term 'guarantee' in relation to performatives: one guarantees that one truly means what one says.

This is more critical in the case of expressives than in that of directives and commissives, and certainly in the case of assertives and declarations. For a declaration guarantees itself by virtue of the authority of the institution on which it is based. And assertives can be verified by observing the reality about which something is asserted and which, in principle, is accessible to everybody. In the case of directives and commissives this is more complicated, because they refer to activities that have not yet happened. Insincerity in a question (prayer) or a promise is harder to detect than a lie. In the case of expressions of feelings it is even harder for the listener to determine whether the speaker really means what he says. Hence if a speaker wants to assure the listener that he genuinely has a certain feeling and genuinely intends communicating it to the other, he has little option but to resort to institutional language and on that basis officially declare that he is realising his communicative intention. After all, all speech acts are bound by a rule of sincerity. One can only make a request if one really wants the listener to perform the requested act. And one can only ask a question if one really wants to obtain that information from the listener. Similarly one can only express thanks if one indeed feels grateful for something the listener has done. Thus when one performs a speech act one is assuring the listener that one truly means it.

Two speech acts in one utterance

Not everybody agrees with this analysis of performatives. Thus Habermas feels that it "explodes the architecture of the classification of speech acts because declarations would lose their distinctive place in it, if they were to explain the performative character of all speech acts" (Habermas 1991, 28). In his view performatives are not a specific type of speech act. He argues that all speech acts have 'a performative character', sometimes explicit but often implicit. But, he maintains, explication does not make the speech act a distinctive type with specific attributes that other speech acts lack. According to him, for instance, they are all aimed at getting the listener(s) to acknowledge their claims to power and validity, by which he means both truth claims and 'analogous-to-truth' claims to normative accuracy and subjective truthfulness (Habermas 1981, 435). In his view the performative nature of all kinds

of speech acts cannot be effected simply by officially declaring that one is performing these speech acts with a particular purpose in mind. While declarations exist and, says Habermas, can bring about wars and marriages, they cannot effect speech acts: if one assumes them to have that capacity, they would be indistinguishable from other speech acts. And in Habermas's view they are distinguishable.

In his alternative classification there is a particular kind of regulatives, that is speech acts which the speaker uses to relate to something in the social world in such a manner that she establishes an interpersonal relationship which is recognised as legitimate (Habermas 1981, 436). He maintains that opening a meeting or a verdict of guilty should not be interpreted according to the scheme of two directions of fit, for when a speaker creates institutional facts he is not relating to anything in the objective world anyway. Rather he is acting in accordance with the legitimate social order and initiating new interpersonal relations (Habermas 1981, 435–436). Indeed, language is not an institution in the literal sense at all, says Habermas. And even though he does not substantiate this statement, it is one of the reasons why he contests the view that performatives are a special kind of declaration. After all, if language is not an institution, a declaration cannot create a speech act as an institutional fact.

These objections are none too convincing. If anything is an institution, that thing is language. Ultimately an institution simply means that X counts as Y in a given context. In language the production of certain sounds and written characters according to certain semantic rules count as a question, a promise or some other illocutionary act in a particular context. That is precisely what makes the performance of a speech act an institutional fact, and that is why the language system is an institution. Secondly, the hallmark of declarations is that they create institutional facts. Hence declarations can create speech acts as institutional facts. That not only implies that declarations that do this are a specific kind of declaration. It also implies that in one respect the performative speech acts executed in this way differ from non-performative speech acts executed without such a declaration: they guarantee that they are truly meant. In response to Habermas's criticism Searle (1991, 95) writes: "The only speech acts that literally have a performative character are those which are performed by way of a performative verb or some other such performative expression. Such speech acts work by way of the speaker performing an act by declaring that he is performing it, thus all performatives are members of the class of declarations, in my taxonomy."

This has major implications for performatives in liturgy and liturgical research into performatives. For one thing, it means that one should not look for the performative character of speech acts other than performatives, for there is no such thing. What does make sense is to determine when performatives merit preference over 'ordinary' speech acts. For instance, when is it necessary or desirable to guarantee the sincerity of the participants' intentions in this way?

Performatives and normativeness

These issues are even more relevant if one relates them to Habermas's second objection to our approach to performatives. From a practical-theological point of view it is particularly interesting, in that it concerns the normativeness of speech acts generally and performatives in particular. Habermas writes that "since most performatives do not appeal to or rely on normative backing, the illocutionary point of declaratives will lose its specificity" (Habermas 1991, 28). He does not really explain what he means by 'normative backing' at this point, but elsewhere it appears that he usually associates normativeness with truth claims made in promises, declarations of war and vindications. He considers that truth to be correspondence with the social world, hence to him norms are social norms. So if he says that most performatives do not invoke norms, he clearly means that they are not bound by what society considers right and true. In Habermas's view constatives do lay claim to truth, but they concern the objective world. He maintains that expressives, too, claim to be truthful, but they relate to the subjective world. For that reason, he argues, the illocutionary point of declarations becomes indistinguishable from other types of speech acts. Only regulatives both claim normative truth and relate to the social world. And that is precisely what declarations are: regulatives. It means that declarations are in fact bound by social norms. To a great extent that is what gives them their distinctive character. By regarding performatives as a type of declaration, he argues, declarations would forfeit that character.

This criticism is equally unconvincing. After all, all speech acts are governed by social norms. The expression in which one asserts something, for instance, must be an attempt to represent an actual state of affairs. And the expression one uses to make a request must be an attempt to get the listener to do something. True, declarations are subject to specific rules and are often governed by extra-linguistic

norms. They are always associated with social institutions—but that institution could be language. And that is what performatives are. When that happens it does not detract from the specificity of declarations, but they in fact owe their performative character to it. As explained already, performatives owe their efficacy to the fact that speech acts are governed by rules, especially the rule of sincerity. Maybe that is not the kind of norm that Habermas has in mind, but it is unquestionably a norm—possibly a particularly binding one.

Performatives and modern linguistics

In modern linguistics there is another development which, on the face of it, strongly resembles Habermas's approach, but in a sense is its exact opposite (cf. Searle 1979, 162–179). I'm referring to a Chomskyan linguistic approach, which tries to discover the syntactic and grammatical rules governing the sounds and meanings in natural languages. In this school of thought there is a trend to assume that in their deep structure all sentences contain a performative: sentences have to be analysed as if they were implicit performatives and have to be inferred from deep structures that contain an explicitly represented performative main verb. That means, for example, that every declarative sentence, such as 'we thank you for the love you bear us', has a deep structure of 'we tell you that we thank you…'. That applies not only to performatives and other declarations but to all sentences, hence to declarations as well. Even the simple statement, 'and he took the cup…' is said to have a deep structure with the form, 'I tell you that he took the cup' (cf. Ross 1970).

If that was in fact the case, it would be an invaluable tool for linguistic research, which could also be used for empirical research into liturgical language. But is the approach tenable? It is an important question, and partly in order to answer it I have devoted a great deal of attention in this article to performatives as a subclass of declarations. Is it true, then, that the syntactic deep structure of every sentence contains a performative verb? These linguists argue that it is a simpler explanation for the rule of the deletion omission of reflexive pronouns in sentences where one refers back to oneself. If one wants to explain why the word 'yourself' occurs in a command like 'do it yourself', one would have to postulate a deep structure containing the word 'you' for every command, but add that it may be omitted in the surface structure because the word 'yourself' refers back to 'you'. According to these linguists

the rule of the deletion of reflexive pronouns can be converted into a rule of performative deletion.

But to do so they have to postulate that in their deep structure all sentences contain a performative clause. That is hardly tenable, for the approach rests on the assumption that the rules specifying the division into syntactic elements apply only to syntactic categories. That does not seem probable: it is not self-evident that one can only perform an illocutionary act by actually saying that one is doing so. Secondly, the assumption is totally unnecessary to explain these syntactic phenomena. Nothing is actually omitted. The imperative mood is the standard way of indicating the illocutionary force of a directive. Hence the literal utterance of a sentence in the imperative mood implies that something is predicated of the listener. Consequently it is unnecessary to assume that the listener must be referred to syntactically a second time, over and above that. So although syntactic elements, including performative verbs, can be omitted, this is readily explicable in terms of speech act theory. And that is much simpler than an explanation in terms of syntactic deep structures, which moreover leads to a mistaken confusion of the use of performative verbs or clauses with a performative form and the performance of performatives.

4   Liturgical Performance and Practical-Theological Research

The foregoing does not permit us to draw direct conclusions with a view to researching liturgical activities from a linguistic perspective, certainly not if such research is meant to be practical-theological and empirical. In that field various substantive and methodological decisions depend on the aims of the research. Hence I shall examine these aims more closely, and clarify some implications of the discussion for practical-theological research into liturgical activities from a linguistic perspective.

Objective experiential knowledge of language

As a science practical theology seeks to gain knowledge that is both based on experience and as objective as possible.

In our case the first aim of scientific research, then, is to glean knowledge about linguistic aspects of liturgical activities. Science and knowledge, however, are 'success words', to use Searle's expression, for

cognitive representations in the sense of really accurate representations. Hence the aim is not merely to find cognitive representations of linguistic aspects. They must also represent real speech acts in liturgy and correspond maximally with the actual performance; or they must be representations of possible and desirable speech acts that correspond maximally with relevant possibilities, wishes and norms in this regard. Hence the descriptions and explanations of liturgical language sought in practical-theological research must relate to language and must ascribe attributes to it which this language in fact possesses. It implies, inter alia, that from a logical point of view the ascriptions must be linguistically either true or false. For this reason a description of liturgical speech *acts* in terms of *understanding* or *reception* cannot be scientific, whereas a description using categories derived from speech act theory as outlined above could be scientific.

The best way to achieve the envisaged correspondence between the representation of speech acts and the represented speech acts themselves is empirical research. After all, experience is the substance of the most direct orientation to something, for instance the substance of an observation or the substance of an intention-in-action. The disparity between representation and that which is represented is far smaller in the case of an observation than in that of a memory, and even smaller in the case of a belief or a surmise. And the disparity is far smaller in the case of an intention-in-action than in a plan or a desire. These are arguments in favour of trying to gain liturgical knowledge that relies maximally on empirical observation. Experiential knowledge, however, is not directed to the representation as a whole, perhaps emphasising one particular aspect of it, but is directed to that aspect itself. Hence empirical research into linguistic aspects of liturgical activities is in effect empirical research into the language of liturgy, that is into people's intentions with liturgical language and their realisation of those intentions.

Because the aim is to conduct scientific research, the envisaged knowledge must be as objective as possible. In this context 'objective' should be understood epistemologically rather than ontologically, which means that the knowledge should depend as little as possible on the researcher's preferences, tastes or opinions. Despite this it obviously remains her knowledge and in an ontological sense such knowledge is always subjective in that it cannot be reduced to the knowledge of other persons or to knowledge 'in general'. The communicative intentions of

the people whose language is researched are likewise characterised by ontological subjectivity. So when a liturgist tries to interpret liturgical language 'empirically', his knowledge becomes epistemologically more objective if he takes into account the ontological subjectivity of the experience of those who are performing the speech acts. That enhances the scientific quality of practical-theological knowledge about liturgical language. Scientific researchers should therefore avoid predicating to other people's liturgical speech something that belongs to themselves as observers and interpreters. They should concentrate on discovering the intrinsic features of the speech acts as best they can, for instance by asking the performers of the speech acts what they mean and what prompts the acts.

Relevant religious reasons for language

Factual knowledge in liturgical science, however, falls in a theological framework. That means that it should provide a basis for finding religious reasons for the performance of speech acts in liturgy that are relevant to our day and age and to the local spiritual context in which the liturgy is conducted.

In the first place it should concern those aspects of liturgical language that pertain to people's relationship with God. We could define these succinctly as religious aspects of liturgical language. Religious aspects are not confined to people's intentionality to God, in the sense of their trust in him or their longing for him. They also include God's intentionality to human beings, such as what he wants from them in this framework. So the aim of research is also to see what speech acts people perform or want to perform on the basis of their beliefs, including their belief in what God wants from them in this context.

Secondly, rationality is considered to be one of the prime criteria of the quality of theological work. Theology should strive to meet the requirements of rationality as far as possible. It must find 'good reasons' for faith and religious experience. This also applies to liturgical speech acts. In effect this criterion of liturgical research means that it should consider as many relevant reasons for decisions on liturgy as possible and determine as accurately as possible how they function. These reasons could relate to participants' individual and collective beliefs and preferences regarding liturgical language. They could also be external, normative reasons relating to participants' religion, such as ecclesiastic rules. To integrate the various kinds of religious reasons

in rational theological reflection one has to find out what they could be, for instance by asking participants what kind of liturgical language they would like or consider appropriate.

A major criterion in a theological approach to liturgical language is the current local context. One can only gain theological insight into liturgical language that is relevant here and now if one takes into account the actual functioning of internal and external reasons against the background of the present-day local context, both cultural and religious. This functioning must obviously be explored. That is another important goal of practical-theological research into liturgical language, inasmuch as it aims to be theological.

Realistic options for activities

Finally practical-theological research should work out realistic options for praxis.

As a practical-theological discipline liturgical science, too, should not be confined to knowing how it *is*, but should contribute to knowing how to *do*. Practical theology is concerned not only with representing realities so that they correspond with the real world, but also with finding representations of what can and should happen, or at any rate what people can and should do. When it comes to liturgical language this boils down to discovering possible speech acts and performances of speech acts.

These possibilities should be such that practitioners can choose between them. Science is never prescriptive, and that includes practical theology and liturgical science. It can weigh up the possibilities and point out their pros and cons. For instance, it can determine when expressives that use performatives are more effective than non-performative expressives, which would entail explicitly indicating why one thanks, praises or honours God. Such evaluation is a major task of a practical discipline like liturgical science.

Evaluation should be done according to some criterion. Some liturgists maintain that prudence should be the yardstick. That strikes me as an important criterion for evaluating possible options of speech acts and their performance. But in recent times the accent has been very much on the realism of liturgical language. A decade or two ago the requirement was to find a contemporary liturgical language; two to three decades ago it was a more personal language; nowadays the insistence is on less other-worldly language. Realism not only means

that the language should refer to the real world in which people live. Liturgical language should also deal with a world that is still to come, to the realisation of which people want to contribute. Such realism means that it should deal with activities that can be realised in practice, for instance with a view to the 'kingdom of God and his righteousness'. Thus it seems to me that a cardinal aim of practical-theological research into liturgical activities from a linguistic perspective is to consider which liturgical speech acts are realistic in this sense and which are not, or are less so.

Liturgical research and performativeness

Sometimes liturgical researchers are too quick to conclude that liturgical language is performative. A case in point is Merz (1988, 135) who, on the basis of his speech act analysis, mistakenly judges the eucharistic prayer to be performative in character and then concludes that it is an event of salvation. According to him the anamnetic and epicletic dimensions of that prayer establish a connection between the praying local church here and now and the primordial ground that is the condition for its existence. That strikes me as an unreal conclusion from what is in any case a misconception of the language of the eucharistic prayer. After all, the anamnetic speech acts ('we celebrate the memory of Christ…') are simply assertives, in the sense of 'reports' of recollections. And the epiclesis ('sanctify these offerings') is nothing but a supplicatory prayer, hence a series of directives. So in the first place they are not performatives at all. Secondly, they create nothing other than a eucharistic prayer, hence in themselves the only link between the congregation and God that they establish is a communicative one. One could call that a redemptive event, but surely not in a performative sense as something brought about by the actual speech acts.

That does not mean that liturgical speech acts cannot create realities in the sense that they can play a constitutive role in establishing and perpetuating institutional realities. They certainly do so in liturgy. But that role does not consist in the liturgical language of, say, the eucharistic prayer redefining and changing the congregation, as Merz concludes. It merely ensures that the performance of the speech acts in this liturgical context, in conjunction with certain non-linguistic factors, has the status function of a 'valid' eucharistic prayer or some other liturgical reality, no more and no less. That has little to do with performativeness in the sense of performative speech acts. Hence it is

advisable to be a bit more circumspect when using such terminology in liturgical research.

Conclusion

The cardinal question in this article is how an approach to the language of liturgy as a totality of (performances of) speech acts can further the achievement of the aim of liturgical science as a practical-theological discipline.

To this end we tried to answer two sub-questions. The first concerned the substance of liturgical performance, more specifically the linguistic performance. The answer is, briefly, as follows. The performance comprises the execution, enacted or not, direct or otherwise, of various kinds of speech acts, with or without metaphorical meaning, with a view to collective communication with God. The second sub-question concerns the nature and purpose of liturgical science, specifically inasmuch as it researches liturgical language. This led to the conclusion that its aim is to glean objective, experiential knowledge as a basis for tracing relevant religious motives in order to assess realistic options for linguistic praxis.

Hence the answer to the main question may be summed up as follows. Speech act theory can help us to discover more realistic options for liturgical language if one uses, at least in empirical research into that language, the concepts and distinctions developed in that theory, and on the basis of empirical data collected in this way one formulates relevant religious motives for the choice of speech acts. In his article on marriage liturgy my colleague Ton Scheer (2001) took an interesting first step in this direction. As he bids us farewell—which is what occasions the writing of my article—I want to express the wish that his example should be followed and expanded on. My article is meant to offer some valid suggestions for that endeavour.

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PART TWO

EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

CHAPTER FIVE

RITUAL, PERFORMANCE, AND THE SEQUESTERING SACRED SPACE[1]

Ronald L. Grimes

In 2001, consulting on several WordBridge plays suffused with ritual motifs, I encountered Jeff Wirth, an improv artist. He and I met for the first time a few minutes before taking on our first play together.

"Have you read it?" Jeff whispered.

"Sure," I said. "Several times. Have you?"

"Nope," he replied, without a trace of shame.

The crowd of theater professionals began to move inside the studio. Jeff entered, hesitated, then turned on his heels.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"Outside," he replied.

I assumed he was embarrassed about not having read the play manuscript.

Now seated at a table, ready to read it aloud for the first time, were the actors. Behind them was a large set of sliding glass doors partially obscured by a black curtain. As the actors began to read the play, *Polar Bears on U.S. 41*,[2] Jeff's thick glasses gradually became visible. From behind the sliding glass barrier, he was peering in at the play from outside. Occasionally, his antics would evoke audience laughter, leaving the actors puzzled, wondering what was funny in the lines they had just read.

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[1] Originally delivered as "Acts of Screening and Metaphoric Moves: Ritual Studies Reflections through a Sliding Glass Door," a paper presented at the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposium, "Sacred Screens: The Origins, Development, and Diffusion of the Byzantine Sanctuary Barrier", Washington, DC, 2003. A revised version was presented in 2004 at the University of Windsor (Canada) in the Humanities Research Group's Distinguished Speakers Series. It was subsequently published as "Ritual, Performance, and the Sequestering of Sacred Space," in *Ritual Economies*, ed. Lorenzo Buj (Windsor, ON: University of Windsor Humanities Research Group, 2004) and then as "Sequestering Sacred Space" as chapter 7 of my *Rite Out of Place: Ritual, Media, and the Art* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Here, it is reprinted with permission of Oxford University Press, Inc., www.oup.com.

[2] The script was written by Marisa B. Wegrzyn.

Jeff watched, quietly and intently, shifting his position every now and then. A few of us audience members began to squirm as it dawned on us that, by gazing at our faces and postures, Jeff was turning us into actors. I envied him a little. Whereas scholars are expected to behave, improv artists get to play the ritual fool.

Later, after the play reading had concluded and the crowd was mingling, Jeff sauntered back into the studio.

"What on earth were you doing out there?" I asked him.

"Ahhhh…, well," he said, "preserving my theatrical virginity. If I learn too much, too fast, I miss what's essential."

There was a pause, then: "Hey, Grimes, where d'ya think the play's center of energy is?"

I hesitated. "I'd have to speculate," I said, a little wary.

"And?" he urged.

I said I supposed the center of energy was offstage—with the polar bears, who are wandering on the highway in a Wisconsin snowstorm. (Because of their color, they are in danger of being run over by cars.) No bear, I said, ever appears onstage. No character ever suggests that the bears are the "real" actors, since they loom over, rather than participate in, the play. Their presence is metaphysical. I thought he would wince at the word, but he did not.

Then, I hedged my bet by warning Jeff that the playwright may well think otherwise. I also suggested, a little testily, that if he had read the play, he could have answered his own question.

Polar Bear

Then it was time. The playwright was coffeed up, the director was ready, and it was our turn. What would these two wildcards do? We had no sooner reconvened than Jeff, not prone to wait for authoritative scripts, much less defer to scholars, snatched my backpack, put it on, covered it with a baggy sweatshirt, and began to lumber around the room. He *became* the polar bear. Without rubrics, plot, or direction, he roared and ate and slept and farted and swam and gobbled salmon, providing the actors and the rather overwhelmed young playwright with a truckload of fish for thought.

After an hour or so, the bear, now caged in a zoo, began responding aggressively to the bidding of a little girl up on the catwalk. She desperately wanted the beast to climb out of the pit and over the barbed

wire fence. But suddenly, two actors-become-cops shot the beast dead at her feet.

The bear crashed heavily to the floor and expired.

The polar bear was about to pull off his improvised mask and hump in order to re-become Jeff Wirth, when, under the force of divine inspiration, I pressed his head back to the floor and whispered in his ear, "Your life is not finished yet; stay put."

I, after all, was the appointed court ritualist, and I had not yet earned my keep. So we conducted a funeral, which not only laid the polar bear to rest—may he forever roar in peace—but also ensured his spiritual and artistic continuation forever and ever, amen.

The made-up words and gestures left some actors crying—not actor tears but real tears. As the shift from acting to ritualizing deepened, the salty drops sprang up in surprising quantities. No one was entirely sure how to respond to this intrusion of hyperreality into fictionality.[3] By the end of that year's lab, though, some were paying proper homage to education-by-unlearning, to going forward with sideways moves, to seeing through glass doors, darkly.

Doors, Curtains, and Screens

For most scholars the gods lurk in details; for ritual studies scholars, sometimes in quite ordinary details. So I return to a tiny detail of the scene I have painted, namely, the sliding glass door. During an actual play, a door transparent to exotic Florida birds strutting and preening outside, a glaring piece of glass through which an intruder might gawk at the action in this theatrical incubation chamber, would not have escaped notice. An alert stage manager would have pulled the black curtain over the door, rendering it invisible.

However, during this particular script-focused lab, the door had been ignored. Audience members, almost all of them theater people, would surely exercise good sense and ignore the door. They would pay attention to the actors, just as ordinary worshipers, also graced with good sense, would know to focus attention on icons rather than on icon screens.

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[3] A provocative treatment of the relationship between play, thus fictionality, and the sacred is Robert Neale, *In Praise of Play: Towards a Psychology of Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

What difference does this apparent oversight make—namely, that the backstage curtain was not pulled, revealing a set of sliding glass doors? One of the great difficulties in studying ritual is that participants, as well as scholars, miss the utter ordinariness that suffuses rites, even those that are formal and elevated. So a typical ritual studies tactic, especially when investigating things sacred, is to search out the ordinary beneath the special and sacred.[4]

However true it is that altar screens embody deities and saints, mediate between heaven and earth, and visually constellate cosmic mysteries, it is also true that they are merely wood, stone, and plaster. They are ordinary items of material culture, not altogether different from sliding glass doors through which breeze blows or freight enters.[5] Even ordinary doors, like gilded gods' gates, simultaneously barricade and invite passage. Even ordinary doors can mystify things by framing—which is to say, by revealing, concealing, and focusing the actions of performers.[6]

Even theologians insist on *dis*identifying (as well as identifying) sacralized objects with *the* sacred, so one is not being iconoclastic, or even disrespectful, by teasing out a comparison that reminds us of

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[4] Regarding the relationship between ordinariness, ritual, and the sacred consult Lynda Sexson, *Ordinarily Sacred* (New York: Crossroad, 1982). See also Ronald L. Grimes, *Marrying & Burying: Rites of Passage in a Man's Life* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995). A more typical move among religious studies scholars would be to frame discussions of sacred screens in the rhetoric of sacred space as articulated by Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1959). His critics include Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Wobbling Pivot," *Journal of Religion* 52 (1972): 134–159. The most successful attempt by a religious studies scholar to tender a theory of religious architecture that is inspired by, but not enslaved to, Eliade is Lindsay Jones, *Hermeneutical Calisthenics: A Morphology of Ritual-Architectural Priorities*, vol. 2, The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000); Lindsay Jones, *Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture*, vol. 1, The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press for the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000).

[5] In the past decade religious studies scholars have become more adept at studying items of material culture. See the May issue (vol. 18, no. 3) of *Spotlight on Teaching*, an insert in *Religious Studies News* (published by the American Academy of Religion). The entire issue is on teaching about material culture in religious studies. See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[6] The master of the metaphor "framing" is Erving Goffman. See, for instance, Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1959). Also see Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

the ordinariness of screens and doors.[7] Comparison is inevitable, and when working with religious phenomena, strategic comparison requires ordinary examples alongside exalted ones.

Popular conceptions often construe ritual as, by definition, religious, thereby putting it in a cultural domain different from that of theater and the arts. In ritual studies, however, liturgical enactment and theatrical performance are construed not only as different but also as akin.[8]

Ritual studies is not wed to a particular theory, but since its inception in 1977, it has been closely allied with religious studies, anthropology, and performance studies. As a result, much ritual studies research is ethnographic, drawing heavily on participant observation and interview. It is also doggedly comparative, committed to charting cross-cultural similarities and differences.

In field research on ritual, observation and interview are the usual correctives against stereotyping, projecting, and other ways of misunderstanding data. However, before arriving at a field site, it is crucial to know what one knows, to disgorge what one takes for granted. In short, self-knowledge, not just knowledge of the other, is essential to ethnographic research. As a classroom teacher, I encourage students bound for the field to imagine, or better, act out, what they expect to encounter. They record these imaginings and later, check them against what they actually find.

So let us imagine. Pretend that you are as ignorant as I am about screening devices. Let us say you hardly know what the terms "iconostasis" and "tramezzo" refer to. Suppose you do not know what such things are for, and you cannot imagine why scholars of things Byzantine or liturgical spend their time writing entire books about mere backdrop. What would be your ignorant-outsider answers to this question: What *might* a screening device do?

These are among my guesses:

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[7] John Damascene, for example, distinguishes between veneration and worship. One venerates icons but worships God. See George D. Dragas, "St. John Damascene's Teaching about Holy Icons," in *Icons, Windows on Eternity: Theology and Spirituality in Color* (Geneva: WCC, 1990), 55. For St. Basil, the sacred image was transparent, a window that a worshiper looks through. See Leslie Brubaker, "Introduction: The Sacred Image," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker, *Illinois Byzantine Studies, 4* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 4.

[8] Tom F. Driver, *Liberating Rites: Understanding the Transformative Power of Ritual* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1998), 79–127. See also Grimes, "Ritual and Performance."

Aesthetic answers:
• provide something pleasing to look at
• provide a frame to look through
• cordon off actions, hiding, half-hiding, revealing, or focusing them
• change the quality of sound and light
• select for certain kinds of action and not other kinds
• create distance, a here-space and a there-space

Practical answers:
• serve as a support, for example, for pictures and statues
• divide a big space into smaller sections
• provide carpenters with work
• provide painters with a task
• keep "the ladies" busy with holy cleaning
• reduce the visibility of unsightly things

Social-political answers:
• grant certain classes of people access[9]
• keep other classes out
• protect those behind the barrier
• engender or enforce a hierarchy
• offer a substitute ("Since you are not permitted to see that, watch this instead.")[10]

Religious answers:
• make hierophanies possible, actual, or apprehensible
• incarnate powers that would otherwise seem absent or ineffectual
• concretize a topocosm (a "this place" that functions as a prism for "everyplace")

Ritual answers:
• back up, evoke, or continue liturgical actions
• constellate a gestalt with a center and periphery, rendering some liturgical actions more important than others

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[9] Women and laypeople were strictly forbidden to enter the Orthodox sanctuary.
[10] Words and images in Byzantine churches served as a way to "enter" the sanctuary without physically entering it. See Sharon E. J. Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary* (Seattle: College Art Association in association with University of Washington Press, 1999), 13. See p. 11, regarding other kinds of substitution.

- make one performance locale more valuable or important than some other
- provide a contemplative focus for wandering attention

What would you add? Or subtract? Or edit? The particulars of the list are less important than disrupting the impression that altar screens have only a couple of functions, that of rendering mystery apprehensible and that of mystifying sources of authority (thereby keeping a priestly class of men in power).

This list of possibilities would likely have to be recast if one were to carry it into an encounter with the particulars of a specific liturgical era and site. Even so, the act of imagining helps form a ritual studies attitude, which likely differs from that of a liturgical theologian, art historian, or archaeologist. An ritual studies approach:

- avoids either/or alternatives, for example, either mystery or politics
- makes space for multiple points of view, for the perspectives of several classes of participants. It is not content with only theological or solely official voices; it inquires into ordinary, folk meanings
- attends to all kinds of ritualizing and performative activity, not just to canonical actions in liturgies
- treats objects and spaces as animators of the behavior that transpires around them; objects and spaces are not rendered as inert backgrounds for human activity[11]
- implies methods and values that may evoke dissonance when brought into contact with "the native point of view"

I am no historian of Byzantine art, nor am I a theologian of Orthodox persuasion. But ethnographically inclined religious studies scholar that I am, I ransacked such writings, trying to figure out how to speak the language. I began asking ignorant, outside-observer questions: What do the "natives" (scholars in fields other than my own) call these barrier-things? Are there clear definitions and compelling examples?

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[11] Even art historians sometimes render "things" as "actors." For instance: "Decorated with saints who gesture across empty space and speak to each other by means of scrolls, the church need not be inhabited by people to be fully active. The sanctuary decoration participates in this idea of the living church by mirroring actual celebration. Momentarily joined by the priest, the painted celebrants included him in their prayers," Gerstel, *Beholding the Sacred Mysteries: Programs of the Byzantine Sanctuary*, 79, 48.

As I read major works in these "other" fields, I did what one does in field research: compile a glossary. I was delighted with the sonorous, chantable terms: balustrade, rood screen, monumental gateway, god's gate, firmament. There were ordinary labels too: parapet, grille, screening apparatus, screening paraphernalia, portal barrier, gate, veil, screen, chancel, perimeter fence. And then there were the imported exotic foreign words, laden with etymological milk: *soreg, mechitzah, devir, paroket, katapetasma, templon, temenos*, iconostasis, *fastigium, tramezzo*. Finally, I happened upon some wonderfully au courant jargon, words one could drop at wine and cheese parties: substitutive spectacle, interposed visual spectacle, architectonic membrane.

The "foreign" language of art history and allied disciplines was so enthralling that I became disoriented. Which words, I wondered, were synonyms and which actually referred to different things? Which things, I wondered, are at the center, and which are on the periphery of scholarly discourse about screening paraphernalia?

The "indigenous" term that most fueled my reflections was one of the simpler ones: veil. The altar screen is a kind of veil? Perhaps the image struck me so forcefuly because hijabs were much in the media then. The altar screen *is* a veil? Or just historically derived from the temple veil? Or merely *like* a veil?

Soon I could not distinguish pairs that were synonyms from pairs that were the result of metaphoric equations. If an altar screen is a veil, shielding and shrouding, can a veil be an altar screen? And if a screen is a veil, does that mean it functions like a mask? And if even a poor Protestant chancel functions something like a mask, is not looking *through* a mask (from the back) a different experience from looking *at* the mask (from the front)? A comparativist must surely recall how Apache and Hopi kids who, after being thoroughly *en*chanted by watching masked spirts dance, are soundly *dis*enchanted by being forced to look through the eye holes of sacred masks.[12]

To gain comparative perspective I began to pose crude questions: "What are other things non-Byzantine that define a sacred space, have doors in them, and that people paint sacred pictures on?" One answer:

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[12] Sam D. Gill, "Disenchantment: A Religious Abduction," in *Native American Religious Action: A Performance Approach to Religion* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1977).

a plains tepee, of course. Made of skin, it becomes a canvas for icons, pictures that not only depict but also embody.

Once I grasped the connection between a veil and an iconostasis, then between an iconostasis and a teepee, other examples began to cascade. In Calgary's Glenbow Museum, as well as in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, sacred pipes of First Nations people are put on display in glass cases. Native people sometimes find the curatorial ritual of enclosure disconcerting. Whereas white people say they are protecting pipes from deterioration induced by oily, greedy human hands, native people say sacred pipes are alive and that glass cases are not good for living—therefore dying and deteriorating—beings. The paradox of enclosing sacra in glass cases is that holiness is trapped in, while observers are trapped out, reduced to voyeurs.[13]

The paradox of a sanctuary is that it not only keeps the uninitiated out, it also traps the initiated in. In Miguel de Unamuno's story "St. Immanuel the Good, Martyr" the priest masturbates behind closed doors, then goes, hands unwashed, to serve communion.[14] As he hands people bread, they have no idea what else they are receiving.

Closed doors and less-than-transparent screening incubate mystery, for sure, but they also closet away sin and cover up abuse. There is no way that a room divider can divide a room into only one space. Whatever shuts out necessarily shuts in.

Once the notion of ritual screening is softened under the impact of repeated comparative moves, one begins to notice how ritual authorities, even when they stroll outside sanctuaries, still carry portable curtains with them in the form of collars, rings, or gowns.

Gestural Screening

Students of artistic and ritual framing devices could benefit from expanding the repertoire of objects classified in the same bin as altar screens. In addition, they should attend to acts of screening as well.

Most of my colleagues, kindly folk, sit behind their desks and face the door. They can see people pass, greet them, and earn teaching

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[13] The full discussion is in Grimes, *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory*, 63–88.

[14] Miguel de Unamuno, "Saint Immanuel the Good, Martyr," in *Abel Sanchez and Other Stories* (Chicago: Regnery, 1956).

awards in recognition of their open-door policy. When a student enters
a faculty office staged in this manner, the desk is between the teacher
and the student. The faculty member rocks back, while the student
leans in, elbows on desk.[15]

Being of the cantankerous school, and deeply desirous of writing
time, I inhabit my office a little differently. I face the window, turning
my back on people outside the door, rendering it, perversely, a kind
of sanctuary barrier. But when a student enters, I swivel around. Even
without a room divider, the gesture of swiveling divides the room—first
this way, then that. Once I swivel, however, there is no desk between
the student and me.

Divergent messages are encoded in these two different ways of setting
the professorial office scene. They are distinctly different ways of per-
forming one's accessibility and authority. They dictate different rhythms
of screening oneself from the world and then reconnecting with it.

Perhaps you see where I am headed now. One can divide a space
with a mere gesture; you do not need walls or room dividers or rails.
Because of the nature of the human body, sectoring happens, even when
there is no altar screen, glass case, or desk between an actor and audience.
The human body is quite enough; and clothed, it is doubly enough.[16]

A piece of clothing, a thin layer of skin, or a mere swiveling gesture
can act as a screening device that blocks or filters entry. Like an earlobe
or a T-shirt, a gesture flung into the air or inscribed reverently above a
dying person enacts a screen on which it is possible to post a portrait
of oneself or an icon of some sacred other.[17] If the likeness has been
ritually executed, duly honoring the conventions, observers may even
be inspired to pay homage to the image flashed upon a gestural screen.
The image will have become a metaphoric embodiment—a tangible
positing of identity and difference.[18] In such a drastic state, there is no

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[15] Regarding promics, the study of social meanings encoded in spatial construction,
see Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Anchor, 1973).

[16] For more on the language of the body, see Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and
Context: Essays on Body Motion Communication* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania
Press, 1970).

[17] On material culture studies, see Daniel Miller, *Home Possessions: Material Culture
behind Closed Doors* (New York: Berg, 2001). Also see W. D. Kingery, *Learning from Things:
Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1996).

[18] This metaphoric equation is quite characteristic of Orthodox liturgy and a primary
assumption of Orthodox theologians. Alexander Schmemann, for instance, describes
symbolism in the liturgy as "eschatological," by which he means "the sign and that
which it signifies are one and the same thing." See Alexander Schmemann, "Symbols

difference, at least in the moment of the devotional act, no difference between the icon and the iconized.

Conceptual Dividers

Ritual partitions, then, may be architectural, but they may be sartorial or gestural as well. In fact, screens may be completely immaterial; they may be purely conceptual. To define something—a space, a word, a field of study—is a way of dividing up territory. Classificatory boundaries, like shared New England fences or Orthodox iconostases, both connect and divide up the shards of a culture.[19] The resulting whole, variously imagined as a grid, a system, or a tapestry, maps out a cosmology that can be strikingly consistent or powerfully dissonant.

Any means of ordering or classifying, whether explicit or implicit, creates a set of conceptual screens. Although less tangible than altar rails and room dividers, epistemological screens—whether constructed of abstract ideas or mental images—are no less determinative of action than physical barriers are. Consider the slashes between these pairs: black/white, east/west, good/evil. Each pair creates two conceptual zones with a slash, a strip of nobody's land, down the middle. The slash dividing these two *conceptual* zones operates like a sacredly guarded barrier. Such a boundary divides and is divisive. People kill each other over partitions they cannot see: Northern Ireland/the Republic of Ireland; the West Bank/the East Bank.

Sets of polar distinctions organized into cultural cosmologies or religious traditions can be diagrammatically represented. As anthropologist Mary Douglas characterizes the grid of Leviticus, creatures, such as pigs, falling upon a taxonomic boundary (that is, across adjacent classificatory spaces), are treated as ritually impure, inedible, even evil.[20]

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and Symbolism in the Orthodox Liturgy," in *Orthodox Theology and Diakonia, Trends and Prospects*, ed. Demetrios J. Constantelos (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1981), 100. For a more general view of metaphor as it is understood in religious studies, consult Mary Gerhart and Russell Allan, *Metaphoric Process: The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1984). A good general work on the topic is George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[19] On classification in religion, see especially Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978). Also see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[20] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*

As I am playing it out, then, the Byzantine icon screen is but an example of a more widespread, utterly ordinary, quite political, necessarily theatrical human activity, that of partitioning and enclosing. Of course, one could define "iconostasis" in such a way as to deny the connections and similarities between it and other kinds of screens. One could insist on its distinctiveness, therefore upon the need to attend exclusively to its historical and cultural specificity. But if we did only that, we would be hedging and cordoning our subject matter like academic priests, would we not?

Please forgive me for playing the fool, the jeff, the globetrotter, who entertains the crowd by shooting baskets while breaking all the rules of basketball. I am playing at achieving a global perspective by spouting a grand narrative that links a sliding glass door in St. Petersburg, Florida, with iconostases in St. Petersburg, Russia, with human skin, with gestures of turning this way and that in a swivel chair, with the epistemology of cultural taxonomies. Such is the struggle for a perspective that aspires to the status of a theory.

My rendering the icon screen as an example of a larger phenomenon makes the terrain slippery, so a good historian of anything, art included, would surely insist on interpretive moves that protect the historical and cultural specificity of the data.

Fear not. In the end, I too revere the minute particulars of the times and places I study. Sound scholarly methods, whether historical or ethnographic, are doggedly local and ultimately modest. But I am making a pitch—you recognize it as that—for supplementing micro-focused, historical research with macro-driven methods and metaphoric moves that are playful, imaginative, and challenging to the data rather than merely reflective of it. This position, of course, reflects a sensibility steeped in the arts and humanities rather than in the sciences, physical or social.

METAPHORIC MOVES

Why make metaphoric moves? To answer that question, I return to Jeff. I confess that I have been distracting you with a little side show by

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(London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966). As well, see Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Vintage, 1973).

calling attention to the sliding glass door (and its holy analogues). If you reflect on the parable of Jeff the Improv Man, you will recognize that the most dangerously disruptive act was not really his peering through the door. Rather, it was his becoming the polar bear and, worse, playing the bear *before* reading the play.

In the WordBridge playwrighting process, there are four centers of dramaturgical authority: playwright, script, actors, and audience. The playwright authors (and thereby authorizes) the script, which in turn is performed by the actors who present the play to an audience of other theater people, which provides feedback for use by authors who are revising their plays.[21] By attending to the fourth center (audience) rather than the first (author), Jeff was not only subverting the usual hierarchy, he was putting himself in the position of having to depend on a circumspect, mediated version of the playwright's vision.

Why would anyone take such a risk when standard communication theories would require us to treat Jeff's understanding of the play as suspect? Surely, his view of it would be clouded by all his indirection, filtering, and calculated ignorance. Jeff's knowledge was "screened" even though the screen was transparent. Jeff had positioned himself where he could see but not hear, deliberately cultivating auditory ignorance.

My own ethnographic predisposition required that I ask Jeff *directly* what he thought viewing dramatic reality through a sliding glass door had accomplished.

Such a posture, he explained, provides a peculiar kind of knowledge unlike the lofty kind I was touting, namely, intellectual knowledge derived from multiple readings, careful exegesis, and focalized listening from the front row. He was tuning in, he said, not to the script, the playwright, or the actors but rather to the entire social-gestural interaction. He first came to know the play not as a script or dramatic reading but as reflected in the faces and postures of an audience responding to actors. He was, in effect, watching the play as a reception, or consumer, critic might have done.[22]

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[21] Since there is a feedback loop resulting in revisions of the script, there are more phases than this simplified summary suggests.

[22] Studies of iconography could benefit enormously from current discussions of visual culture such as Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. For an example of fieldwork-based, reception-oriented interpretation of religious elements in popular culture, see Lynn Schofield Clark, *From Angels to Aliens: Teenagers, the Media, and the Supernatural* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

If you had not read the script, interviewed the playwright, or listened to the first reading, you would think the chances were high that your contribution to the play's development would be either disruptive or just plain silly. So what is the test of success in a metaphoric intervention? What determines whether Jeff gets it right when he makes his powerful metaphoric move of becoming a polar bear and consuming an hour of fifteen professionals' time? The test in a playwright's lab is whether the lightbulb goes on for the playwright, whether, in the end, the script is improved, rendered more effectively engaging. Getting a metaphoric improvisation wrong is obvious: It skews the playwrighting process by confusing the actors or sidetracking the playwright.

When the director asked the playwright what the play was about, she did not mention bears at all. She talked instead about the waitress in the diner, with whom she clearly identified, and about the boss and a strange customer. Asked why she named the play after the bears, the playwright sounded like many participants interviewed after rites. She said she did not know.[23]

By making such an oblique move and playing the bear, Jeff took the risk of derailing the process. But the outcome of the improvisational strategy was, in fact, enormously fruitful. In religious language, we would say that the playwright and actors experienced a "revelation." By the end, the playwright had begun to discover what her play was about and what polar bears have to do with waitresses who talk to their alphabet soup, but that is another story.

Theories as Metaphoric Screens

Like theater, ritual depends on symbols. When symbols do more than point, when they embody that to which they point, they become metaphoric.[24] A ritual metaphor is a drastically embodied symbol, one in which symbol and symbolized are simultaneously identified and dif-

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[23] Inability to articulate meaning does not make something meaningless. A provocative discussion of ritual and symbolic meaning is Frits Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual," *Numen* 26 (1979): 9–14. Another is Dan Sperber, ed., *Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[24] For example, Maximus the Confessor imagines a church as a man: "Its soul is the sanctuary; the sacred altar, the mind; and the body the nave," Maximus the Confessor, *The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man: The Mystagogia of St. Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Julian Stead (Still River, MA: St. Bede's, 1982), 71.

ferentiated. This bread *is* my body; this bread is *only* bread. That icon *is* sacred; that icon is *only* wood and paint.

Scholars usually recognize the metaphoric dimension of ritual.[25] Sometimes, however, they do not recognize their own metaphoric moves. Theories in the humanities, social sciences, and theology are predicated, sometimes tacitly, sometimes explicitly, on generative metaphors, for example, the threshold, or *limen*, that underlies the rites-of-passage theories of Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep.[26] Applying a theory, like performing a play or enacting a liturgy, amounts to a metaphoric move. To apply a theory is to interpose a sliding glass door (clean, hopefully) between onself and the data. To query data with theoretically driven questions is to play the polar bear, because to theorize is to know what to expect before one has read the script.

The dedicated comparativist tries to gain perspective on things doggedly local by setting up parallel columns and then mapping out similarities and differences: An Orthodox iconostasis is to a temple veil as a sliding glass door is to a Plains tepee as human skin is to a museum display case as swiveling this way and that in a chair is to a conceptual grid.

When studying comparatively, the items set up for comparison are discreet and stubbornly local. To be most effective, researchers ought to choose their items from *differing* cultural domains in order to challenge the interpretive scope of their models. Then, sometimes, an electric, metaphoric arc occurs: The icon screen *is* a veil, *is* skin, *is....*

Seeing such equations on the conceptual screen, historians and ethnographers may be tempted to shut down their computers, lest the big bear of imagination eat up their data and them along with it. But I suggest otherwise. We should stay the course and make the metaphoric

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[25] James W. Fernandez, "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture," *Current Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (1974): 119–145; James W. Fernandez, "The Performance of Ritual Metaphors," in *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric*, ed. J. David Sapir and J. Christopher Crocker (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); James W. Fernandez, "Persuasion and Performances," in *Myth, Symbol, and Culture*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Norton, 1971); James W. Fernandez, *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[26] Victor W. Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1987); Victor W. Turner, "Liminality and the Performative Genres," in *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, ed. John MacAloon (Philadelphia: ISHI, 1985); Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

move. Play the Jeff. If all goes wrong, we will at least have had fun, and you can blame the mess on me (or him).

Suppose we play out the metaphor: altar screen as altar skin. What does skin do that an altar screen might do? Skin contains. It is a stretchable, flexible bag. Skin protects. It is a boundary, keeping out rain, sun, and foreign organisms. Skin regulates. It maintains consistent body temperature. Cold, it tightens into goose bumps. Hot, it sweats. Skin conducts, takes in. It is a sensor, a conductor. It grabs vitamin D from the sun, conducts the vibration of a lover's touch. Embarrassed, it turns red. Skin communicates ("See my pimples; I eat too much chocolate and too many greasy fries." "Look at my skin: I am a Black person." "I am dead." "I am very hot. I am alive.") Skin advertises who we are.

So much for skin. Now let us make the metaphoric leap by asking: Understood on the model of skin, what might altar screens do that skin does? The answer is already obvious. Screens contain, protect, regulate, conduct, and communicate.

Of what use is the metaphoric move, altar screen as altar skin? When one sets an icon screen in a comparative, cross-cultural context, the larger, almost universal, question that arises is this: How permeable or impermeable are thresholds of sanctity? Is this screen, or act of screening, like a solid wall, or is it like a membrane? Every boundary creates an inside and out, a here and a there. And the most fundamental question about ritually maintained borders concerns their permeability—not only to bodily passage but also to sound, light, smell, and sight. Again and again, we humans try to understand screens and boundary markers by inferring the rules for passage through them: This can pass through, that cannot. This can pass, but only in the presence of such-and-such an agent. If we cannot discover the rules of passage either by direct inquiry or by inference, then we will likely discover them the hard way: by violating them accidentally.

What makes a screen work is what makes a veil work is what makes a mask or a beard work: Something is back there, over there, in there. We out here wonder what is up. From outside, it may seem that the power behind the screen knows me intimately, better than I know myself. The screen does not merely point to this felt sense; it creates it by setting the stage for it.

Even though magic men behind curtains can generate blazing auras and stunning light shows, reality backstage can seem pretty flat for a stage manager. But for the profane, the great unwashed who are kept out, screening heightens interest and focuses attention.

Lest you go away complaining that I *only* played with you and did not earn my keep by tendering a scholarly argument, I will summarize it, making it an easy (though moving) target:

- Screening is an act of stage managing. It constructs inside spaces in ways that cast others as outsiders; or, alternatively, outside spaces in ways that trap others inside.
- Screening is a calculated act of unknowing. It is simultaneously conducive of conceptual humility but also expressive of epistemological arrogance.
- Metaphoric moves are hyper-real, acts of theatrical supererogation, risky but potentially revelatory sorts of stage magic.
- Metaphoric moves are explicit in both ritual and the arts, although they are more constitutive in liturgical rites, in which predications of identity are guarded as sacred rather critiqued as fictional.
- Metaphoric moves also determine scholarly research. Metaphors suffuse the theories that frame and drive research. Like the metaphoric moves of priests and actors, those of scholars consume as well as reveal their subject matter.

In ethnographic field research on ritual one may try to enter an arena of action free of presuppositions. But, at best, we are jeffs, playing at unknowing. Try as we might, one never enters a field, faces a text, or contemplates an artifact in a state of epistemological innocence. Becoming a blank slate, empty cup, or transparent window is a spiritual aspiration, not an academic achievement. (Even Jeff Wirth has to practice the spontaneity that underlies his improv artistry.)

Arts theories are less important for outcomes they predict than for perspectives they provoke. At the heart of every arts theory and method are metaphors so pervasive and tenaciously guarded that they function as ultimate, or sacred, postulates. Pregnant with fructifying metaphors lying curled deep in their bellies, theories facilitate interpretations that are at once stronger and deadlier than untheorized approaches. Scholars, like celebrating priests and enterprising stage managers, screen their performances (and not just when they return home to show Powerpoint presentations on dances that native do). Interpretive screens are knitted not only of theories and methods, but also of images, preconceptions, definitions, values, hunches, and stereotypes interposed between ourselves and what we study.

Like Jeff, seizing upon a sliding glass door to provide him with a less captive, more creative, more critical perspective, we scholars use theories

to gain perspective, to tune in to undertones. But whatever tunes in, also tunes out. Whatever reveals also conceals. Whatever selects for this, selects against that. Theory-using is a form of screening, and, like it or not, it is, in this respect, both priestly and performative.

Whether artistically inspired, religiously prescribed, or theoretically driven, making metaphoric moves is risky. When one improvises the bear in order to play the data, dormant values and meanings may awaken, emerging into daylight, hungry for recognition. But the other possibility is that the bear escapes the zoo. And having escaped, he gobbles up the little girl who wants to take him home as a playmate.

By Jeffing, by posing as outsiders who ask disturbing questions to ritual insiders, scholars can perform a valuable intellectual and social service. But the blessings of scholarly arrival upon scenes ceremonial and sacred are mixed. Scholarly research is a form of hunting, predatory, even parasitic, upon whatever it studies.[27] Things studied are soon deadened, rendered corpselike. Scholarship necessarily, not accidentally, consumes what it studies. For having transposed persons, gods, spirits, and the departed into data, we scholars repeatedly incur social and ecological guilt. And the only acceptable form of paying off the debt is a good sideshow fearlessly imagined and disarmingly improvised.

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[27] This case is argued more fully in Ronald L. Grimes, "Performance Is Currency in the Deep World's Gift Economy: An Incantatory Riff for a Global Medicine Show," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 9, no. 1 (2002): 149–164.

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MATRIMONY: VALUES AND RITUAL.
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE RELATION BETWEEN MATRIMONIAL VALUES AND NOTIONS ABOUT THE FORM OF ECCLESIASTIC MARRIAGE RITES

Remco Robinson and Hans Schilderman

1 Introduction and Research Questions

Ever since scientists first became interested in the phenomenon of ritual the spotlight in ritual studies has fallen on certain pivotal moments in human life. After Arnold van Gennep published his seminal work in 1909, rites of passage emerged as a separate category. Marriage is a major ritual marking a crucial transition in human life. At least one of the partners leaves his or her old situation to embark on a new one. This change can have a tremendous impact. Yet marriage and marriage rituals in Western Europe are not uncontroversial.

When we look at developments in the area of marriage and cohabitation, the question immediately arises: what is happening to marriage? The number of marriages in Europe has declined from 3,3 million in 1972 to 2,2 million in 2004. Taking into account a population growth of 8%, it means that the number of marriages per 1000 inhabitants dropped from 7,9 in 1972 to 4,8 in 2004. In addition people are marrying later. The average age for women has risen from 23 to 27. The number of divorces has quadrupled, from 0.6 per 1000 inhabitants in 1960 to 1.9 in 2002. On average divorces happen 11 to 12 years after marriage (Eurostat 2004, 15–128).

Marriage as we know it in Western Europe today may be regarded as a stage in a long-term, cultural historical evolution. Before the Industrial Revolution most people still lived in extended families comprising two or more generations. They jointly earned a livelihood, so marriage involved all members of the family. Partners were often chosen by parents on economic grounds. As a result of the Industrial Revolution and concomitant urbanisation this unit was disrupted and the nuclear family, comprising parents and their children, emerged (Kaa & Lesthaege

1986, 9–12). After all, wage earning meant that people no longer had to rely on several generations for their livelihood. It also meant that they could choose their own marriage partners. Physical and emotional attraction became the main motives for marrying (Allan & Crow 2001, 56–62; Klein & White 1996, 49–58).

In the 1960s social change proceeded apace. Numerous social movements (human rights, student, pacifist, civil rights, gay rights and especially feminist movements) shook the foundation of the nuclear family. It became clear that marriage and the family were not necessarily the ideal societal form (Aulette 1994, 11–14; Kaa & Lesthaege 1986, 12–24). In fact, one might say that the individualisation process that started during the Industrial Revolution with the break-up of the extended family into nuclear units had gone further. Whereas the basic societal unit used to be the family, it has now become the individual. As a result marriage lost its exclusive position and extramarital cohabitation, premarital and extramarital sex, illegitimate children and divorce became more and more common (Kaa & Lesthaege 1986, 12–24). Marriage assumed a new form as one of various societal forms.

Apart from the cultural historical form of marriage, the way couples experience their married state is important. Until the 1970s marriage in Western society was experienced as a pre-eminently Christian institution. Since the Middle Ages the church had tried to take control of marriage so as to prevent clandestine marriages. Ever since the end of the Roman Empire it was the sole agent that could administer marriage, however imperfect its system. Hence religion and marriage went hand in hand. The Reformation and the Council of Trent strengthened the—now various—churches' control over marriage.[1] The separation of church and state from the late 18th century onwards eventually made marriage the responsibility of civil authorities (in most countries). But until the 1970s the churches' moral influence remained unimpaired.

All this changed in the latter half of the 20th century. Then secularisation and de-institutionalisation set in in most European countries. Throughout Europe the number of church members per generation declined. People also increasingly failed to practise their faith actively (attending church services, personal prayer, support). Finally faith itself

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[1] Despite the Reformers' view that marriage was a matter for civil authorities, practical factors and the civil authorities' unwillingness to take responsibility for marriage meant that it remained in the churches' hands (Brink, 1977, 113–118, 120–122, 129–139).

declined over successive generations (Voas, forthcoming 2006). Not only did the number of church members decrease. The churches' influence on their members' relational lives also declined drastically. Thus various churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, prohibit unmarried cohabitation, whereas in practice a large majority of their members do not marry without first cohabiting. Another consequence of the two processes is that far fewer people have church marriages. Denomination, too, is no longer a factor in choosing a partner. That raises the question: to what extent do present-day couples who get married in church subscribe to the traditional values that churches associate with marriage?

The ongoing discourse in matrimonial theology allows us to identify four values that have traditionally been focal in Christian marriage: a contract, having children, sexuality and love.

Since the inception of Christianity marriage was conceived of as a contract, as it was among the early Christians' contemporaries. In addition Christianity inherited another concept of marriage: in German culture the belief was that a marriage was accomplished after the first sexual consummation (McAreavey 1997, 46). Both notions are discernible in present-day Catholic notions about marriage. Entering into a contract (exchanging vows) and sexual intercourse are focal in establishing a valid, sacramental, indissoluble union.

Apart from the contractual and sexual aspects, procreation is an important factor in matrimonial theology. Early theologians (e.g. Clement of Alexandria and Augustine) called it the primary purpose of marriage. This view was adopted by all theologians until the pontificate of Pius XI and his *Casti Conubii* (1930). This pope considered interpersonal love and intimacy the crux of marriage. That brings us to the fourth matrimonial value. Pius's innovative input was developed by the theologians Von Hildebrand and Doms, whose work firmly steered matrimonial theology in a new direction. This new trend had an impact on the way Vatican II defined marriage: The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the jugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent. (Gaudium et Spes No. 48). It is an covenant that creates an intimate relationship of *life* and conjugal love. Firstly, it is aimed at the well-being of the spouses. Secondly, it is aimed at procreation, and thirdly, at society (Gaudium et Spes No. 50; Lawler 1993, 67–68; Arjonillo Jr. 1998, 62–110, 134–165, 257–336).

Following earlier matrimonial theologies, the four matrimonial values we have mentioned are discernible in the Vatican II definition of marriage. Marriage is, first of all, a contract. It is a special contract: a covenant of love between two people aimed at their well-being. This special contract regulates the interaction between the spouses, obliging them to help and care for each other. The second value we call having children: marriage is aimed at having children and caring for them. Being a covenant, it creates a secure environment to do so. The third value is sexuality. Just as marriage creates a safe environment for having and raising children, so it provides safety for the expression of sexuality. The fourth focal matrimonial value is love. Marriage is a contract that may be described more specifically as an alliance of love. In this article we propose examining to what extent these four matrimonial values are still endorsed by contemporary couples.

Because married life has changed in our time and it is questionable to what extent traditional Christian matrimonial values are still endorsed, we anticipate that notions about the form of the church's marriage rites may also have changed. By way of illustration one can cite the thesis of Michels (2004), in which he describes the various possible marriage rituals available in the Netherlands. Some people opt for a civil marriage only, others for a combined civil and ecclesiastic marriage, or a civil marriage with a distinctive religious or meaningful rite. If we confine ourselves to the church's marriage ritual, there are signs that both bridal couples and pastors feel a need for diversity, for a customised ritual. Michels's study reveals changes in bridal couples' description of ecclesiastic matrimonial rites. Terms like 'traditional' and 'solemnise' are replaced by 'joyous'. In addition pastor and couple spend far more time preparing the ritual, and the preparation and the pastor's role are rated far more highly (Michels 2004, 173–175). A clear sign of greater scope for diversity is the fact that Roman Catholic marriage rites as prescribed by the Vatican and bishops' conferences are more flexible. Thus there are different rituals for a marriage between two Roman Catholics, between a Catholic and a Christian from another denomination, and between a Catholic and an unbaptised person. Each ritual offers many different readings and prayers for pastor and couple to choose from. Apart from this official range of choices, there are even more alternatives to be found in liturgic practice. This diversity in supply and demand naturally raises the question of the extent to which the couple's wishes can be accommodated. When is it still an ecclesiastic marriage rite, and when is it so tailored to the individuals' wishes that the link with the

church's tradition is severed and it becomes simply a wedding held in a church? This question, too, will be examined empirically.

Thus we arrive at the following research questions, to which this article seeks to provide empirical answers:

1. To what extent do bridal couples subscribe to the four matrimonial values that we identify (a contract, having children, sexuality, love)?
2. What are present-day bridal couples' ideas on the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites?
3. To what extent do bridal couples' ideas on the four matrimonial values relate to their notions about the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites?

To answer these questions we draw on the research findings of a pilot study in the survey project, "Matrimony: a rite of passage". A questionnaire was given to 49 couples married in the Roman Catholic Church in the period January to June 2005. The couples were married in parishes drawn randomly from a list of all Dutch Roman Catholic parishes. The questionnaires were completed separately by both spouses within three months of their church wedding.

2   MATRIMONIAL VALUES

The four key values of a Christian marriage, we have said, are: a contract, having children, sexuality and love. In this section we deal with the conceptualisation and operationalisation of these values, as well as our empirical study of the values and the concomitant dimensions.

2.1   *A contract*

2.1.1   *Conceptualisation*

Since classical antiquity up to the present marriage has entailed a contract of some sort. In his book *From sacrament to contract* (1997) Witte describes how, in the development of this contractual value, the institution administering the marriage changed periodically, giving rise to different forums. Nowadays bridal couples can have several ideas about whom they address in the first place, when they give their consent. This leads us to ask what importance they attach to each forum. From the development outlined in Witte's book we infer five forums,

which can be seen as dimensions of the contractual value. In earliest times marriage was a contract between two families. It was made clear to the community what agreements are made regarding the lives of two people. We take this to be the social dimension: you get married before the people in your environment. The second dimension is civil and judicial: a marriage conducted by a civil authority. In Europe this value arose at the time of the Roman empire. The civil authority supervises the substance and observance of the contract. Marriage became a state affair. During the Reformation this dimension resurfaced. The third dimension is ecclesiastic and judicial: a marriage conducted by an official church. This is linked to the church's growing role in marriage from the 4th century onwards. Fourthly, to Christians marriage before God can be a major factor. The bridal pair make their vows before God and rely on him for their observance of these. That is the religious dimension. The fifth and last dimension is personal: the couple marry before each other. Marriage is primarily an covenant between these two people (Witte 1997, 5–10). Hence we expect that the contractual value can be approached in terms of five dimensions: social, civil judicial, ecclesiastic judicial, religious and personal.

2.1.2 *Operationalisation*

To measure attitudes towards the contractual matrimonial value we designed an instrument. For each of the five dimensions that we identified theoretically we formulated four items, which were included in the questionnaire in random sequence. Respondents answered on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating the extent of their agreement.[2] In addition they could circle the numeral 6, indicating they have never thought about it. Below we present each dimension with an item to illustrate it.

1. Personal dimension. Example: When two people get married it is primarily something between the two of them.
2. Civil judicial dimension. Example: The most important part of the marriage is done in the registry office.
3. Religious dimension. Example: In the first place you get married before God.
4. Social dimension. Example: Getting married means in the first place showing your community that you belong together.

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[2] Ranging from 1, totally disagree to 5, totally agree.

5. Ecclesiastic judicial dimension. Example: You are not really married
   until after the church wedding.

2.1.3   *Empirical investigation*

By means of factor analysis we examined in how far the five theoreti-
cally identified dimensions (personal, civil judicial, religious, social and
ecclesiastic judicial) are reflected in the responses of the couples in
the pilot study. The following table compares our theoretical distinc-
tions (theoretical domain) with the distinctions found in the responses
(empirical domain).

Theoretical domain	*Empirical domain*
Personal	*Personal*
1	1
12	12
16	16
19	
Civil judicial	*Secular judicial*
3	3
	6(−)
7	7(−)
8	8
17	17
	18
	20
Religious	*Religious*
4	4
9	9
13	13
20	
Social	*Social*
2	
5	5
10	10
14	14
Ecclesiastic judicial	
6	
11	
15	
18	

In the final result[3] we retained four factors from our five dimensions. Items 2, 11, 15 and 19 were eliminated because of their low factor loading (below .40). Hence there is one factor fewer than there are dimensions. We had to remove two ecclesiastic judicial items, because they were too unrelated to the other items. The remaining two loaded on the first factor. It seems to indicate that the couples in the pilot study did not recognise an ecclesiastic judicial dimension, which was therefore excluded from further analyses. The labels of factors I, III and IV are taken over from the dimensions, because the items corresponding with these dimensions cluster in these factors. Hence we label them 'personal', 'social' and 'religious'. The label of factor II had to be adjusted, since two items from the ecclesiastic judicial and one from the religious dimension loaded on that factor. The religious item and one of the ecclesiastic judicial items are phrased negatively. The second ecclesiastic judicial item, although phrased positively, loads negatively. These three 'additional' items might furnish more information on how the civil judicial items are interpreted, namely as nonreligious and non-ecclesiastic. Accordingly we labelled the first factor 'secular judicial'. The elimination of the ecclesiastic judicial dimension could also be indicative of the de-institutionalisation of the church, which was corroborated in the main project (Felling, Peters, & Schepers 2000). The church is not regarded as a separate institution or forum that marries people.

We constructed a scale for the items of each factor. Reliability analysis showed that the scales were reliable.[4] The following table reflects the mean and standard deviation of each scale score.

Scale label	Mean	Standard Deviation
Personal	4.3	0.6
Religious	3	0.81
Social	2.8	0.43
Secular judicial	2.6	0.81

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[3] Minimum eigen value 1, oblique rotation.
[4] Cornbach's alpha higher than .65.

The scale scores indicate that the personal dimension is endorsed most strongly. The religious and social dimensions evoke an ambivalent response and the secular judicial dimension is rejected. The strong agreement with the personal dimension supports the theory that the institution of marriage is highly individualised.

2.2 *Having children*

2.2.1 *Conceptualisation*

We have noted that until the 1930s the primary goal of marriage in matrimonial theological discourse was procreation. In society, too, marriage centred on having children until the 1960s. Most couples had several children. Many people felt that God gave married couples an obligation to have children in accordance with the churches' message, which is traceable to the Bible and theology. Genesis 1:28 commands humans to be fruitful. A child, moreover, is a gift of God and a sign of his blessing. Childlessness is a curse. The Bible contains many examples of parents (especially mothers) who are afflicted with barrenness until God unexpectedly grants them children. Examples include Abraham and Sarah (Gen 21), Hannah (1 Sam 1) and Elizabeth and Zechariah (Lk 1). In theology procreation was an explicit goal of marriage, for instance in the views of Clement of Alexandria, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. People marry in order to have children. From a Christian perspective one may regard having children as God's commission to married people.

Since the late 1960s the situation has changed greatly. Nowadays contraception means that having children is an option, not a necessity. Advances in medical science also mean that many forms of infertility can be remedied. Besides, having children is not exclusively confined to wedlock, so the link between the two is no longer taken for granted. But couples may still feel socially pressurised to have children, because their parents or friends of their own age expect them to. Nonreligious people, too, may experience this kind of pressure. In that case having children is seen as a social expectation. Hence we expect that the value 'having children' should be approached in terms of two dimensions: having children as a religious obligation and as a social expectation.

2.2.2   *Operationalisation*

To measure attitudes towards the matrimonial value 'having children' we designed, as in the case of the contractual value, an instrument comprising eight items. Respondents again choose between five options to indicate their degree of agreement, plus a sixth to indicate that they have never thought about it. Below are the two dimensions and an item by way of illustration.

1. Having children as a religious obligation. Example: If you are married, God wants you to try to have children.
2. Having children as a social expectation. Example: If you are married, the people around you expect you to have children.

2.2.3   *Empirical investigation*

The 'having children' value, too, was subjected to factor analysis to determine to what extent the couples' response patterns reflect the distinctions we make. In the following table we again compare the theoretical and empirical domains.

Theoretical domain	*Empirical domain*
Religious obligation	*Religious obligation*
1	1
4	4
5	5
7	7
Social expectation	*Social expectation*
2	2
3	3
6	6
8	8

In the final result[5] all items in the factors loaded in accordance with the dimensions in the theoretical domain, confirming that the couples make exactly the same distinctions that we anticipated.

Again we used the items for each factor for scale construction. This time we could use the labels of the dimensions as scale labels, since

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[5] Minimum eigen value 1, oblique rotation.

the scales and dimensions contained the same items. Thus the scales are 'having children as a religious obligation' and 'having children as a social expectation. Reliability analyses showed both scales to be reliable.[6] The next table shows the means and standard deviations on the two scales.

Scale label	Mean	Standard Deviation
Religious duty	2.5	0.93
Social duty	2.5	0.79

The scale scores show that the couples reject having children as both a religious obligationand a social expectation. Probably having children is experienced as a choice rather than as an obligation or expectation.

2.3   *Sexuality*

2.3.1   *Conceptualisation*

We have said that in its most basic form marriage is a way of regulating sexuality. According to the Christian tradition it is the framework in which sexuality may be expressed, partly as a means of procreating, partly to counteract lust (Hill 1993, 4). Today many churches hold that sexuality is only permissible within marriage. Although many theologians and churches value sexuality, they still feel that it needs to be regulated. Marriage is seen as a way to do so. In this view sexuality is associated exclusively with marriage.

In our western society it is less easy to determine the relation between sexuality and marriage. Although the media deal extensively with sexuality, it is usually extramarital sex in the sense of passion or escapades. There are hardly any films or other programmes that pay much attention to conjugal sex. What is featured is sex between unmarried couples that have only recently met, or otherwise adultery. It is questionable, however, whether ordinary people's sex lives are as wild as the media would make us think. Whereas in practice the exclusive connection between marriage and sexuality is seen as severable, to most single people the ideal is still a stable relationship, in which sex plays a

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[6] Cronbach's alpha higher than .60.

role. Their first sexual experiences are premarital, even before cohabitation. People sleep together, go on holiday together, et cetera. Only then do they start living together and, possibly, get married (Garssen et al. 2001, 3–29). In this view, then, sex is not associated exclusively with marriage. Consequently we expected that the sexuality value should be approached in terms of three dimensions: premarital sex unacceptable, premarital sex acceptable, extramarital sex unacceptable.

2.3.2   *Operationalisation*

On the basis of our three dimensions we constructed a measuring instrument comprising six items. Respondents were given the same response options as for the other matrimonial values. Below are the dimensions, plus an illustrative item.

1. Premarital sex unacceptable. Example: Sex with another person is only permitted once you are married to that person.
2. Premarital sex acceptable. Example: You need not be married to a person to be allowed to have sex with him or her.
3. Extramarital sex unacceptable. Example: You may only have sex with somebody if you are married to that person.

2.3.3   *Empirical investigation*

Here, too, we used factor analysis to determine whether our distinctions corresponded with the couples'. The following table reflects the theoretical and empirical domains.

Theoretical domain	*Empirical domain*
Premarital sex unacceptable	*Premarital sex unacceptable*
6	*6*
3	*3*
	2(–)
	4(–)
	1
Premarital sex acceptable	
2	
4	
Extramarital sex unacceptable	
1	
5	

In the final result[7] item 1 was eliminated because the factor loading was too low.[8] All other items load on one factor. The 'extramarital sex unacceptable' dimension is not discerned separately, probably because the item can also be interpreted as 'premarital sex unacceptable'. In that factor the items measuring acceptability of premarital sex load negatively. Hence we may label this factor 'unacceptability of premarital sex'. We constructed a scale for these items, which we called 'degree of unacceptability of premarital sex'. The scale is reliable (Cronbach's alpha .94). Again we calculated the scale scores.

Scale label	*Mean*	*Standard deviation*
Degree of unacceptability of premarital sex	1.6	0.64

The couples reject the view that premarital sex is unacceptable. They consider it acceptable.

2.4   *Love*

2.4.1   *Conceptualisation*

Nowadays most people in the Western world associate marriage with love. In *Casti Conubii* Pius XI specified for the first time that interpersonal love is the crux of marriage. Whereas prior to the Industrial Revolution people rarely married for love, by now it has become the norm in the Western world. Yet it is unclear what is meant by love. Love is multi-dimensional.

A well-known author on the subject is C. S. Lewis. In *The four loves* (1960) he distinguishes between four types of love based on the Christian tradition: Ἀγάπη (selfless love), Ἐρος (passionate desire for union with the beloved), Φιλία (reciprocal friendly love between equals) and Στοργή (caring love, especially parental love).

Although Lewis does not substantiate his categorisation, theology and the Bible do offer grounds for it. Naturally one has to allow for differences in language, times and context. The Bible mentions three of the four types of love: Ἀγάπη (e.g. 2 Sam 13:15, Ecc 9:1, Lk 11:42,

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[7] Minimum eigen value 1, oblique rotation.
[8] Below .40.

Jn 5:42 and Rom 5:8); Ἔρος (Pr 7:18 and 30:16); and Φιλία (e.g. 1 Mac 8:1, 10:23, 12:1, 2 Mac 6:22, Pr 15:17 and Sir 6:17). The fourth type of love, Στοργή, can be reconstructed from various biblical passages. There are many stories dealing with parents' love for their children, such as the story of Moses' birth and upbringing (Ex 2), Hannah's care for Samuel (1 Sam 1) and the Christmas story (Matt 2, Lk 2).

Theological ethics refers to *sexus, eros* and *agapè. Sexus* is passionate love stemming from sexuality; *eros* is inner longing for wholeness and happiness by having the other augment one's own limitations; and *agapè* is selfless affirmation of the other. Sometimes this scheme is supplemented with a fourth type of love, *philia*, being caring, benevolent, reciprocal love based on sympathy.

Systematic theology speaks of the love emanating from God, Ἀγάπη. In addition there is love emanating from people. When that love is directed to God it is a human response to the divine Ἀγάπη and may be called by the same name. People's love for their fellow humans depends on the nature of the relationship. Friends' mutual love is Φιλία. Parents' love for their children is Στοργή. Lovers' feeling for each other is *Ἔρος*. And charitable, selfless love is Ἀγάπη (Haeffner, Söding, Drumm, & Hilpert 2000, 908–920). If one confines oneself to mutual human love, one is back with Lewis's four loves: Ἀγάπη, Ἔρος, Φιλία and Στοργή.

Hence we expect that the love value may be approached in terms of four dimensions: Ἀγάπη, love for the other with total disregard of self; Ἔρος, longing for union with the other (either sexual or spiritual); Φιλία, mutual love between equals; and finally, Στοργή, caring love in a (partly) dependent relationship.

2.4.2 *Operationalisation*

To measure the love value we constructed an instrument comprising sixteen items on the basis of the four dimensions we identified. Response categories were the same as for the other matrimonial values. Below are the dimensions, plus an illustrative item.

1. Ἀγάπη. Example: If you truly love someone, you efface yourself completely.
2. Ἔρως. Example: If you truly love a person, you want to be one with him or her.
3. Φιλία. Example: True love is only possible in a relationship with an equal partner.
4. Στοργή. Example: True love is above all caring for the other.

2.4.3   *Empirical investigation*

To determine what distinctions the couples made we subjected all items for the love value to factor analysis. The theoretical and empirical domains are reflected in the following table.

Theoretical domain	*Empirical domain*
Agapè	*Agapè*
1	*1*
2	
10	*10*
13	*13*
Eros	*Eros*
3	*3*
6	*6*
7	*7(–)*
14	*14*
Philia	*Philia*
4	*4*
8	*8*
11	*11*
16	*16(–)*
Storgè	*Storgè*
5	*5*
9	*9*
12	*12*
15	

The final result[9] yields four factors. Items 2 and 15 are eliminated because of low factor loadings.[10] The other items load on the factors in keeping with the theoretical domain. Hence we use the labels of the dimensions for the factors. They are ’Αγάπη, Ερος, Φιλία and Στοργή.

   On the basis of the factor loading of items we constructed scales that proved to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha above .60). We used the factor labels as scale labels. The next table shows the scales, means and standard deviations.

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[9] Minimum eigen value 1, oblique rotation.
[10] Below .40.

Scale label	Mean	Standard deviation
Agapè	2.5	0.88
Eros	3.6	0.67
Philia	3.8	0.75
Storge	3.5	0.68

The couples subscribed most strongly to Φιλία, with Έρος and Στοργή a close second. Ἀγάπη is rejected. This could indicate individualism, in the sense that the individual may be there for the other but should never be totally self-effacing. The discrepancies between the other scale scores are not big.

3   Form of Ecclesiastic Marriage Rites

As we have pointed out, the diversity of ritual forms available to pastors and bridal couples has increased greatly in recent years, as has the need for a 'customised' ritual. This increased supply and demand for liturgical options should be viewed in light of the overall modernisation process, in which virtually immutable traditions are making way for an ever broadening spectrum of choices in every sphere of life (Berger 1979, 10–29). The availability of multiple options does not mean that exercising one's choice is entirely unproblematic: people still grow up in their traditions. Although ecclesiastic marriage is no longer the only option, it remains a familiar one. The institutional church, which transmits that tradition, seeks to convey its values to its members. These institutions and their various traditions continue to exist, while at the same time their importance is relativised by alternatives. As a result, modern people are required to relate to both their tradition and modern pluralism. In this regard Berger distinguishes between three possibilities: a deductive, an inductive and a reductive option.

The deductive option affirms the authority of religious tradition in confrontation with the modern, secularised world. Norms and values are inferred or deduced from religion. The inductive option bases religious behaviour on personal experience, in relation to experience deriving from a religious tradition. Finally, the reductive option submits religious tradition to the criteria of secular modernity. The mindset of modern people rather than the religious institution is authoritative. Hence faith is reduced to accord with modern criteria. The reductive option is fundamental different from the deductive and inductive options. The latter two still assign religious tradition a place. In the deductive option

religious tradition is authoritative, the inductive option translates religious tradition into the modern categories via religious experience. In the reductive option modernity is authoritative and religious tradition no longer has any authority, which makes it doubtful whether one can still speak of religion at all (Gerwen 1990, 28–31; Quartier, Scheer & Schilderman 2001). Hence we do not include this option in our consideration of ecclesiastic marriage rites.

The overall process of multiplication of options has an impact on marriage and ecclesiastic marriage rites. We have noted that marriage is no longer the prerequisite for cohabitation but merely one of the options. It is also not clear in how far traditional Christian matrimonial values are still a consideration to modern couples. In this respect, too, they appear to be free to accept or reject the values. Finally we look into the plurality of forms of ecclesiastic marriage rites. In the application of the deductive and inductive options to these rites we consider two aspects.

The first is the linguistic aspect. What kind of language should be used to articulate the key themes of the marriage ritual? Should one use traditional images and terms or settle for images from the participants' own life world?

The second aspect is observance of guidelines. The marriage ritual can adhere to fixed (in our case Roman Catholic) guidelines, or be structured according to guidelines specifically designed for the occasion. Do people regard the traditional guidelines as universal or would they rather have them tailor-made for each occasion?

With the aid of Berger's deductive and inductive options and the aforementioned two aspects we can identify participants' ideas on ecclesiastic marriage rites. We expect that their notions regarding the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites can be approached in terms of four dimensions:

1. language of the marriage ceremony—inductive
2. language of the marriage ceremony—deductive
3. guidelines for the marriage ritual—inductive
4. guidelines for the marriage ritual—deductive

3.1   *Operationalisation*

As in the case of matrimonial values, we formulated items for the various dimensions of ideas on ecclesiastic marriage rites so as to measure the couples' agreement with each idea. Respondents again had five optional answers to indicate in how far they agreed, plus a sixth option

in case they had never thought about it. Below are the dimensions with an example of a relevant item.

1. Ritual form—language, deductive. Example: A marriage ritual should adhere to church tradition.
2. Ritual form—language, inductive. Example: The language of a marriage ritual should be directed to the participants.
3. Ritual form—guideline, deductive. Example: If one wants to get married, the ceremony should conform to the requirements of the church's tradition.
4. Ritual form—guideline, inductive. Example: A marriage ceremony should be geared to the participants' needs.

3.2   *Empirical investigation*

The items relating to ideas on the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites were subjected to factor analysis. The theoretical and empirical domains are reflected below.

Theoretical domain	*Empirical domain*
Ritual form—language deductive	*deductive form*
	10
5	*5*
	3
1	*1*
	6
8	*8*
Ritual form—language inductive	*inductive form*
9	*9*
	4
12	*12*
	11
2	*2*
	7
Ritual form—guideline deductive	
3	
10	
17	
Ritual form—guideline inductive	
4	
7	
11	

The end result of the factor analysis[11] of the items showed that the couples in fact distinguish between the inductive and deductive options, but not between form and guideline. Hence the result yielded two factors. This meant that the labels of the dimensions had to be adjusted. Factor I was labelled 'deductive form' and factor II 'inductive form'. On the basis of the way items clustered in the two factors we constructed two scales, which we called deductive form and inductive form. The scales proved to be reliable.[12] The following table gives the means and standard deviations of the two scales.

Scale label	Mean	Standard deviation
Deductive form	3.5	0.63
Inductive form	3.9	0.59

Although the differences are slight, the couples subscribe more strongly to the inductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. But there is also agreement with the deductive form. Hence there is a need for personal input in regard to form, although they still attach importance to tradition.

4 Matrimonial Values and the Form of the Marriage Ritual

The various hypotheses posited above indicate different relations between matrimonial values (contract, having children, sexuality, love) on the one hand and ideas on the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites on the other. To clarify these relations we made a number of bivariate analyses to establish the correlations.

The following table reflects all significant[13] correlations between the couples ideas on the matrimonial values (contract, having children, sexuality, love) and the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites.

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[11] Minimum eigen value 1, varimax rotation.
[12] Cronbach's alpha .83 for both scales.
[13] With a reliability interval of 95%.

Matrimonial value Scale		Inductive form	Deductive form
Contract	Secular judicial		−0.27
	Religious		0.28
Having children	Religious duty		0.24
	Social duty	−0.22	
Sexuality	Premarital sex unacceptable		0.29
Love	Philia	0.33	
	Storgè		0.22

Not all dimensions of the contractual value correlate with the inductive and deductive conceptions of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. Accordingly we eliminated the personal and social dimensions. The religious dimension correlates positively with the deductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. The secular judicial dimension correlates negatively with the deductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. Hence the more couples agree with the religious dimension, the more they subscribe to the deductive conception. The more they subscribe to the secular judicial dimension, the more they endorse the inductive conception.

There is also a positive correlation between the religious dimension and the deductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. The social dimension correlates negatively with the inductive conception. The more couples agree with the religious dimension, the more they endorse the deductive conception. The more they subscribe to the social dimension, the less they agree with the inductive conception. Couples who strongly subscribe to the inductive conception show less agreement with the social dimension of having children.[14] Probably couples who attach greater value to a customised ritual attach more importance to personal decision about having children.

Thirdly, there is a positive correlation between the notion that premarital sex is unacceptable and the deductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. Couples who agree strongly with the notion that premarital sex is unacceptable also agree more with the deductive conception of the form of the ritual.

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[14] Since we are dealing with correlations and not with regressions, we have not yet established whether conceptions of the form are dependent on notions regarding matrimonial values, or vice versa.

Fourthly, there is a positive correlation between Φιλία and the inductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites, as well as a positive correlation between Στοργή and the deductive conception. Couples who attach great importance to reciprocal love between equals agree more strongly with the inductive conception, and those who consider caring love more important agree more strongly with the deductive conception.

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This article reports on our study of the extent to which present-day bridal couples subscribe to traditional Christian matrimonial values, including their notions regarding the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. We also examined the relation between their ideas on matrimonial values and their views on the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites.

With reference to our research questions, we find indications that couples by and large distinguish between the four matrimonial values (contract, having children, sexuality, love) and subscribe to them up to a point. In regard to the contractual value, the signs are that present-day couples agree mainly with the personal dimension. This could indicate an individualised conception of the contractual side of marriage: they get married primarily before each other. Agreement with the religious dimension is far lower. It is neither endorsed nor rejected. They disagree more than they agree with the social and secular judicial dimension. Note that it is doubtful whether the church is perceived as an institution, since factor analysis could not identify this dimension as a factor. There are also indications that the civil judicial dimension is interpreted non-ecclesiastically and a-religiously. The notion that having children is either a religious or a social duty is rejected. Probably the modernisation process described in section 3 has influenced couples' attitudes towards having children: it is a personal decision. As for sexuality, modern couples feel that premarital sex is acceptable. The notion that it is unacceptable is not endorsed. Finally, when it comes to love, mutual love between equals receives the strongest support, although there is some agreement with erotic and caring love as well. There is far less support for self-effacing love. This, too, could point to individualisation. Couples want an equal relationship and are not inclined to sacrifice their personal interests to the larger whole, the relationship.

When it comes to the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites our pilot study shows that couples make a distinction between inductive and

deductive notions, agreeing more strongly with the former. They do not distinguish between language and guidelines as aspects of form. Remarkably, the deductive option is neither accepted nor rejected. This could be indicative of a process of de-traditionalisation. The language and guidelines of religious tradition (i.e. the church) are no longer endorsed. There is a greater need for rites that are appropriate to the couples personal, specific situation.

Thirdly, our study clearly indicates a relation between couples' ideas on matrimonial values and on the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites. Those who agree more with the deductive conception of the form subscribe more strongly to the religious dimension of the contractual side of marriage, to the notion that having children is a religious duty, to the view that premarital sex is unacceptable and to caring love. They are less supportive of the secular judicial dimension of the contractual side of marriage and the notion that premarital sex is acceptable. Couples who are more in favour of the inductive conception of the form of ecclesiastic marriage rites agree more strongly with the secular judicial dimension of the contractual side of marriage, with the idea that having children is a social duty and with mutual love. The findings of this empirical study indicate that views in regard to values could correlate with views in regard to rites. Agreement with values that could be described as religious correlates with agreement with deductive notions about rites. Values that could be described as predominantly secular correlate with inductive ideas about rites.

The research results reported (in part) in this article derive from a pilot study of matrimonial values and ideas on ecclesiastic marriage rites. This is only a preliminary study. A follow-up project will be conducted with a larger, more representative[15] sample, including not only the bridal couples but also other participants in ecclesiastic marriage ceremonies. This should indicate whether there is any difference between the couples' participation and that of other parties involved in an ecclesiastic marriage. Hypotheses based on the correlations found in this pilot study can then be tested.

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[15] A representative sample in the strict sense is not possible. The fact that we are researching a major ritual in people's lives makes it impossible to find respondents purely randomly, since couples always want to know who is being asked to complete the questionnaire and who is not. But by drawing a random sample of parishes we shall try to obtain as versatile a sample as possible.

Appendix A. Pattern Matrix and 'Contract' Items

Pattern Matrix

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Registry office the most important part	.862			
Primarily something at the town hall	.838			
Civil marriage most important	.794			
Has nothing to do with God at all	.588			
Not something for the church	.555			
Truly married after promising fidelity in church	−.521			
Registry office component quite unimportant	.456			
Primarily a matter between the two partners		−.818		
Primarily concerns the bridal couple		−.773		
Mainly the business of the marriage partners		−.682		
Your relationship becomes official for people in your environment			.793	
Official to people around you			.716	
Clear to environment that you belong together			.462	
Marry primarily before God				.772
Most important to exchange vows before God				.666
Bring your relationship to God				.592

Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a Rotation converged in 7 iterations. Factorloadings < .30 not displayed.

The factors comprise the following items:
Factor I
 3. The most important part of the marriage is done in the registry office.
17. A marriage is primarily something done at the town hall.
 8. A civil marriage is most important.
20. Marriage has nothing to do with God at all.
18. Marriage is not something for the church.
 6. You are not really married until after the church marriage ceremony (negative).
 7. When you get married, the part in the town hall is totally unimportant (negative).

Factor II
1. When two people get married it is primarily something between the two of them.
16. Marriage primarily concerns the bridal couple.
12. Marriage is primarily the business of the marriage partners.

Factor III
14. The main thing when you get married is that your relationship becomes official to the people in your environment.
10. Only through marriage does the couple's relationship become official to those around them.
5. Marriage is above all the way to show your environment that you belong together.

Factor IV
5. In the first place you get married before God.
9. The most important part of marriage is that you exchange vows before God.
13. In the marriage ceremony you bring your relationship to God

APPENDIX B. PATTERN MATRIX AND ITEMS 'HAVING CHILDREN'

Pattern Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
V. God gave them the task of having children	.972	
God gave them a duty to have descendants	.971	
Trying to have childen a duty to God	.852	
God wants you to try to have children	.785	
Married people expected to have children		.925
People around you expect you to have children		.674
Having children is part of marriage		.603
If married, children as well		.511

Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 5 iterations. Factorloadings < .30 not displayed.

The factors are:
Factor I
1. If you are married God wants you to try to have children.
4. God gave married people a duty to ensure that they have descendants.

5. Married people have a God-given task to try to have children.
7. Trying to have children is a duty that God gives married people.

Factor II
2. If you are married, the people around you expect you to have children.
3. If you are married, you also ought to try and have children.
6. If you are married, you are expected to have children.
8. Part of marriage is that you try to have children.

APPENDIX C. FACTOR MATRIX AND ITEMS 'SEXUALITY'

Factor Matrix

	Factor 1
Sex permissible only if married	.934
Sex permissible only once married	.892
Premarital sex unacceptable	.882
Quite unnecessary to marry first to have sex	−.866
Need not be married to have sex	−.831

Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring.
a 1 factors extracted. 5 iterations required.

The factor comprises the following items:
Factor I.
6. Sex with another person is only permitted once you are married to that person.
3. Premarital sex is unacceptable.
2. You need not be married to a person to be allowed to have sex with him or her (negative).
4. It is quite unnecessary to marry first to be allowed to have sex with someone (negative)
1. You may only have sex with somebody if you are married to that person.

APPENDIX D. PATTERN MATRIX AND ITEMS 'LOVE'

Pattern Matrix

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Totally efface yourself	.903			
Total self sacrifice	.872			
Forget yourself completely in favour of the other	.686			
Only possible in an equal relationship		.984		
Only possible between equal partners		.684		
You need not see each other as equals		−.527		−.305
Always see each other as equals		.457		
Primarily care for the other			.677	
Mainly care for the other			.532	
Ought to care mainly about looking after other			.521	
Long to be one with the other				.754
Primarily be absorbed in the other				.733
Only long to become one				.511
Nothing to do with union at all				−.364

Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 10 iterations. Factorloadings < .30 not displayed.

The factors comprise the following items:
Factor I
  1. If you truly love someone, you efface yourself completely.
10. In true love you efface yourself completely.
13. In love you forget yourself completely and think only of the other

Factor II
  3. If you truly love someone, you want to become one with that person.
  6. True love is primarily being absorbed in the other.
  7. True love has nothing to do with union with the other.
14 Love is a longing to become one with the other.

Factor III
  4. True love is only possible between equal partners.
  8. In loving the other you must always see each other as equals.
11. True love can only happen in an equal relationship.
16. If you love someone, you need not see each other as equals.

Factor IV
5. True love is above all caring for the other.
9. If you truly love someone, you ought to care mainly about looking after the other.
12. True love is mainly about caring for the other.

APPENDIX E. FACTOR MATRIX AND ITEMS 'CONCEPTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE RITES'

Rotated Factor Matrix

	Factor 1	2
Observe stipulations of church tradition	.891	
Texts should concur with church tradition	.668	
Marriage according to requirements of church tradition	.668	
Articulate church tradition	.604	
Form determined by church guidelines	.594	−.330
Should refer to precepts of church tradition	.584	
Speak to people in language they understand		.749
Directed to participants' needs		.721
Should speak people's language		.697
Experience determines how participants shape rite		.697
Language attuned to participants		.693
Form depends greatly on individual case	−.358	.479

Extraction method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 3 iterations. Factorloadings < .30 not displayed.

The factors comprise the following items:

Factor I
10. A marriage should observe the stipulations of church tradition.
5. Texts used in a marriage ceremony should concur with church tradition.
3. If someone asks for a marriage, it should be conducted according to the requirements of church tradition.
1. A marriage ceremony should articulate church tradition.
6. The form of a marriage ceremony should be determined by the church's guidelines.
8. A marriage ceremony should refer to the precepts of church tradition.

Factor II

9. In a marriage ceremony people should be addressed in language they can understand.

4. A marriage ceremony should be attuned to the participants' needs.

12. A marriage ceremony should be conducted in the people's language.

11. Participants' experience should determine the form of a marriage ceremony.

2. The language of marriage ceremony should be directed to the participants.

7. The form of a marriage ceremony should depend greatly on the individual case.

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ROMAN CATHOLIC FUNERAL LITURGY AND HUMAN FINITUDE: EMPIRICAL EXPLORATIONS OF LIFE, DEATH AND AFTERLIFE IN CONNECTION WITH LITURGICAL MEMORY

Thomas Quartier & Chris A. M. Hermans

The finitude of our existence profoundly influences human lives, especially when a loved one in our immediate environment dies. Then we have to take leave of a person and that is when the question of life's finitude obtrudes. If this happens in a ritual setting, the tendency is to fall back on repertoires from a particular interpretive tradition, such as Roman Catholicism. In modern society, however, this pattern appears to be breaking down. Awareness of death and mortality seems to feature less in the minds of modern people (Moller 1996, 15; Littlewood 1993, 69ff.). This has implications for the manner in which they part with their loved ones.

In his publications the French cultural historian Philippe Ariès makes the point that in industrialised societies attitudes towards death have changed: the thought is repressed and does not play a major role in the lives of modern people (Ariès 1980, 785). As a result, Ariès maintains, funerals are no longer all that important: the growing number of cremations indicates that people are less inclined to commemorate their dead, and that determines the character of funerals (Ariès 1974; 1980, 736ff.). Ariès's observations raise certain questions.

The first is: how conscious are modern people of mortality, especially when faced with the death of a significant other? It could be that certain (transcendent) interpretations of mortality are disappearing, while other (more immanent) interpretations can still rely on solid support. In other words, should Ariès's thesis not be differentiated into divergent interpretations of mortality? Secondly, does the memory of the dead play a lesser role in funerals in modern European societies, as Ariès avers? Individualised funeral liturgies in fact indicate that the dead are called to mind very personally in liturgy. One example is the prominence of *In memoria* in funeral rites (Van Tongeren 2004; Melloh

1993). A third question is how memories of the dead are influenced by attitudes towards mortality. According to Ariès attitudes towards mortality no longer exist: death is pushed aside and people no longer relate to the deceased in any real way. In Ariès's view this influences the commemorative nature of modern European funerals.

As a research project the study described in this article forms part of the testing phase of the empirical cycle. Hence we first indicate what concepts have been developed, which we then proceed to test empirically. To this end the study centres on the following main question: *what attitudes towards mortality are encountered among present-day participants in funeral rites, and how do they influence their attitudes towards liturgical commemoration?* To answer the question the first section deals with ecclesiastic funeral rites and the role of memory in these (1). In the next section we analyse people's attitudes towards mortality when they are faced with the death of a significant other (2). In the third section we report on our empirical study of participants in funeral rites in the Netherlands with a view to our main research question (3). The fourth section contains some conclusions and a brief discussion (4).

1   REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE IN CATHOLIC FUNERAL RITES

What happens when a loved one dies? People may ponder on the death of the deceased or on their own death. Below we deal with funeral liturgy from the point of view of the other person's death. How do people deal with the loss they experience in their social network? What role does the memory of the loved one play in this regard? What forms does it assume? And what place does it occupy in funeral liturgy? In this section we try to answer these questions. Our approach is based on a concept of collective memory, in which we distinguish between two forms (1.1). Then we look for a place for these two forms of memory in funeral liturgy (1.2). Finally we identify two forms of liturgical commemoration (1.3).

1.1   *Temporal, horizontal and vertical dimensions of memory*

When a loved one dies people face a broken relationship. The other is no longer there as he used to be. Human life spans a given period of time, and at every point in that time the person is linked to both past and future—what was and what is to come. Memory serves to connect past and future by linking both with the present. Jan Assmann (1992,

21) calls this underlying structure the connective structure of memory. Memory connects members of the collective with the past and hope connects them with the future.

This is the structure in which people construct their collective identity, because together they form a socio-cultural network. It implies that they share a common past and are moving towards a common future. The network is plunged into crisis as soon as the present—life here and now—comes under pressure. That is particularly true when they are faced with the death of a beloved other, who has been wrenched from the common socio-cultural network. The relatives then have to re-define past and future, because they find themselves in a transitional phase (Turner 1969). How can the past be interpreted meaningfully in light of the loss of the deceased, and what will the future be like? The community can only construct its relationship with the deceased by looking back on the past in memory (remembrance) and looking ahead to the future (hope).

This gives the connective structure of memory a temporal, horizontal dimension, that is a connection with past and future, in which the collective's relationship with the deceased is assigned a place. In addition to this temporal, horizontal dimension the connective structure has a vertical dimension. Here Assmann (1992, 16) distinguishes between communicative and cultural memory. Communicative memory refers to realistic experience of the past that members of a socio-cultural network share with each other. But when someone dies people also fall back on another kind of memory: cultural memory (Assmann 1992, 16). This is oriented to a distant past and a distant future, located in non-chronometric—mythical—time (Fenn 1997, 10). In this way real time, in which death has caused an apparently unbridgeable rift, is transcended and durability is created beyond my/your memory. Communicative memory lasts three generations at most.

To sum up, memory has two dimensions. The first is temporal and horizontal. It differentiates between past and future, or remembrance and hope. The second is a vertical dimension, which differentiates between communicative and cultural memory. The communicative aspect represents an immanent interpretation of memory. The cultural aspect exceeds immanent reality and represents a transcendent interpretation. On the basis of these two dimensions we identify four forms of memory: communicative remembrance, communicative hope, cultural remembrance and cultural hope.

1.2   *Remembrance and hope in funeral liturgy*

According to Assmann (1992, 56) rites are where communicative and cultural memory converge. In rituals cultural memory (mythical time) finds a place in the reality of communicative memory (chronometric time), thus establishing a connective structure in the collective (Assmann 1991). In an ecclesiastic context, then, funeral liturgy may be seen as the rite embodying communicative and cultural remembrance and hope.

In liturgical science the key concept of anamnesis explains how this structure corresponds with the essence of liturgy. In a liturgical context anamnesis refers to remembrance of an act by re-actualising it. In the eucharist this primarily concerns Jesus' actions at his last supper with his disciples in Jerusalem. At the same time anamnesis implies a promise for the future. The community gains a perspective that radiates a promise for the future: Jesus' salvific acts are realised (Jasper & Cuming 1987, 9).

Hence a eucharistic community's activities differ from everyday activities: they are performed before God's countenance and, according to liturgical theological belief, God himself is active in liturgy. Christian theology associates this with epiclesis, which takes place in liturgy: the deity finds a place in the purely human sphere—the activities of a liturgical community—and becomes the active subject, more specifically through the Spirit, who is invoked and active in liturgy (Chauvet 2001, 137; cf. Odenthal 2002, 119). Because of their anamnetic and epicletic character liturgical funeral rites can be the locus for liturgical remembrance and hope (Scheer 1993).

1.3   *Different forms of liturgical memory*

Two different forms of remembrance and hope feature in funeral liturgy: what we call communicative liturgical and cultural liturgical remembrance and hope.

What is the substance of these forms of memory when a significant other dies? At a communicative liturgical level individual and social remembrance and hope may play a role. Remembrance re-actualises the individual and the collective—that is, her social network—notwithstanding death. By this we mean that the deceased is recalled in her personal uniqueness (individual aspect) and in her relationships (social aspect) (Heyde 2002, 142ff.). Hope, too, has two aspects: the uniqueness of the person means that death cannot be the final exit

(individual); at the same time the deceased lives on in everything he leaves behind (social).

At a cultural liturgical level salvation history and the Easter mystery play a role. These are two key elements of Christian theology (cf. Boismard 1999). Cultural liturgical remembrance could be associated with salvation history: the fact that God, who has been with human beings, his people—hence also with the deceased during his lifetime—since the time of creation, has never forsaken them (cf. Vorgrimler 1990, 33–34). Cultural liturgical hope, too, could be associated with salvation history. That implies that God will not forsake the deceased, even after death. Regarding the Easter mystery, cultural liturgical remembrance means remembering the death and resurrection of Christ, which bring salvation also for the deceased. Cultural liturgical hope in this sense means that after death the deceased, too, will rise with Christ.

Finally, in addition to these liturgical forms of remembrance and hope, a perspective of 'no hope' may feature in funerals. In secularised societies it could well be that at the time of the funeral participants have no hope at all and that this is expressed in the ritual. We append this category to the other forms.

2   Attitudes Towards Mortality

This section deals with the way people relate to the finitude of human existence in a general sense. We suspect that attitudes towards mortality can afford insight into Catholic funeral-goers' preference for a particular type of memory (Baumann 1996, 15; Bowker 1991, 20ff.). In section 1 we pointed out that past and future play a major role in the rituals accompanying a person's death. Since the question of mortality includes that of past, present and future in the sense of life, death and life after death, it is critical how individuals relate to the finitude of life. The deceased's status transition (Glaser & Strauss 1968, 239) confronts participants in a funeral rite with a rift in time. This is greatly influenced by attitudes towards finitude generally (Koestenbaum 1971, 5f.), because they form the basis of various interpretations of this rift and the deceased's status transition (Bowker 1991, 21).

Attitudes towards mortality—like memory in funeral rites—have two dimensions. The first is again a horizontal temporal dimension, referring to the individual's life, death and afterlife. We deal with this dimension in the first subsection (2.1). The second is the vertical interpretive

dimension of attitudes towards mortality. It includes an immanent and a transcendent interpretation of mortality, which we discuss in the second subsection (2.2). In the third subsection we identify, on the basis of these two dimensions, six types of attitudes towards mortality (2.3).

2.1   *Temporal dimension of mortality: life, death and afterlife*

To understand how people adopt an attitude towards mortality we need to know what mortality signifies in human lives. Coping with mortality implies finding a way to relate to death, but not only to death as the irrevocable end of the human person. It also entails finding a way of relating to life prior to death. Coping with mortality implies that people are concerned about their life and how they live it (Bauman1992, 12ff.). According to Kastenbaum (2004, 19) coping with mortality is a matter of "death, with life left in it". Along with the question of life prior to death the question of a possible life after death arises (Kastenbaum 2004, 23). If death is the end of life, mortality raises the question of what comes after death. There are various answers to the question. An irrevocable end may be associated with a longing for infinitude (Walter 1996), mortality may raise the question of immortality (Bauman 1992, 52f.).

To sum up: the temporal dimension of mortality has three aspects, namely attitudes towards life, death and an afterlife. First we consider attitudes towards life: death gives life a significance it would not have had otherwise (Koestenbaum 1971, 26). Mortality impels people to ask about the meaning of life before death. Secondly, they have to adopt an attitude towards death itself (Bauman 1992, 14ff.). Death is the irrevocable end of human existence. In the third place an attitude towards life after death forms part of a perspective on finitude: is death indeed the end of the person, or could there be a future beyond that boundary? Finitude may arouse longings for immortality (Bauman 1992, 51ff.).

2.2   *Vertical interpretive dimension of mortality: immanent and transcendent interpretations*

Confronting the death of a significant other is an experience that affects people existentially (Koestenbaum 1971, 6). Because death and the thought of death make us poignantly aware of the limits of our own existence, the death of a significant other is a moment when our own existence is called into question. What does this experience entail?

Faced with their mortality people may feel that durability is beyond human reach. If a valuable thing is enduring, it is not humanly attainable because the finitude of life limits its attainability. What is enduring and transcends the finitude of life we receive from beyond ourselves. Hence finitude does not have the final say in human experience, for people experience that they are given something that transcends it (Bauman 1992, 18).

Following Hans Joas (2004, 17) we can call this an experience of self-transcendence (*Selbstranszendenz*). According to Joas (1997) the experience of self-transcendence confronts people with something that is beyond human reach. It is a subjective sense of being given something of ultimate value that is constitutive for human identity (Joas 1997). It puts an end to the human subject's self-absorption, when that subject is gripped (*Ergriffensein*) by something of ultimate value. This is an inherently human experience, which implies that our existence always relates to something that lies beyond our reach (Hammond 1966, 34ff.).

Edward Schillebeeckx (1989) calls this a contrast experience, when people are brought face to face with the limits of their own existence. Contrast experiences imply the extreme limit of our humanity (Oosterveen 2005, 48ff.). We experience the negativity of the limits to life and respond with 'and yet' as our subjective selves conceive of something of ultimate value (Joas 2004, 21). Human finitude presents an experience which may be interpreted as a contrast to human life, and at the same time causes us to be gripped by something of ultimate value.

How does the human subject interpret this experience? How is the experience of self-transcendence understood? Joas maintains that experience and interpretation (*erfahren und deuten*) are separate from each other. The person experiences both that life is finite, and that she is given something of ultimate value that transcends human life. This experience is assigned meaning, which could be either *immanent* or *transcendent* (Joas 2004, 23, 61; cf. Scherer-Rath 2001, 134). We take these to be religious and nonreligious interpretations.

To assign a particular interpretation the status of immanent or transcendent in the sense of religious or nonreligious the two concepts have to be regarded as a binary code (Hermans 2001, 210; Luhmann 1996). That means viewing immanent and transcendent as mutually exclusive categories: immanent means this-worldly and transcendent means more-than-this-worldly. Since it is not a bipolar contrast, it

permits interpretations that are both immanent and transcendent, as sometimes happens in theology (Van der Ven 2001, 286; Hermans 2001, 127).

Thus the vertical interpretive dimension of attitudes towards mortality means that what is considered to be of ultimate value during the experience of self-transcendence in the face of finitude can be interpreted either transcendently or immanently. As noted already, we consider the transcendent interpretation to be religious, in the sense of a transcendent force at work in human life (Walter 1996, 10). In immanent interpretation that is not the case: it refers to a reality that does not exceed this-worldly reality and remains within reach of the human subject.

2.3   *Six types of attitudes towards mortality: temporal dimension and vertical interpretive dimension*

In the *temporal* dimension we distinguish between three aspects of attitudes towards mortality: first, the question about life (Koestenbaum 1971, 26); second, the question about the meaning of death (Bauman 1992, 12); and finally the question about an afterlife (Walter 1996, 4). These three aspects to which attitudes towards mortality may relate can be interpreted in two ways: transcendently or immanently. We call this the *vertical* interpretive dimension of attitudes towards mortality.

By combining the temporal and the vertical interpretive dimension of attitudes towards mortality we obtain a typology of six kinds of attitudes: an immanent interpretation of life, death and afterlife; and a transcendent interpretation of life, death and afterlife. We shall now describe these possible types and illustrate them with reference to certain philosophical and theological authors. That does not mean that an author coincides with a particular type. We simply cite them by way of illustration. First we deal with immanent interpretations of life, death and afterlife (2.3.1) and then with transcendent interpretations (2.3.2).

2.3.1   *Immanent interpretations of life, death and afterlife*

First we consider what an immanent interpretation of life, death and afterlife could entail. We do so mainly on the basis of the philosophy of subjectivity, since mortality pertains primarily to the human individual and his grappling with the problem of his own existence (Heyde 2000, 135). People have only limited access to the mortality of others. This

applies particularly to present-day society, in which, because of indi-
vidualisation, people focus predominantly on themselves when it comes
to existential issues (Felling & Peters 2000). The philosophy of subjec-
tivity posits that immanent interpretations of life, death and afterlife
are based on the self-actualisation of the human subject. This makes
it an appropriate approach for immanent interpretations of mortality.
Human self-actualisation is made possible, and also essential, because of
the finitude of existence (Heyde 2000, 145), which determines people's
attitudes towards life, death and afterlife.

(1) What is meant by an immanent interpretation of life? It is an
interpretation that fully accepts the transience of human life. Life is
interpreted as inherently finite, implying that a human being "must
construct his life—daily actions as well as major, overall plans—with
the full and clear realization of that fact" (Koestenbaum 1971, 26). The
finitude of life is taken into account in every decision. These decisions
embody the essence of the human person. People have to actualise
themselves in the decisions they take. This can give rise to a 'serious'
outlook on life that does justice to their individual subjectivity (Kierkeg-
aard 1996, 173ff.; Theunissen 1958). Such an outlook on life includes
human creativity, which is a product of the possibility of choice: the
fact that people can actualise their creativity despite, and in the face
of, finitude is the essence of the human subject (Bauman 1992, 33f.).
Transience is not something that is appended to life but is integral to
every moment, because that alone necessitates the decisions that give
rise to the creative essence of the human subject (Heidegger 1993,
§49; Heyde 2000, 146). If that human subject seeks to actualise herself
fully, she can transcend the limitations of the here and now (Schulz
1992, 137). In actualising their own subjectivity through the decisions
they take people discover that they are part of a greater existential
structure. This structure is realised entirely in this-worldly reality, but
is not tied to the concrete situation here and now. Human beings are
always able to transcend the concrete limitations of the here and now
by living creatively. The experience of the limitlessness of their own
subjectivity means that they transcend the temporal bounds of their
existence and are no longer trapped in the here and now (Heyde 2000,
148; Schulz 1992, 139). The social dimension of life in particular may
be regarded as a realisation of the breaching of the limits of the here
and now in that the subject steps outside himself (Heyde 2000, 164). To
sum up: an immanent interpretation of life implies that human beings
actualise themselves by accepting the finitude of life, thus transcending

the realities of the here and now. This in its turn opens the way for relating to other people and society.

(2) From an immanent perspective death is the end of earthly life. As such it is experienced as a threat to the individual person, for it implies a temporal constraint that the human mind does not recognise: in their own minds subjects do not appear to be temporally confined (Bauman 1992, 14). But apart from imposing a limit, death is also an incentive for human existence and thus an important part of life. In an immanent approach death is seen as integrally part of life. Because of death human life is enacted within a particular period of time (Heidegger 1993, §50; Heyde 2000, 148; Vorgrimler 1978, 25ff.). It means that it is not a transition to a different mode of existence but the end of immanent existence (Dastur 1996, 10). That does not detract from the value of immanent life, but affirms it by integrating death (Heyde 2000, 141). Death imposes limits on the human subject (Thielicke 1980, 15ff.), who accepts it as part of life. It is considered a 'natural attitude' to view death as the end of natural life (Schulz 1976, 99; Walter 1996, 82f.). That means that it is accepted as a limitation on life (Schulz 1992, 142). To sum up: an immanent interpretation of death means accepting it as a final limit that is part of life.

(3) What does an immanent interpretation of the afterlife entail? Human beings are mortal but also unique. This may be considered an existential ambivalence of human life (Bauman 1992, 18): they have to accept the transience of life and its natural end on the one hand, but on the other they endeavour to exceed the boundary of death because, as subjects, they are unique (Vorgrimler 1978, 41ff.). The question about an afterlife—like questions about life and death—can be interpreted immanently. It concerns forms of afterlife in which human beings do not exist as unique persons but in some other way. That is inevitable, since in immanent interpretations death marks the end of the human subject (Heyde 2000, 141). The philosophy of subjectivity permits the following view of such an immanent interpretation of the afterlife. Human subjects have to actualise themselves in their lifetime. In death they reach the end that was implicit right from the start, yet after death they remain meaningful for this-worldly reality (Bauman 1992, 58ff.). The afterlife is understood in various ways (Lifton 1979, 18). Firstly, it could be that people live on in their children, even after their death. This interpretation may be called inter-generational or biological (Lifton 1979, 18; cf. also Heyde 2000, 141). Secondly, the afterlife could be defined with reference to nature. People are part of

nature and in that sense inseparably part of the natural cycle of life, death and new life. From this perspective life after death is meaningful, because people are part of the greater whole of the natural realm, in which they have a place. This may be called a natural immanent interpretation of the afterlife. Finally people can also live on in a social sense, that is in everything they have done for other people or for society as a whole. This belief implies that everything one creates continues to exist after one's death. It could be the person's work, relationships or whatever he meant to others or to society. This is known as the creative interpretation, since it concerns the works that people leave behind (Lifton 1979, 21–22). An immanent perspective on the afterlife is concerned with making the person's life durable and transcending its transience, even though there is no question of personal survival. To sum up: an immanent interpretation of the afterlife is that people do not survive personally, but live on in their children, nature or the works they leave behind.

2.3.2   *Transcendent interpretations of life, death and afterlife*

Besides these immanent interpretations, life, death and afterlife can also be interpreted transcendentally. In our description we confine ourselves to the Christian tradition, since our special concern is the impact of these attitudes on Christian funeral liturgy. By and large a transcendent attitude towards the finitude of our existence means interpreting life, death and afterlife in terms of an other-worldly reality ('God'). Often this reality is interpreted with the aid of religious traditions, one of which is the Christian tradition. What does a transcendent interpretation of mortality imply for the human subject?

   (4) What does a transcendent interpretation of life entail? In immanent interpretations of life the emphasis, following the philosophy of subjectivity, is on the development of the subject. Through the decisions people have to take they actualise their essential selves. Life could be described as a series of decisions to be oneself (Tillich 1963, 130). Because life is finite, choices are imperative. In a *transcendent* interpretation the basic trust required for these choices is not sought in human beings, for life is impenetrable and humans are alienated from their true being (Schipper 1971, 29). God is the ground of the trust that makes possible the choices through which people actualise their subjectivity (Van Knippenberg 1987, 56). By encountering and trusting God humans have the courage to become themselves (Tillich 1963, 136). If people

must choose life in its totality with all its transience, that choice is made in relation to God. God is in fact the transcendent source of human-ness—of "the new being" (Tillich 1956). In a transcendent framework, in which God is the ontological ground of existence, Christian theology puts the accent on personal encounter or communion with God (Tillich 1963, 139–140; Schipper 1971, 29–30). Through such communion the limits of life are transcended and people can penetrate to their true nature (Schipper 1971, 22). In a transcendent interpretation of life people's relationship with God is the horizon within which they can grow to full subjectivity. This subjectivity also operates at a social level: people who have become full-fledged subjects through communion with God exceed their own limitations and direct themselves to those around them or to society as a whole (Hammond 1966, 91ff.; Halter 1990, 207ff.). Communion with God also inspires them, for instance to address injustices in the world. To sum up: a transcendent interpretation of life means that faith in God and his gracious dealings with human beings makes it possible for them, via their decisions, to actualise their humanity to the full, also at a social level.

(5) How is death interpreted in a transcendent perspective? In such a perspective death is not the end but the consummation of life (Vorgrimler 1978, 123; Van Knippenberg 1987, 57–59). Through encounter with God death loses its sting, because it is not seen as the absolute end (Dastur 1996, 10ff.). In the Christian tradition this hopeful view of death is related to God, who reclaimed Jesus from death (Bowker 1991, 75ff.; Schipper 1971, 68ff.). An essential premise is that God will not forsake the human subject in death, provided she remains faithful to him (Vorgrimler 1990a, 47; 1978, 117; 1990b). Death has lost its sting because people do not feel that God deserts them in death. If during their lifetime they affirm God as the ground of their existence (Tillich 1963, 148), then the consummation of life in death that God effects is also a reason to trust in his presence—even in death, the ultimate darkness (Vorgrimler 1978, 117). A transcendent interpretation of death does not see it as the end, because God guarantees eternity, even in death (Van Knippenberg 1987, 59). To sum up: a transcendent interpretation of death implies that death, whilst part of life, is also its consummation and thus offers a new perspective, because God is more powerful than death and does not desert human beings.

(6) In a transcendent interpretation the afterlife depends on God and his activity (Lifton 1979, 20). After death people have new life, which derives from God. There are different transcendental interpretations

of the afterlife: either in terms of continuity with this life, or in terms of discontinuity. The first possibility, that of an afterlife in continuity with this life, is that the human subject passes through death into new life (Van Knippenberg 1987, 52ff.). That makes death a transition, and the afterlife means that after death God has prepared a life that is the fulfilment of earthly life, in which people can already follow God (Vorgrimler 1978, 123). A transcendent afterlife in continuity with this life means that life is consummated in God and that after death humans are with God (Van Knippenberg 1987, 56ff.). God's eternal now is both the origin and destination of human life, to which people return after death (Tillich 1959, 30ff.; Küng 1982, 148). The second possibility is that the afterlife is discontinuous with this life. Death is the opposite of life and the afterlife means that God creates a new beginning that has nothing to do with earthly life (Van Knippenberg 1987, 60ff.; Tillich 1958, 474–475). This is based on the notion that the human subject reaches his end in death, but that after death God has prepared a new life for him in the sense of a new beginning. This salvation is accomplished, not via death, but beyond it, offering a vista of a new beginning. In this prospect Jesus' death and resurrection are God's promise of the new beginning to be created after death (Vorgrimler 1978, 73ff.; Van Knippenberg 1987, 61). To sum up: a transcendent interpretation of the afterlife proceeds from an other-worldly perspective: human beings live on in God, who has prepared another life in his eternal now or has created a new beginning *ex nihilo*.

In these illustrations of the six types we have dealt with some implications of the interpretations in our typology, thus outlining possible attitudes towards mortality. In so doing our premise was the significance of mortality for the human subject. Naturally there could be other interpretations, but our concern is to identify those that can give substance to our types.

3   RESEARCH

The empirical liturgical study described below seeks to determine in how far the foregoing attitudes towards mortality are discernible among participants in Roman Catholic funerals, and how these affect their attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope. This takes us into the testing phase of the empirical cycle. Does the conceptual framework of memory that we developed afford insight into our respondents' minds?

To find this out we first present our research questions (3.1). Then we describe the research design and our sample (3.2), and the results that are relevant to the research questions (3.3). Finally we report and comment on the findings (4).

3.1 *Research questions*

To discover how attitudes to mortality influence attitudes towards remembrance and hope, the first question is which attitudes towards mortality are found among participants in funeral rites. A funeral is the ritual moment when one comes to grips with the loss of a loved one. The way participants interpret life, death and afterlife could be meaningful for their interpretation of the funeral. In a secularised society both transcendent and immanent interpretations may play a role (*question 1*). We also want to know to what extent respondents agree with these interpretations (*question 2*).

A further question concerns the extent to which attitudes towards mortality influence attitudes towards remembrance and hope. In the introduction we quoted Ariès's view that the commemorative character of funeral rites has disappeared, or at any rate been transformed. He ascribes this to the repression of death and mortality in modern society. Our research attempts to trace in how far attitudes towards mortality influence the way in which memory—remembrance and hope—in its liturgical form features in funerals. To what extent do attitudes towards mortality determine people's interpretation of funerals? We expect transcendent interpretations of life, death and afterlife to influence cultural liturgical remembrance and hope and to have a negative impact on 'no hope'. We expect, moreover, that immanent interpretations of life, death and afterlife will positively affect communicative liturgical forms, and possibly have a positive impact on 'no hope' (*question 3*).

The research questions, then, are as follows:

1. Which attitudes towards transcendent and immanent interpretations of life, death and afterlife can be identified in the attitudes of participants in present-day Roman Catholic funeral rites?
2. To what extent do the respondents agree with different attitudes towards life, death and afterlife?
3. How do attitudes towards life, death and afterlife influence liturgical remembrance and hope if we control for church involvement and relationship to the deceased?

3.2   *Research design and sample*

To find answers to these research questions we chose an exploratory descriptive survey design. This means that we cannot generalise the results. The object of the questionnaire-based research was to determine what attitudes towards cultural liturgical and communicative liturgical remembrance and hope are found among respondents who have recently attended a Roman Catholic funeral.

Our method of data collection was as follows. We carried out observations in 20 Roman Catholic parishes in the Netherlands, from which we ultimately chose ten, our criterion being that these parishes conducted funeral liturgies typical of the different liturgical styles in the Netherlands. Because of the incidental nature of funeral services, data collection, which took place between February and August 2002, was difficult. Researchers also had to observe the deference due to the bereaved. Data collection proceeded in several stages. Initially we enlisted the cooperation of pastors of the parishes, who gave the questionnaires to the bereaved. Later we established direct contact with relatives of the deceased and handed the questionnaires to them. We also asked them for names of other participants in the funeral. In addition we used parish networks to identify groups whose members were known to have attended a funeral in that parish recently. We distributed 539 questionnaires; 229 were returned, which amounts to a response rate of 40%.

3.3   *Measuring instrument*

To measure attitudes towards life, death and afterlife we looked for indicators of the six concepts that we had identified. The purpose of the indicators was to pin down what we considered to be key factors within these concepts. When we encountered these factors we assumed that we would find that concept among respondents. Using the various indicators, we proceeded to construct items. Table 1 shows the various concepts with the relevant indicators. The measuring instrument appears in the appendix (1).

Table 1: Indicators and Operationalisation of attitudes towards
human finitude

Concept	Indicators	Illustrative item
Immanent attitude towards life (LI)	freedom, here and now eternal, letting go, core of life	Life is to gain the freedom to let go of yourself
Immanent attitude towards death (DI)	death as end of life, death as inherent in life	Death is the end of individual life
Immanent attitude towards afterlife (VI)	living on in nature, living on in descendants, living on in works left behind	Through our connection with nature we live on
Transcendent attitude towards life (LT)	God as basis of life; inseparable bond with God; life as a decision about God	Despite every threat our life is rooted in God
Transcendent attitude towards death (DT)	life consummated by God; death vanquished by God	In death God consummates life
Transcendent attitude towards afterlife (VT)	new beginning from God; God's eternity after death	After death God creates a new beginning from nothing

Each item was followed by a Likert scale, on which respondents could indicate in how far they agreed with the statement in question (from 1, "totally disagree" to 5, "agree totally").

To measure liturgical remembrance and hope we used a previously developed instrument for assessing these two factors (Quartier et al. 2004). It comprises five scales: communicative liturgical remembrance, cultural liturgical remembrance, cultural liturgical hope, communicative liturgical hope, and no hope. Items from this scale appear in the appendix (2). Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they believed the item to be a core theme in Roman Catholic funerals (from 1, "totally disagree" to 5, "agree totally").

3.4 *Analysis of results*

To answer the first research question we conducted a factor analysis of the items on life, death and afterlife. On the basis of a criterion of eigen-value = 1 we eliminated all items that had communalities below .20. The remaining items yielded four factors. Below is a summary of the theoretical and empirical domains. The factor analysis appears in appendix 3.

Figure 1: Theoretical and empirical domains of attitudes towards mortality

Theoretical domain	*Empirical domain*
transcendent attitude towards life (items 16, 17, 18, 19)	
transcendent attitude towards death (items 20, 21, 22)	*transcendent attitude towards mortality* (items 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25)
transcendent attitude towards afterlife (items 23, 24, 25)	
immanent attitude towards life (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	*immanent attitude towards life* (items 1, 2, 4, 5, 19)
immanent attitude towards death (items 6, 7, 8, 9)	*immanent attitude towards death* (items 8, 6, 22)
immanent attitude towards afterlife (items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)	*immanent attitude towards afterlife* (items 10, 11)

On the basis of our theoretical model we expected six factors, but the analysis yielded only four. The first factor comprises only items from the transcendent interpretations of life, death and afterlife, so we call it *transcendent attitude towards mortality* (alpha = .92). The second factor comprises items that interpret life immanently. The one exception is the item, "Belief in the resurrection is realised only in active confrontation of injustice", which derives from the theoretical concept of a transcendent interpretation of life. Possibly the item reflects the significance of society and its influence, which led respondents to conceive of it as an immanent interpretation of life. We call this factor *immanent attitude towards life* (alpha = .69). The third factor comprises items that interpret death immanently, as well as the item reflecting the inverse of the transcendent interpretation of death. All these items regard death as the absolute end of life. We call this factor *immanent attitude towards death* (alpha = .61). The last factor comprises two items reflecting a natural immanent interpretation of the afterlife. The correlation between these two items is fairly low, but for theoretical reasons we include the factor in subsequent analyses. We call it *immanent natural attitude towards the afterlife* (r = −.20). The other two immanent attitudes towards the

afterlife—the inter-generational and creative interpretations—fell away. Overall this means that transcendent interpretations of life, death and afterlife jointly constitute a single factor, whereas immanent interpretations constitute separate factors.

The second research question concerns the extent to which respondents subscribe to the four scales that we retained from our factor analysis (see appendix 3). Respondents are dubious about the transcendent attitude towards mortality, albeit tending towards agreement (3.3; std. = .92); they are also ambivalent about an immanent attitude towards life (3.1; std. = .66) and about the immanent attitude towards the afterlife (2.8; std = .85). The only factor they subscribe to is the immanent attitude towards death (3.5; std = .88). The two factors registering greatest agreement are the immanent attitude towards death and the transcendent attitude towards mortality.

Our third research question concerns the extent to which attitudes towards life, death and afterlife found among our respondents influence their attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope. Before we look into these we first summarise their agreement with liturgical remembrance and hope. Respondents subscribe to communicative liturgical remembrance (X = 4.0; std: .91; alpha: .89) and hope (X = 3.8; std = .69; alpha = .73), with remembrance receiving the greatest agreement. They agree with cultural liturgical remembrance, although inclining to ambivalence (X = 3.6; std = .98; alpha = .93), and are doubtful about cultural liturgical remembrance (X = 3.2; std. = .76; alpha = .90). Respondents disagree with a 'no hope' perspective (X = 2.0; std = .94; alpha = .84).

To determine the influence of attitudes towards mortality on attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope we conducted a regression analysis, with immanent and transcendent attitudes towards life, death and afterlife as the independent variable and attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope as the dependent variable. Our hypothesis was that attitudes towards mortality in the sense of life, death and afterlife would significantly influence respondents' attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope. We regard this influence as an interpretation. In this context we consider interpretation to mean that an immanent or transcendent attitude towards life, death and afterlife co-determines the meaning ascribed to remembrance and hope in funeral liturgy, in the sense of communicative and cultural liturgical remembrance and hope. We also incorporated respondents' church involvement (non-member,

lapsed member, peripheral member, modal member) and their relation to the deceased (family, personal relationship, other relationship) in our analysis so as to control the influence of the independent variable (interpretation of mortality) on liturgical remembrance and hope for these two background characteristics. It could be, after all, that liturgical remembrance and hope are not explained solely by respondents' attitudes towards mortality but also by certain background attributes.

Table 2: Regression of attitudes towards MORTALITY and towards liturgical remembrance and hope

	Cultural lit. remembrance β	Cultural lit. hope β	Communicative lit. remembrance β	Commu- nicative lit. hope β	No hope β
Transcendent attitude towards mortality	.66**	.70**			−.47**
Immanent attitude towards life			.31**	.27**	
Immanent attitude towards death	.11*				.35**
Immanent attitude towards afterlife	.11*	.10*		.16*	
Church involvement		.18**	−.25**		
Relation to deceased					
Adj. R^2	.46	.67	.15	.12	.37

**: p≤.01

*: p≤.05

Cultural liturgical remembrance is influenced by a transcendent attitude towards mortality (β = .66) and, slightly, by an immanent attitude towards death (β = .11) and the afterlife (β = .11). Cultural liturgical hope, even more than remembrance, is influenced by a transcendent attitude towards mortality (β = .70). An immanent attitude has a weak influence on attitudes towards the afterlife, while church involvement has some effect: people who are closely involved with the church agree more strongly with liturgical hope. The strong influence of a transcendent attitude towards mortality on cultural liturgical forms of remembrance and hope was as anticipated. The common factor among these attitudes is a transcendent interpretation. The weak influence of an immanent attitude towards death on cultural liturgical remembrance and of attitudes

towards the afterlife on cultural liturgical remembrance and hope indicates that these attitudes certainly do not preclude a transcendent attitude towards mortality.

Although the regression analyses of communicative liturgical remembrance and hope have far less explanatory power than the analyses of cultural liturgical remembrance and hope for respondents' interpretation of the liturgy, some significant influences should be noted. Communicative liturgical remembrance is influenced by an immanent attitude towards life (.31). This finding is to be expected, since earthly life is focal in both factors. Church involvement has a negative effect (−.25). This finding is remarkable, since church-going respondents not only put greater emphasis on cultural liturgical hope, but also attach less importance to communicative liturgical remembrance. In fact, church involvement influences communicative liturgical hope almost as strongly as does an immanent attitude towards life. Communicative liturgical hope is influenced by an immanent attitude towards life (.26), and less strongly by an immanent attitude towards the afterlife (.16). These findings, too, were anticipated, since in both cases the frame of reference is immanent reality. Finally, the 'no hope' liturgical perspective correlates negatively with a transcendent attitude towards mortality (−.47). That is to be expected. It also correlates positively with an immanent attitude towards death (.35). Again it is understandable, since an immanent attitude excludes every perspective other than earthly life. Relationship to the deceased has no significant influence on liturgical remembrance and hope.

4   CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The main question in this article reads: what attitudes towards mortality are to be found among present-day participants in funeral rites and how do these attitudes influence their approach to liturgical commemoration? First we summarise the findings of our empirical liturgical study, followed by comments on some of the more remarkable results.

Regarding the first research question about attitudes towards mortality among present-day participants in Roman Catholic funerals, the following: we found a transcendent attitude towards mortality (which includes life, death and afterlife) among our respondents, as well as an immanent attitude towards life, death and afterlife. The second research question concerns the extent to which respondents agree with these

different interpretations of mortality. An immanent interpretation of death received the greatest agreement. Respondents were ambivalent about the immanent interpretation of life and afterlife, as well as the transcendent interpretation of mortality (life, death and afterlife). Here a transcendent attitude receives marginal agreement. In regard to the third research question—how our respondents rate the influence of attitudes towards mortality on attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope—our findings are as follows. Cultural liturgical remembrance and hope are influenced by a transcendent interpretation of mortality. This is by far the strongest influence. Communicative liturgical remembrance and hope are influenced by an immanent interpretation of life. Finally, the 'no hope' liturgical perspective is influenced negatively by a transcendent interpretation of mortality, and positively by an immanent interpretation of death. Respondents' church involvement positively influences cultural liturgical hope and has a negative impact on communicative liturgical remembrance.

Some of these findings are noteworthy. The first is that items for the transcendent interpretation of life, death and afterlife together constitute a single factor, whereas the immanent interpretation of life, death and afterlife yields separate factors. A second remarkable outcome is that the immanent interpretation of death obtains greatest agreement among all interpretations of mortality, and the 'no hope' perspective obtains least among concepts of liturgical memory. In this respect there is some tension. Thirdly, the transcendent interpretation of mortality manifestly influences cultural liturgical remembrance and hope, but has no effect on the communicative liturgical forms of remembrance and hope. Here the positive influence of respondents' church involvement on cultural liturgical hope and the negative influence on cultural liturgical remembrance are relevant. Let us look more closely at these findings and suggest possible explanations.

(1) We found the temporal dimension of attitudes towards mortality (including life, death and afterlife) among participants in funeral rites whom we studied to be associated with an immanent attitude towards mortality but not with a transcendent attitude. Hence our respondents make a temporal distinction between life, death and afterlife (Kastenbaum 2004, 19) only when they interpret these immanently, and not when they opt for a transcendent interpretation (Joas 2004, 24). How can we account for this finding? Could it be that the difference between life, death and afterlife is meaningless from a transcendent point of view? The transcendent perspective clearly overrides the distinction

we initially made. For a religious interpretation this raises theological questions: in Roman Catholic funeral rites the Easter mystery of Jesus Christ is the cardinal model for interpreting human finitude, and that comprehends life, death and afterlife. Jesus was incarnated as a human being and took on human existence. He died like a human being and passed through death. Then he rose from the dead. In so doing he fully took on the brokenness of human existence (Vorgrimler 1978, 68ff.). We do not encounter the brokenness arising from our finitude in the minds of respondents who accept a transcendent interpretation. Why not? Transcendence heals the rupture between life, death and afterlife in their interpretation of mortality. Could it be that from an eternal vantage point finitude is no longer experienced as a radical separation? When confronted with this brokenness, do people seek comfort in transcendence? Does eternity fulfil a bridging function in relation to life, death and afterlife—for the very reason that God is experienced as an 'eternal now' of which human beings are part (Tillich 1959, 30ff.)?

(2) The fact that an immanent interpretation of death attracts the greatest agreement raises questions about Christian interpretive patterns. Remarkably, a 'no hope' perspective in a *liturgical* sense receives least support. Apparently the experience of death as the final exit is interpreted differently in a general and a liturgical sense. This is also evident in the influence of an immanent interpretation of death on the 'no hope' liturgical perspective. Our respondents agree that death is the final exit from life, but they disagree with the idea that this is what an ecclesiastic funeral is about. It suggests that people want consolation and look for it in funeral liturgy, even though they have given up on God. How does one explain that in terms of a religious interpretation of funeral rites? Again it raises liturgical theological questions, since it is patently clear that a 'no hope' perspective, which is influenced by an immanent interpretation of death, does not feature prominently in present-day participants' perceptions of funeral liturgy. That, too, could relate to the Easter mystery. Since Vatican II the Easter mystery has occupied a focal place in funeral liturgy as the cardinal Christian interpretive pattern for the death of a significant other (Rutherford 1990, 115ff.). In the process the emphasis was very much on the resurrection rather than on the life, and particularly the death, of Jesus Christ (Gerhards 1990). If the Easter mystery has indeed been narrowed down to the resurrection (Goumans 1980), then it clearly means that people do not connect the high priority given to death as the final exit of life in their attitude towards mortality with their perception of Catholic funeral rites. The

notion that there is no hope in the religious context of a funeral and that God and his help are absent is not accepted—something they will not concede, although they do experience it that way (Zuidgeest 2001). At the same time an immanent interpretation of death influences the 'no hope' liturgical perspective and negatively influences cultural liturgical forms of remembrance and hope. Could a complete integration of the paschal mystery in the sense of life, death and afterlife reduce the divide between general notions of mortality (e.g. death as the final exit) and attitudes towards liturgical remembrance and hope (e.g. 'no hope')? Could this enable people to experience comfort corresponding with their immediate crisis—and with their religious starting point?

(3) Finally, the strong positive influence of the transcendent interpretation on cultural liturgical remembrance and hope, and its total lack of influence on communicative liturgical remembrance, are noteworthy. Clearly there is a close connection in our respondents' minds between the cultural liturgical nature of funeral rites and a transcendent interpretation of mortality. There is no correlation at all between the communicative liturgical character of funeral rites and a transcendent interpretation of mortality. Church involvement positively influences cultural liturgical hope. This seems to support the assumption that people who are more deeply rooted in the Christian tradition have greater expectations that the liturgy embodies a transcendent interpretation of remembrance and hope. The negative impact of church involvement on communicative liturgical remembrance shows that nonreligious people attach greater importance to the deceased's life. Do the two groups (greater and lesser church involvement) diverge? They certainly seem to. That poses a dilemma for funeral liturgy as either a farewell ceremony or a service of worship. People who have no close involvement with the church have stronger expectations that the commemoration in the service is immanent or communicative in nature. They have a need for eulogy rather than homily (Melloh 1994). Pastors conducting burials in present-day secular, pluralistic societies have to deal with these contrasting human needs. Assman, however, sees the connective structure as a hallmark of ritual, in which cultural and communicative commemoration are interrelated (see above). If one allows the two elements to be separated, the liturgy no longer accomplishes what Assman posits it should. That suggests a need to interlink the two forms of memory more closely. How this is to be done in liturgy is beyond the scope of this article. Possibly the interpretation of mortality as a contrast experience could play a role.

In regard to the problem posed in this article, we conclude that Philippe Ariès has part of the answer. An altered sense of mortality has influenced perceptions of present-day funerals, particularly the aspects of hope and remembrance. But we cannot go so far as to say that as a result interpretations of mortality and memory no longer play a role. It is more that there is no longer just one overriding interpretation of mortality (Grimes 2000, 222ff.). Memory also features in different forms. In fact, one should rather see it as a transformation, as Ariès surmises in the case of American society (Ariès 1974, 101). Further research is needed to determine what this transformation of interpretations of finitude in fact entail, and what liturgical forms and interpretations of funeral liturgy could accommodate it.

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APPENDIX 1

Items on attitudes towards mortality

Immanent attitude towards life (LI)
1 – Life is to gain the freedom to let go of yourself
2 – Truly experiencing the here and now is to experience something eternal
3 – Truly experiencing the here and now is totally different from experiencing eternity (inversion)
4 – The crux of life is the struggle against a lack of relationships
5 – Life is the struggle to rid society of injustice

Immanent attitude towards death (DI)
6 – Death is the end of individual life
7 – Death is the opposite of life
8 – After death the individual person decays into dust
9 – Death is with us from the day of our birth

Immanent attitude towards the afterlife (AI)
10 – Through our connection with nature we live on
11 – Our connection with nature does not guarantee an afterlife
12 – Having descendants does not guarantee an afterlife
13 – We live on in our descendants
14 – Through our work we leave a permanent mark on society
15 – Through death the influence of our work eventually comes to an end (inversion)

Transcendent attitude towards life (LT)
16 – Life is a series of decisions in relation to God
17 – Despite every threat, our lives are rooted in God
18 – Our relationships are grounded in God's inseparable relationship with us
19 – Faith is the resurrection is only realised in our concrete confrontation of injustice

Transcendent attitude towards death (DT)

20 – In death God consummates life

21 – Life with God is stronger than death

22 – Life with God does not protect us against the final exit from life (inversion)

Transcendent attitude towards the afterlife (AT)

23 – Death is the passage to another life

24 – After death God creates a new beginning from nothing

25 – In death humans share fully in God's eternal now

APPENDIX 2

Operationalisation of liturgical remembrance
and hope

Concept	examples of items The core of a Roman Catholic funeral is…
cultural liturgical remembrance	– God did not abandon the deceased during his life – Christ died and rose for the deceased
communicative liturgical remembrance	– the deceased was a unique person – the deceased meant much to many people
cultural liturgical hope	– God will not abandon the deceased after his death – the deceased will rise from death with Christ
communicative liturgical hope—individual	– the deceased cannot simply disappear into nothing – the deceased will live on, for example in her work, her children or in memory
no hope	– death is the final exit from life

APPENDIX 3

Oblimin rotated factor matrix, commonalities (h²), percentage
of explained variance, estimated reliability (alpha) regarding attitudes
towards MORTALITY

	% not agree	% not agree/ agree	% agree	h^2	f1	f2	f3	f4
25 In death humans share fully in God's eternal now (AT)	23.9	26.6	49.5	.79	.88			
20 In death God consummates life (DT)	22.8	25.9	51.3	.71	.83			
21 Living with God is stronger than death (DT)	18.6	20.8	60.6	.68	.81			
18 Our relationships are grounded in God's inseparable relationship with us (LT)	28.6	34.1	37.3	.71	.80			
23 Death is a passage to another life (DT)	15.6	21.4	62.9	.62	.75			
17 Despite every threat, our lives are rooted in God (LT)	16.9	25.8	57.3	.59	.72			
16 Life is a series of decisions in relation to God (LT)	41.7	32.1	26.1	.52	.68			
24 After death God creates a new beginning from nothing (AT)	45.2	28.1	26.7	.45	.63			
1 Life is to gain the freedom to let go of yourself (LI)	15.6	42.7	41.7	.46		.64		
2 Truly experiencing the here and now is to experience something eternal (LI)	19.9	39.4	40.7	.40		.58		
4 The crux of life is the struggle against a lack of relationships (LI)	47.0	34.1	18.9	.37		.56		
5 Life is the struggle to rid society of injustice (LI)	33.6	37.2	29.1	.35		.48		
19 Faith in the resurrection is only realised in our concrete confrontation of injustice (AT)	29.6	33.3	37.0	.39		.45		
8 After death the individual person decays into dust (DI)	14.5	15.5	70.0	.48			.67	
6 Death is the end of individual life (DI)	24.7	18.3	57.1	.41			.63	
22 Life with God does not protect us against the final exit from life (DT inversion)	27.7	15.0	57.3	.27			.50	
10 Through our connection with nature we live on (AI)	30.0	30.9	39.1	.45				.56

cont.

	% not agree	% not agree/ agree	% agree	h²	f1	f2	f3	f4
11 Our connection with nature does not guarantee an afterlife (AI)	56.6	23.5	19.9	.26				−.43
Alpha					.92	.69	.61	
R								−.20
scale average (mean)[1]					3.3	3.1	3.5	2.8
standard deviation					(.94)	(.66)	(.88)	(.85)
number of valid cases[2]					219	217	211	218

explained variance: 49.6%
f1*: transcendent attitude towards mortality*
f 2: *immanent attitude towards life*
f 3: *immanent attitude towards death*
f4: *immanent naturalistic attitude towards the afterlife*
[1] scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (agree totally)
[2] N = 229

MINISTRY AS A RITUAL PROFESSION

Hans Schilderman

Liturgy is public worship, following a proper ritual order of divine service. Ritual celebrates the very core of a religion's identity. It is not only the place where one feels the heartbeat of a religious community but, more importantly, the time when the sacred motive for its gathering is experienced and the essence of its faith—its focus on God—is disclosed. Raising questions about a ritual profession in the face of the religious significance of liturgy may seem irreverent and improper. Worse, inquiring into the theological underpinning of liturgical ministry may suggest functionalist reduction of that which many perceive as the very core of religion. Must not any reflection on liturgy end in awed silence?

To answer this question academically, one should point out that any theory of ritual performance is not primarily aimed at disclosing the essential meaning of religion for the participants. Rather it represents a trial-and-error, scholarly attempt to develop theories of what ritual is and how it is experienced by different groups at different times and in different contexts; then, through effort or research, to find out how liturgy works. Though one can and should by no means exclude the possibility that research may benefit the actual practice and development of a ritual profession, one should also acknowledge the difference in the aims and responsibilities that are at stake.

Inquiry into a ritual profession has a theoretical rather than a practical motive. It reads: how do those who conduct liturgy evaluate the main theological notions involved in liturgy? Theology is especially pertinent to ritual as the public expression of a confession. It is in the shared practice of a religion that crucial dimensions of liturgy, such as membership of a religious community, actual ritual behaviour and beliefs, are publicly expressed and personally 'exercised'. In theological terms, religious belonging is reflected in views of the church; ritual views determine orientations towards the sacraments; and belief is expressed in spiritual notions. By studying these theological notions in

the empirical variety of corresponding attitudes, the key dimensions of liturgy can be clarified. The empirical variety of views is not meant to eclipse their normative validity but is a measure of the extent to which these claims are supported in the dynamics of congruent and conflicting views among the participants.

Whereas the topics of church, sacraments and spirituality are likely to be significant for all participants in liturgy, we focus on pastors of the Roman Catholic Church. We consider pastors to be ritual professionals, whose frame of reference is the aforementioned theological views. Ministry gains its character as an office from the structure and culture of the church, the religious and institutional foundation of is authority. Especially in the Roman Catholic tradition sacraments are key tasks in pastoral ministry. Administering the sacraments and their implicit signification and function are crucial aspects of ministry that define it as a ritual profession. Without lived spirituality a ritual profession is reduced to technique, devoid of confessional and vocational motives and drives. The concepts of church, sacraments and spirituality feature in the theological education, spiritual formation and professional training of pastors. Theology reflects this system of religious ideas, and ritual embodies the inherent religious codes, expressing them in an emotionally appealing liturgy and teaching them as guidelines to proper conduct.[1] These theological themes can be thought of as criteria for pastors to evaluate their ministry. Thus there is good reason to study the theological views of those whose ritual profession is the ministry.

In the first section I explore ministry as a ritual profession (1). Then I clarify empirically how pastors evaluate the office which shapes their ritual profession (2). The attitudes towards pastoral ministry were mirrored in discussions of the published research results, so I give an overview of the reception of our findings (3). Finally, I assess to what extent the problems revealed in that reception affect the professional practice of liturgy, thus presenting aims and issues for further research into ritual professions (4).

1   EXPLORING THE RITUAL PROFESSION

Pastoral ministry in the Roman Catholic Church may be seen as a ritual profession. One description of the essential meaning of the office

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[1] J. van der Ven. *Ecclesiologie in context*. Kok, Kampen 1993, 104–130.

is to be found in canon law, the basic rules governing the church. The codex defines pastoral office as "any post which by divine or ecclesiastical disposition is established in a stable manner to further a spiritual purpose" (CIC 145, §1). The spiritual purpose that canon law stipulates as the very basis of pastoral ministry finds special expression in liturgy. Liturgy interprets that spiritual purpose transitively, in the sense of a task in which it relates to people's sanctification. At this fundamental level pastoral ministry may be seen as a liturgical or—more generically—a ritual profession. The liturgical task is defined as follows: "The Church carries out its office of sanctifying in a special way in the sacred liturgy, which is an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy, by the use of signs perceptible to the senses, our sanctification is symbolised and, in a manner appropriate to each sign, is brought about" (CIC 834, 1).

From this it is clear that canon law, while seeking to promote believers' active participation in liturgy, unequivocally makes liturgy a clerical task that can only be performed on the authority of the church in hierarchically ranked fashion. Bishops and priests officiate in liturgy, whereas deacons and the faithful participate in liturgical celebration (cf. CIC 835). Hence though post-Vatican II theology may view the ministry as belonging to all believers, in liturgy that only applies in certain respects. In positive terms, from the church's perspective pastoral office is primarily regarded as a ritual profession with its own clientele. Several formal characteristics affirm this definition: the fact that liturgy is regarded as a core task of ministry; that its socio-spiritual function is instrumental, not merely self-referential; that its ritual task has a public character and is performed on behalf of a recognised church institution; and that it is institutionally integrated with a formal employment structure, for whose identity the ritual denotations and connotations are crucial. Ritual is characteristic of the entire clerical profession: it defines its proper place among other occupations. If anything highlights the particular expertise of Roman Catholic pastoral ministry in the division of labour, it is its ritual function and, more specifically, its spiritual speciality of liturgy.

Such definitions of liturgy as the cardinal task of clerical office are not purely dogmatic but also concern the meaning of the term 'office' in common language. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'office' has several connotations that indicate the close semantic relationship between office and ritual. The general meaning of the term is a 'service (of) kindness', that is a duty or obligation performed with special

attention. But it also indicates the public place or position from which
these services, duties or obligations are discharged. Thus it refers to an
'official', often partly ceremonial position of employment transcending
the private interests that usually mark jobs and careers. The vocational
connotation of the term is important. One speaks of an office inasmuch
as the term refers to the public good that is expressed in holding an
office, and promoted by the activities performed in that official capac-
ity. Liturgy is always performed ex officio, that is by virtue of one's
office and the vocation it assumes. A further feature of the inherent
relationship of office and ritual is that the notion of office indicates
the actual ceremonial requirements of religious observance. The term
'office' implies the performance of certain rites that people are entitled
to on particular occasions. In a church setting these are associated with
liturgy, since the term indicates any authorised form of divine worship,
especially forms prescribed for particular occasions.[2]

These meanings of the term 'office' in canon law and in everyday
language not only illustrate its richness but also its propensity for con-
fusion. Is office a spiritual (mental) phenomenon or simply a form of
employment? Is it a vocation or an occupation? Is its inherent author-
ity vested in persons or in institutions? What is the difference between
administering a ritual and participating in it? Why do we need profes-
sionals to perform rituals or priests to celebrate liturgy? If there is a
public good that is ritualised in spiritual life, who should be in charge,
the people or the official clergy? Answers to these questions lead to
discussion with diverse kinds of theologians: practical and dogmatic
theologians, pneumatologists, ecclesiologists, liturgists; sometimes even
sociologists and anthropologists of religion. At the same time it involves
a public issue—that of the church as a ritual place where the office is
officially exercised.

In modern times the answers to these questions have become highly
controversial, mostly among theologians but sometimes among the
faithful as well. The case of the Dutch Roman Catholic ministry is
a good—according to some a tragic—example of a church debate in
which various conceptions of office were at issue. In Dutch society it
happened in the second half of the 20th century and was marked by
a rapid transition from a popular church backed by a highly confes-

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[2] See the entry 'office' in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), 2nd edition. Oxford,
Oxford University Press 2002.

sional culture to a marginalised church battling against a rising tide of secular worldviews.[3] The historical events had huge consequences for our topic. As far as the confessional culture is concerned the aforementioned transition can be seen as an emancipation process. With regard to pastoral ministry, however, the consequences are more accurately described as a process of de-professionalisation. Whereas the institutional pillar of Catholicism provided a splendid opportunity for professional leadership up to the latter half of the 20th century, it could not be maintained thereafter.

Several factors contributed to this de-professionalisation. At the Dutch Pastoral Council (1966–1970) Catholic intellectuals' ideological efforts to implement the perceived innovations of Vatican II from a Dutch national perspective of successful Catholic emancipation proved abortive. The ensuing ideological clashes between theological and church-political opinion in the 1970s and 1980s seriously affected the identity of the pastoral profession. Intellectuals, eventually followed by regular churchgoers, no longer professed to be Catholics and ritual participation declined rapidly. The sharp decrease in ritual participation was accompanied by what must be described as a decline of the liturgical profession. Between 1960 and 1990 a massive number of priests left the office; annual ordination figures dropped by 93 percent and have not risen significantly since. As a result those that remained in the church, be it as ritual participants or ritual professionals, adapted to the constraints and opportunities that the local parish offered to maintain a spiritual life and were little affected by 'official' precepts, whether from church administration, theologians, intellectuals or other authorities.

This recent history undoubtedly limits the scope for professional innovation in the pastoral office. But the situation also prompted a representative empirical survey among Dutch Roman Catholic pastors to describe and compare their views on ministry and professionalisation. What, in these pastors' opinion, are the opportunities for professional innovation of basic aspects of the office? With due regard to the ritual speciality of ministry in the division of labour, we selected issues that are crucial to a theological understanding of ministry as a ritual profession. Thus we studied the notions of church authority,

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[3] For a concise overview of the Dutch history that illuminates some controversial issues in Roman Catholic pastoral ministry, see the introductory chapter of my *Religion as a profession*. Leiden/Boston, Brill 2005. 1–11.

apostolicity and leadership, which provide the institutional base for the ritual profession of pastoral ministry. In addition we explored key topics such as the significance of ritual in terms of sacramental efficacy, and ritual access to the office by way of ordination. Finally we studied the spiritual identity of the ministry by clarifying both sources and aims of spirituality, and spiritual metaphors of the office. A major question is to what extent the ritual profession of pastoral ministry offers opportunities for professional innovation.[4] To answer it we also studied aims, topics and responsibilities relating to professionalisation.

If there is such a thing as an *ars celebrandi*, our research should afford insight into some of its characteristics by concentrating on those aspects of theology of ministry that define the office as a ritual profession. As will become apparent, the research—much like the topic under investigation—displays characteristics of discourse and debate throughout. Hence it aptly illustrates the final, often neglected, phase of the empirical research cycle: that of evaluation.

2   Empirical Research Into Ministry

To identify some basic characteristics of the ritual profession we turn to our research into Dutch Roman Catholic pastoral ministry. After describing the research design, we present basic results, in which we distinguish between background characteristics, attitudes towards ministry, attitudes towards professionalisation and, finally, the relationship between the two types of attitudes.[5]

Research design

In the initial phase of the project we conducted an extensive study of the literature on pastoral theology and professionalisation theory, as well as talks with board members of the professional association. We also conducted trial runs among pastors in various ecclesiastic and professional settings. The survey design of the study resulted in

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[4] For a description of pastoral labour problems at the time, see: *Verenigingen van Pastoraal Werkenden, Bureau Arbeidsverhoudingen. Van beroep: pastor. De arbeidsverhoudingen van pastores in de rooms-katholieke kerk van Nederland*. Hilversum, Gooi & Sticht. 1986.

[5] The study was conducted by Drs C. Visscher and Drs H. Schilderman, supervised by Prof. Dr J. van der Ven and Prof. Dr B. Felling.

a representative net sample comprising 20 percent of the pastoral occupational group.[6]

Our conceptual model included ecclesiological, sacramental and spiritual conceptions of the office, and notions of professionalisation relating to the strategies, substance and responsibilities involved. The research problem was: in how far do pastors' attitudes towards theology of ministry justify support for a policy of pastoral professionalisation? The first goal was to describe the conceptualisation, operationalisation and empirical manifestation of some key elements of the research problem. The second goal was to explore and explain, by way of empirical and theoretical interpretation, the relation between the office—being the conventional theological framework in pastoral work—and professionalisation, as a possible accommodation strategy in the modern context of pastoral office.

Since the project depended on third stream funding, close attention was paid to supervision and reporting of the research. A supervisory committee was established, comprising the board of the professional association and a number of pastors, as well as representatives of the three Catholic theological faculties in the Netherlands. Contact with the professional association was maintained via interviews, lectures and publications in the professional journal.[7] The actual research results were published in several phases, first for the respondents, then formally for the board, and comprehensively for members of the professional group.[8] In addition some specific analyses were made, resulting in research reports to the professional association.[9]

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[6] N = 481, composed of 48% of the gross probability sample (N = 1010) and 20% of the population (N = 2396).

[7] For example: J. Schilderman, Professioneel pastoraal leiderschap. In: Kontakt-blad Federatie VPW Nederland, professional association of Roman Catholic pastors, 1992, 92/3; 9–14.

[8] See: J. Schilderman & C. Visscher. *Professionalisering van het pastorale ambt. Onderzoeksverslag survey r.k. pastores* 1991. Nijmegen. 1992. J. Schilderman, C. Visscher, J. van der Ven & A. Felling. *Professionalisering van het pastorale ambt. Onderzoeksverslag voor de Federatie van Pastoraal Werkenden Nederland. Intern VPW-rapport*, November 1993. J. Schilderman, C. Visscher, J. van der Ven & A. Felling. *Pastores en het ambt. Verslag van een onderzoek onder R.-K. pastores. Federatie VPW Nederland*. Utrecht. 1994.

[9] J. Schilderman. *VPW-pastores nader in beeld* (internal research report to VPW). Utrecht. 1995. J. Schilderman. *De pastorale arbeidssituatie in de Nederlandse Rooms-Katholieke Kerk. Onderzoeksrapport voor de Federatie VPW's Nederland* (internal research report to VPW). Utrecht. 1996. J. Schilderman & N. Bulter. *Kenmerken van VPW-leden. Analyse voor de Federatie VPW Nederland* (internal research report to VPW). Utrecht. 1997.

Background characteristics

When it came to background variables two points seemed relevant.
One was the pastors' spirituality. Most of them reported religious and
mystical experiences, in which spiritual closeness featured prominently.
A minority found that traditional pastoral devotion shaped their daily
lives. Thus spirituality featured more prominently at an experiential
level than as an influence on shared religious behaviour.

The other background characteristic was the pastors' professional-
ism. Although 75 percent of them considered themselves pastorally
competent, it seemed this was based on high ratings of their profes-
sional attitude rather than their level of proficiency. Less than 7 percent
claimed to possess a very high or even a high degree of various skills,
including two ritual skills. A majority had done further (occupationally
specific) training courses, but completion of the only accredited course
at the time—clinical pastoral training—showed little or no correlation
with variations in attributed expertise at an attitudinal or skills level.[10]
Pastors reported that they received mainly local professional support
and very little from qualified or responsible agencies such as diocesan
service centres, theological faculties, professional associations or church
authorities.

Conceptions of the office

As for conceptions of the office—our independent variable—we dis-
tinguished between church, sacrament and spirituality. The church
provides the institutional framework, without which the ritual profession
is inconceivable. Remarkably, the majority of pastors rejected orthodox
ecclesiastic views, for instance that the church should be structured
as a hierarchic pyramid or that pastoral leadership should be based
on sacramental competency. By contrast the majority supported the
importance of the local church and cherished an emancipatory view
of pastoral leadership.

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[10] J. Schilderman. Naar een educatief kader voor pastorale deskundigheidsbevorde-
ring. In: 'Studiedag Centrum voor Klinische Pastorale Vorming', *Zon en Schild*, 30
September 1993. Amersfoort. 27–41. H. Schilderman. Klinische Pastorale Competen-
tie. In: S. Körver (ed.), *Corrigerende ervaringen. Leren in klinische pastorale vorming en pastorale
supervisie. Bij het afscheid van Piet Zuidgeest*. Eindhoven 1998. 123–149. H. Schilderman
Klinisch pastoraat als professionele en ambtelijke zorg. In: *Pastorale dienst of dienst geestel-
ijke verzorging. Achtergronden bij een keuze*. Report on Bossche Convent symposium, Twee
Steden hospital, Tilburg, 4 October 1999. 6–22.

Sacraments are a key aspect of the ritual character of pastoral office. In contrast to systematic theology, where instrumental, symbolic and communitarian interpretations of sacramental activities rest on entirely different premises of ritualism, the corresponding notions among pastors are uncontroversial. The majority of pastors supported these interpretations of rites, although the one based on the local community had most support. When it comes to admission to the ministry the situation is somewhat different. Although most pastors felt that admission to pastoral office should be based on personal choice and religious vocation, on the point of formal admission pastors and deacons differed from pastoral workers. The first group felt that ecclesiastic ordination and the right to administer the Eucharist should be closely linked, whereas the second group refuted this view. Whereas pastoral workers tended to agree with the principle that the right to celebrate the Eucharist should be based on an invitation by the local religious community, priests and deacons inclined to disagree. This suggests that a cardinal issue in the Dutch post-Vatican II debate on the ministry remains undecided in pastors' minds.[11]

Since spirituality may be regarded as a condition and goal of the ritual profession, we explored pastors' ideas in this regard. Only a very small minority disagreed with this view, but there is little unanimity on how pastoral spirituality should be understood. At any rate, there appear to be few unambiguous images of spiritual ministry in the sense of metaphors in which pastors recognise their religious role. The five images we encountered—leader, counsellor, carer, fellow human and woman—all met with an ambivalent response. The image of the pastor as leader was largely questioned, whereas the egalitarian image of the pastor as fellow human being had relatively more support.

A second-order factor analysis of the main conceptions of the office showed that in pastors' minds the leader image correlated with an orthodox theology of ministry, whereas the other spiritual images cohered with a relational theology. Apart from the less than 25 percent support for an orthodox theology of ministry, the vast majority of pastors subscribed to a communitarian theology of ministry. Whereas the

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[11] For a scrutiny of the significance of ritual for theology and professionalism see: H. Schilderman & A. Felling. Sacramental incentives in the pastoral office. *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 2003, 7, 2, 249–276.

relational theology of ministry was largely questioned, a religious theology of ministry was acceptable to a substantial majority of pastors.

Professionalisation

Regarding our dependent variable, professionalisation, we distinguished between goals, responsibilities and themes. For the goals we developed an instrument based on professional theory, in which what is known as the power approach to professionalisation identifies policy aims.[12] Judging by the pastors' assessments, a large majority agree with the professionalisation goals of enhancing expertise and the utility value of their profession. They disagree about the need to gain ecclesiastic influence as a pastoral professional group. A slight majority endorses this view, but more than 25 percent are ambivalent and the rest disagree. Disagreement is even greater in the case of typical protection of interests goals. These more trade unionist goals divide the pastors into three equally sized groups: agreement, rejection and ambivalence. Hence pastors support developmental goals, but acquisition of collective influence is controversial.

The same ambivalence about power is apparent in the assignment of responsibility for professionalisation. While a tiny minority assigns this responsibility to pastoral professional organisations, far more pastors see it as the responsibility of the church (in its capacity as employer) and even more as the responsibility of universities. In other words, the desire for occupational control is not unequivocally or exclusively ascribed to the pastoral professional group, so that the principle of collective power has no broad support base among pastors, not even among members of the professional association.

We classified professionalisation themes according to the disciplines taught in theological faculties. Pastors turned out to agree with virtually all professionalisation themes with very little dissent, hence it was not possible to define explicit priorities. Support for religious studies themes, which are endorsed along with theological themes, was greater among pastoral workers than among the clergy; greater among categorically employed than among territorially employed pastors; and greater among members than among non-members of the professional association.

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[12] Th. van der Krogt. *Professionalisering en collectieve macht. Een conceptueel kader.* Dissertation. Tilburg. 's-Gravenhage, 1981.

Relation between view of the office and professionalisation

Is there any relation between pastors' views of the office and their atti-tudes towards professionalisation? With some necessary qualifications the answer is affirmative. An interesting finding is that an orthodox theology of ministry is a negative predictor of those aspects of profes-sionalisation that could threaten the official church's powers. All other tenets of theology of ministry that predict specific conceptions of professionalisation are positive predictors. Especially the community-oriented theology of ministry, which stresses the importance of the local religious community, proves to be a broad predictor of various aspects of professionalisation. Theology of ministry appears to have most influence on the importance ascribed to the utility of the pastoral profession, protection of interests, striving for power, the responsibility of universities and the professional association, and religious studies themes in professionalisation. For the rest background characteristics play a major role in support for professionalisation. Thus attitudinal level or pastoral work culture, membership of the professional association and career dissatisfaction are strong rivals of theology of ministry as predictors of views on professionalisation. Remarkably, discrimination according to clerical position, which is ultimately also based on ritual competencies, hardly features in prediction.

Interpreting empirical correlations is always risky. In our study this relationship is based on views of legitimation. On the basis of our data pastoral work cannot be regarded as legitimised by expert authority. On certain crucial issues social coherence within the professional group is too weak for such a conclusion, and there seems to be every reason to assume that technical expertise is not rated as highly as in profes-sional domains in the modern welfare state. Although pastors no longer endorse orthodox ecclesiastic authority, the traditional church context is very much alive in their orientation to the local religious community. But this local frame of reference among pastors undermines the profes-sional group profile, since they seem to see themselves as local officials rather than as representatives of a profession.[13] Theologically this raises the question whether a local conception of the office offers a legitimate

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[13] I draw the same conclusion from the study by ITS/Kaski, in which the pastor emerges as a professional individualist. Th. Buis; K. Frietman, J. Sander & L. Spruit. *Beroepsprofielen in het parochiepastoraat.* Kaski, Nijmegen, 1998. Also see H. Schilder-man. Profileren in het parochiepastoraat. *Kontaktblad Federatie VPW Nederland*, 1999, 1, 13–16.

basis for gaining professional influence. One way of harmonising such legitimation with the manifestly communitarian orientation among pastors is the principle of subsidiarity, which entails decentralisation of powers in instances where communitarian interests can be catered for better at lower organisational levels. The furtherance of the common good implicit in the principle of subsidiarity can also be related to the principles of proper division of labour, professional autonomy, enhancement of expertise, the right of professional association and social service.[14]

3   RECEPTION OF EMPIRICAL MINISTRY RESEARCH

The reception of the study revealed clear trends, which may be seen as an example of the evaluative phase of the empirical research cycle. It centred on three issues, all of them affording insight into the ritual profession: the concept of professionalism, the theological significance of pastoral office and the pastor's spirituality.

Professionalism

What is the professionalism of pastoral ministry? More specifically, what ritual skills are really pertinent to liturgy? Though our research did not focus on professional performance as such, we found controversy on this very point. Indeed, our research design included a scale that measured ritual skills like sermon analysis based on rhetoric and speech act theory. According to these indicators, 10 percent of the pastors possessed adequate liturgical skills.

The first controversies erupted in the national media, even before our research report was published. It was said that our study showed that Dutch Catholic pastors were incompetent.[15] That compelled us to report on the researched competence of pastors even before publishing the full report. In an article we described the skills that we selected as indicators according to their professional importance, and stated the

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[14] H. Schilderman. *Religion as a profession*. Leiden, Brill. 2005, 267–278.
[15] The ANP was committed to the organ of the pastoral professional association and interpreted the low competence scores that I reported in an interview as a generic judgment of pastoral expertise. *Volkskrant, Trouw* and various regional dailies reprinted the ANP report on 23 and 24 July 1994. *NRC Handelsblad* (25 August 1994) differentiated more accurately: pastors see themselves as competent, which is reflected in their professional attitudes but is not corroborated by the reported low level of proficiency.

academic norms we applied in choosing these competencies as indicators of proficiency. We conceptually clarified our choice of skill indicators, described the results empirically, and made a case for the relevance of competence to church development.[16] But that did not put an end to the debate on professionalism—indeed, it provoked further questions about the conceptual validity of the term 'pastoral professionalism' and the reliability of empirical theological practice. Thus not only the pastor's professionalism was at issue, but also that of the scientist.

There were two explicit responses to our study of skills. A. Baart from Utrecht criticised the notions of pastoral professionalism in a way that clearly targeted the Nijmegen theologians.[17] In particular he objected to the technical, instrumental and heavily theoretical character of our skills indicators. In his view they failed to do justice to pastors' own views of their competence and created an image of pastors as flagrant bunglers. The fact that skills are described in an applied sense disregards theological, hermeneutic and agogic interpretations of competence that pastors themselves may well espouse. In addition this conception of expertise does not include any socio-critical assessment of the concept of professionialisation. Such a technical approach distorts and represses existential issues, leading to emotional deprivation of clients and motivational problems and burnout among professionals. According to Baart this indicated a need for more normative interpretations of professionalism.

Another reaction came from H. Zondag in Tilburg, who basically agreed with Baart's criticism that our survey did not allow for pastors' own definitions of professionalism.[18] In a study of Roman Catholic, *Nederlands Hervormde* and *Gereformeerde* churches he probed pastors' competence by way of open questions and processed his findings using qualitative research methods. His categorical system was commensurate with ours, so that skills featured explicitly. A distinction emerged between

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[16] J. Schilderman, C. Visscher, J. van der Ven & A. Felling. Pastorale bekwaamheid als kerkelijke survival-strategie. In *Praktische Theologie* 1995, 2, 21–43.

[17] A. Baart. Pastoraat. De zogenaamde onbekwaamheid van de pastor. In: E. Borgman, B. van Dijk & T. Salemink. *Katholieken in de moderne tijd. Een onderzoek door de 8-mei-beweging*. Zoetermeer, De Horstink 1995, 129–151. A. J. Baart. Wat heet professioneel? Naar een sterke opvatting van professionaliteit. In: *Sociale Interventie* 1996, 3, 113–123. A. Baart. Op zoek naar pastorale bekwaamheid. In: *Praktische Humanistiek*, 1996, 1, 4–15.

[18] H. Zondag. Luisteraars die geloven. De eisen die pastores aan zichzelf stellen. In: *Praktische Theologie* 1999, 5, 523–536.

religious and nonreligious skills, the former referring to typical liturgi-
cal skills (sermons, prayer, officiating in liturgy, etc.) and the latter to
administrative and social skills. Pastors appeared to attach most impor-
tance to passive social skills and relatively little to knowledge and goal
achievement. In addition no relationship could be established between
ascribed competence and the requirements pastors set for themselves.

In response to Baart and Zondag we argued that the new qualita-
tive study also identified pastoral professionalism as a problem area.
For my part, the study helped me to amend my concept of normative
professionalism critically.[19]

Theology

Besides the concept of professionalism, the theological meaning of
ecclesiastic office in relation to professionalism evoked fierce criticism.
Here the main critic was from a colleague in Tubingen, O. Fuchs,
who saw our study of pastoral office as an opportunity to criticise
some aspects of the empirical theology practised at Nijmegen.[20] The
immediate object was an article of ours, in which we compared views
of the church and of professionalisation.[21] We interpreted these views
on the basis of certain notions from sociology of religion, which we
brought to bear on constraints on professionalisation policy in the
Roman Catholic Church. Thus we described the ecclesiastic localism
that we found among pastors as an obstacle to seeing their occupation in
terms of professional interests and ecclesiastic adaptation processes. We
also regarded membership of the professional association as competing
with the clerical (i.e. ordination) mechanism of social closure. And we
considered the social efficiency of professional authority at this stage
to be low compared with the assertive legal and traditional claims to
authority associated with clerical office.

Fuchs's criticism can be summarised under three points. The first is
that pastors' actual expertise is not adequately dealt with in our study,

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[19] H. Schilderman. Normen en feiten in de pastorale professionaliteit. In: *Praktische Theologie*, 1999, 5, 537–557.
[20] O. Fuchs. Wie Funktioniert die Theologie in empirischen Untersuchungen? In: Theologische Quartalschrift 180, 3, 2000, 191–210.
[21] J. Schilderman, C. Visscher, J. van der Ven, A. Felling. Professionalising the Shepherds. In: Journal of Empirical Theology 12, 1999, 1, 59–90.

hence the respondents were not taken seriously.[22] Up to a point this is the same as Baart's critique, but there is a more specific concern. Fuchs is not so much interested in a reconstruction of empirical, as opposed to academically regulated, professionalism, but in the interaction between academic theological professionalism and pastoral practice in local churches. To him the fact that faith and pastoral ministry are primarily located in real-life praxis is a theological criterion, which can be used to assess the dialectical relationship between situation and tradition. The second point is the integration of sociological concepts with pastoral theological research, which Fuchs feels entails a risk that theology may become a lackey of the social sciences.[23] That applies particularly if one tries to resolve the theological debate on the office with concepts deriving from professionalisation theory. This is not the way to handle the interchange between theology and sociology. The third and last point is the reductionism of empirical theology, which in Fuchs's view happens when God-talk becomes conceptualised at the expense of the normative meaning of theology. This not only negates the scientific status of theology but undermines its directive significance for (ecclesiastic) practice.[24]

Our response to Fuchs's criticism was threefold. First, we organised an international workshop on the theme of the office and professionalisation.[25] Various papers read on this occasion focused on the problem of empirical-theological conceptualisation in empirical research on the one hand and the significance of normative theological claims on the other. Comparable problems were reported from theological studies in Germany and Austria. Since Fuchs's critique was partly based on theoretical and methodological assumptions about empirical theology, I took the opportunity to write an overview of the practice of this

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[22] O. Fuchs. Wie Funktioniert die Theologie in empirischen Untersuchungen? In: Theologische Quartalschrift 180, 3, 2000, 205–206.

[23] Fuchs suggests this when he says that empirical theology is develop into an '*ancilla scientiae humanae*': O. Fuchs. Wie Funktioniert die Theologie in empirischen Untersuchungen? In: Theologische Quartalschrift 180, 3, 2000, 204–207.

[24] In this way it become a banal, '*nickende Theologie*'. O. Fuchs. Wie Funktioniert die Theologie in empirischen Untersuchungen? In: Theologische Quartalschrift 180, 3, 2000, 202–204.

[25] The seminar was held at the CUN Faculty of Theology on 26–27 June 2000 and was attended by researchers from various German and Austrian faculties.

discipline at Nijmegen.[26] Finally I dealt in detail with his criticism by explaining the premises of the contentious article and evaluating the research findings in terms of its objective (contributing to theology of ministry) and its inquiry (empirical theorising on pastoral office).[27]

Spirituality

The third aspect of the reception of the study to be noted is the spirituality of pastoral office, a key characteristic from a liturgical point of view. Soon after the research findings were circulated among pastors concern was expressed about the religious identity of the office. It was felt that professionalism could become the exclusive standard. Some thought there was a real danger that if expertise was the primary criterion, it would eclipse the importance of devotion and spiritual virtues. This concern implied an antithesis, or at any rate ambivalence, between (technical) rationality and spirituality, with a possible risk of secularisation in and of the office.[28]

The relation between professionalism and spirituality was also considered problematic in courses and seminars offered by the professional association. This led the founder of the Dutch pastoral professional association, G. Zuidberg, to complement our study of professionalisation with a qualitative inquiry into pastors' actual spiritual experience, also in relation to their ideas about pastoral professionalism.[29] Zuidberg's qualitative research design led to a description of the context of religious development; the relation of spirituality to God, Jesus and the Spirit; the various forms of expression; and its relation to the church, the sacraments and pastoral ministry. A major finding of this study, as Haarsma points out, is the shift in spirituality from a *fides obedientialis* to a *fides fiducialis*. Pastors define spirituality as an open, personal

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[26] This was done independently of the debate launched by Fuchs. H. Schilderman. Blazing the trail of empirical theology. In: H.-G. Ziebertz, F. Schweitzer, H. Häring & D. Browning (eds). *The human image of God*. 2001, Leiden/Boston, Brill. 405–433.

[27] H. Schilderman. Pastoral Amt als empirisches Problem in der Theologie. Offered to *Theologische Quartalschrift Tübingen*, at the request of Prof. Dr O. Fuchs (May 2001). Also see H. Schilderman & A. Felling. Sacramental incentives in the pastoral office. In: *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 2003, 7, 2, 249–276.

[28] F. Haarsma commented on the study by warning against pastoral technocracy. F. Haarsma. Kennis en kunde, maar ook deugden en devotie. De eenzijdige benadering van de pastorale professionaliteit. In: *De Bazuin*, 5 August 1995, 5–7.

[29] G. Zuidberg. *De God van de pastor. Onderzoek naar de spiritualiteit van pastores*. 1997, Utrecht, Ton van den Ende pdv. G. Zuidberg. (Translation: *The God of the pastor. The spirituality of Roman Catholic pastors in the Netherlands*. Leiden/Boston, Brill. 2001.)

religious attitude rather than as an orthodox ecclesiastic and substantively theological phenomenon, with the result that public and private meanings—or confession—of faith no longer coincide.[30]

Another conclusion of Zuidberg's study prompted us to conduct a new study of professionalism and spirituality. This was his finding that most pastors describe spirituality and professionalism as more of less interchangeable competencies in pastoral ministry. Expertise in the ritual profession is embedded in, or even coincides with, the pastor's faith. A minority disagreed by focussing on spirituality but nonetheless differentiating it as a professional goal to be pursued in pastoral ministry. Since this is an interesting finding, we decided to investigate the relation between spirituality and professionalism more closely on the basis of our data.[31] Counter to our initial assumption that this relation reflected temperamental incompatibility among pastors, we found that when no power issues were at stake, professionalism and spirituality were on the whole compatible in their minds. Both are aspects of pastoral commitment. However, professional development of spirituality—whether as a personal attitudinal instrument for pastors or a programmatic pastoral goal orientation—is considered unlikely in view of the church's very different culture and concept of spirituality. In liturgy—still the cardinal public expression of spirituality—this could lead to a dichotomy between the officiant's expression of personal spirituality and the traditional spirituality contained in the codes of the order of service.

4   The Ritual Profession Revisited

At the beginning of this article we said that research into the attitudes of ritual professionals is a relevant issue in ritual studies. Liturgists contribute to this project by locating the study of ritual in the contemporary context of institutionalised confessions, the development of professional practice, and a framework of religious legitimation. Having clarified some questions pertaining to ritual practice in our study and having described its reception, what insight have we gained? To answer this question we first look into the problem of evaluation. Then we discuss

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[30] F. Haarsma. In: G. Zuidberg 2001, 266–278.
[31] H. Schilderman & A. Felling. Religious and professional commitment in pastoral ministry. In: *Studies in spirituality*, 13/2003, 293–320.

the challenges that confront the ritual profession, which also present opportunities for future research.

Evaluative problem

Let us start by noting that our research provoked controversy about the office and its ritual core characteristics. The critics in that debate were academic theologians and their criticism was academically phrased and addressed. This in itself may not be remarkable, were it not for the absence of any overt criticism from the side of the professional association and church administration. The professional association took cognisance of the results and organised seminars, courses and follow-up research. Church administration acknowledged that the definition of pastoral ministry should be a focal point in ecclesiastic personnel policy, and is at present explicitly advocating professionalism as an area for attention in pastoral cooperation.[32] Although the same pastoral commitment was displayed by the theologians, it was entangled with perceived academic interests, such as clarifying the domains of theology and the social sciences, emphasising the validity of normative claims in theology, and the need for a distinctive conceptualisation and methodology.

The common denominator in these pastoral and academic arguments is concern for theological legitimation. In Weberian terms legitimation is a process in which authority acquires moral meanings and institutions wielding this authority stand a better chance of running social activities according to their guidelines. Abandoning religious legitimation of the office also encroaches on theology, which undertakes this legitimation by constantly reformulating the applicability of religious codes to the real-life context of the church, the office and liturgy.[33] While our research empirically investigated the legitimation of theology of ministry among the group that applied it in their professional practice, the critics were from the group that evolves, analyses and evaluates these legitimations, that is academic theologians. This is not surprising, considering that the pastoral office, more especially its ritual tasks, represents the professional

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[32] Thus professionalism is mentioned as an important developmental theme in the policy memorandum of the Dutch Conference of Bishops, *Beleidsnota 'Meewerken in het pastoraat'*, Utrecht, SRKK, 1999, *Kerkelijke Documentatie* 121 27(1999), 337–376.
[33] J. van der Ven. *Ecclesiologie in context*. Kok, Kampen 1993, 124–126.

and public form of theology in modern society. Encroachment on the pastoral office is an encroachment on theology.

The legitimation problem of theology is manifested in diverse ways. In the social domain religious commitment and ecclesiastic ritual participation are drifting apart. One example is social institutions that employ 'spiritual caregivers', where one finds that typical clerical interests (missionary task, liturgical tasks, profiling of religious identity) are pushed into the background. The formal definition of this occupation in terms of worldview and spiritual care contains no religious reference or theological conceptualisation.[34] In the ecclesiastic domain the office as a theological category has undoubtedly become less meaningful, to the extent that believers wonder whether the theological distinction between clergy and laity is still relevant. Even enlightened definitions such as those of Vatican II, which speak of the church as 'the people of God' or in terms of a 'general priesthood', do not strike an emancipated, individualised public as relevant qualifications of their relationship to the church and their role in pastoral service. Finally, in the theological domain the office has likewise lost ground. The church's recognition of theological faculties as clerical training institutions and the concomitant government funding are jeopardised if there is no clear connection between theological studies and the ecclesiastic, pastoral profession. With secularisation and increasing cultural and religious interaction in society the question arises whether the 'canonical' link between church (religion), state (citizenship) and university (science) still has a claim to existence in the Netherlands, and whether Dutch theology courses should have a clerical basis.[35]

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[34] In a sense despite the facts. Although spiritual caregivers have a professional association, the post is only defined as that of 'spiritual caregiver' in a minority of formal employment contracts (43%). Less than a third of categorically employed pastors (30%) call themselves spiritual caregivers and a tiny minority of their fellow caregivers (11%) refer to them as such. Last but not least, a negligible minority (2%) of inmates or patients of care institutions can picture the post of spiritual caregiver. The term 'pastor' is used most often by members of the profession (35%) and their fellow caregivers (31%), and is also frequently used by inmates and patients (33%; *dominee* 34%). A. de Roy, D. Oenema, L. Neijmeijer & G. Hutsemaekers. *Beroep: geestelijk verzorger. Een verkennend onderzoek naar persoon, werk en werkplek van geestelijk verzorgers in de gezondheidszorg.* Trimbos Institute, Utrecht. 1997, 23–24. Also see H. Schilderman. Klinische pastorale competentie. In J. Körver (ed.) *Corrigerende ervaringen. Leren in klinische pastorale vorming. Bij het afscheid van Piet Zuidgeest.* Eindhoven, CVPE, 1998. 123–149.

[35] Thus J. van der Ven started a debate, in which he advocated subsuming theological faculties in a faculty of religious studies. J. Van der Ven. Theologie beoefenen in

These comments illustrate the close connection between the theological themes of church, sacrament and spirituality that we researched and the professional presence and function of the ritual profession. The moment this professional significance is questioned, the legitimacy of theology is also at issue. What challenges do such legitimation problems pose for the ritual profession in modern society? How can research in liturgical studies help to clarify and contend with these challenges? I will attempt to answer these questions by describing three challenges to the ritual profession of pastoral ministry: pragmatic innovation, liturgical hermeneutics and ritual expertise.

Challenge of pragmatic innovation

In another article in this volume I define liturgy as a dynamic structure of the dimensions of belonging, believing and ritualising. The afore-mentioned legitimisation problems may be seen as a gradual disintegration of these dimensions and their interrelationship in the professional frame of reference of pastoral ministry.[36] Liturgical practices become 'de-sacralised' to the extent that the element of belief disappears; they appear to become 'dis-embedded' to the extent that the dimension of belonging declines; and they are 'de-ritualised' to the degree that their modelling or 'script' characteristics vanish. These are not only academic theological problems; they also challenge the professional practice of pastors. They call for praxis-oriented studies to determine characteristics, causes and a resolution.

Pragmatic innovation of the ritual profession of pastoral ministry is needed because the ritual scenario in modern societies has changed dramatically. The changes are manifold and cannot be explained by just one study. One change is the decline of confessional monopolies. Though the phenomenon varies greatly around the world, in Western Europe ritual participation in the liturgies offered by mainline churches is decreasing. While liturgical practices in more or less orthodox communities survive as ritual niches, liturgy no longer seems to rely on unequivocal, culturally unquestioned spirituality. While this applies to the remaining ritual practices, it also offers opportunities for experimental rituality, as can be observed both inside and outside the established

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een faculteit voor religiewetenschappen. In *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*. 2002, 43, 244–267. Here: 244–245.

[36] See my article on the domain of liturgical studies in this volume, pp. 3–34.

churches in liberal, charismatic and sectarian communities. Another change in the ritual scenario is a result of increasing interreligious interaction. Contact with other religions is usually characterised by ritual variety. Ritual codes come to be understood as pluralistic, involving different signs and texts and using new metaphors that may appeal to established or new audiences. These different codes inevitably meet as soon as representatives of different religions mix and participate in each other's rituals, as is increasingly happening in rites of passage. Finally, a further change in the ritual scenario is the growth of secular ritual. There is a clear tendency for ritual to migrate from religious to secular contexts. Secular meanings may be integrated with church liturgies, while religious forms are secularised in public rituals outside the churches. In the first place ministry is no longer the ritual profession par excellence, as civil funeral services increasingly illustrate. Secondly, the actual religious denotations of ritual change: they disappear altogether, are toned down to address a pluralistic audience, are replaced by secular or humanistic alternatives or, conversely, are revived in 're-sourced', reborn or relived interpretations of religious confessions.

These manifold changes in the ritual scenario drastically affect the ritual profession: at least in principle, they present a professional opportunity to understand and adapt to change. Understanding the changed ritual scenario and adapting liturgy accordingly can be done from a pragmatic perspective. I use the term 'pragmatic' in a paradigmatic rather than a popular sense to emphasise the notion of liturgy as practice, that is, a coherent structure of purposive actions.[37] Liturgy is seen as a cohesive tissue of religious signs, texts, codes or metaphors that is not self-contained but depends on its capacity to generate meaning in ever changing contexts. This pragmatic view prompts questions such as when, why and how liturgical forms of meaning appear, become extinct or change, and what purposes these forms serve in different times and places. Pragmatism also explicitly regards the inherent purpose of

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[37] I use the term 'pragmatism' as defined by Thayer (1973, 227): "A theory of knowledge, experience, and reality maintaining: a) that thought and knowledge are biologically and socially evolved modes of adaptation to and control over experience and reality; b) that reality possesses a transitional character and that thought is a guide to the realisation and satisfaction of our interests and purposes; c) that all knowledge is evaluative of future experience and that thinking functions experimentally in anticipations of future experiences and consequences of actions—thus in organising conditions of future observations and experience." Thayer, H. S. (1973). *Meaning and action. A study of American pragmatism.* Indianapolis, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 227.

action as the art and skill of performing signs, reading texts, handling codes and employing metaphors, and adapting them to purposes that are pertinent to particular times and places. Pragmatism does not imply that one takes over new forms of meaning overnight, adapts uncritically to apparently relevant purposes, or simply adjusts liturgy to contextual requirements. What is does is to demonstrate, from both a reconstructive and a performative perspective, the interrelatedness of liturgical forms of meaning, what purpose they serve for participants, and the socio-cultural contexts in which liturgical forms and participants are embedded. Describing, comparing and explaining these diverse forms of liturgical meaning are among the challenges facing contemporary liturgists.

Challenge of liturgical hermeneutics

The next question concerns liturgical hermeneutics: how can the normative character of liturgical practice be safeguarded in the face of the legitimation problems of pastoral ministry?[38] Hermeneutics is the interpretation of forms of meaning. Hence liturgical hermeneutics entails understanding the religious signs and texts as they are ritually expressed in religious beliefs and practices. It is the study of practised values and norms that characterise religious and ecclesiastic codes in liturgy. It also explains the function of liturgical metaphors to enable us to give meaning to everyday issues. The study of liturgy investigates the continual reinterpretation of these forms of meaning as they are handed down in ritual canon and practised in forms comprehensible in modern times, embattled by problems of legitimation. Thus liturgical hermeneutics can be seen as a challenge to interpret the hermeneutic practice of liturgy itself.

The aforementioned changes in the ritual scenario prompt us to formulate this interpretive challenge in the following question: if one has to adapt to new liturgical settings, how does one set about it? One answer is the concept of ritual adaptation and its alternative strategies

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[38] Hermeneutic interpretation is one of the options to deal with normative ambiguity, along with, for instance, classical apologetics and conjectural criticism. The normative aspect should not be identified with justification but also implies explanatory functions. For a discussion of the empirical aspects of normativeness, see H. Schilderman (2004). Normative claims in pastoral ministry research. In: J. A. van der Ven & M. Scherer-Rath (eds). *Normativity and empirical research in theology*. Leiden/Boston, Brill. 225–249.

of assimilation and accommodation.[39] Ritual assimilation refers to the tendency of liturgy (here liturgical agents) to adapt its environment to its ritual. Ritual accommodation refers to a tendency of liturgy (here liturgical agents) to adapt its ritual to its environment. The theological grounds for argued choices between these strategies can be expected to cohere with views of pastoral ministry. Looking back on our research, four normative views are relevant: an orthodox, a communitarian, a personal and a religious view of ministry.

From an orthodox perspective, one could ask, first of all, whether any adaptation is planned, since orthodoxy in the envisaged sense implies a legalistic view of liturgy, which allows little scope for change. However, if adaptation is contemplated, it is likely to display characteristics of ritual assimilation. It will create enclaves of traditional spirituality, which the established ritual expresses and epitomises. Our research corroborates this assumption by revealing no positive relation between this perception of the office and different professionalisation attitudes. If ritual remains unchanged, professional innovation is hardly relevant. In other words, the professional enterprise does not concern ritual itself but is characterised by the officiants' organisational and rhetorical capacities to change the environment to create conditions for the ritual to flourish in new, sometimes even hostile settings. The communitarian answer to problems of legitimation is probably ritual accommodation. The theological emphasis on local needs that characterises a communitarian view of the office is likely to affect the public and cultic activities of ministry. This is substantiated—at least in principle—by the positive correlations we found between this particular view and a number of professionalisation attitudes. To tailor ritual to local needs in a hermeneutically valid way requires a professionally argued choice that takes into account contemporary understanding of the religious past.

The other two normative views are probably less outspoken with regard to adaptation. Whereas the personal view of the office is expressed exclusively in self-referential metaphors, the religious view seems likely to favour ritual accommodation. The functional emphasis on spiritual conditions and aims of the office correlated positively with several professionalisation attitudes, which suggests at least a basic

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[39] The distinction derives from Piaget's biological epistemology, in which adaptation (as distinct from organisation) is understood as an organism's innate capacity to adapt to its environment, either by changing aspects of the environment (assimilation) or by changing aspects of the organism itself (accommodation).

consciousness of professional performance in pastoral ministry. Future research in liturgical studies will have to determine the characteristics of ritual adaptation and its correlation with views of pastoral ministry.

Challenge of ritual expertise

Finally, liturgical practice implies a challenge to performance. Let me phrase the question about ritual expertise rhetorically: what expertise is necessary and sufficient to perform liturgy well? The question is rhetorical, since it puts into perspective the matter of legal and traditional authority that often features in Christian theology of ministry. Does one need any expertise at all to perform religious rituals? Traditional answers to this question emphasise authentic spirituality, institutional obedience and official competence. Though these qualifications imply certain social skills and personal attitudes, they do not in principle require the level of academic training that is still assumed in theological curricula.

However, in view of the aforementioned evaluative problem of reinterpreting the function of liturgy in the changed ritual scenarios in modern society, new questions about expertise have to be asked and answered. If one takes the need for ritual innovation seriously, the characteristics of the implied adaptation process must be observed, described and discussed. Its motives and consequences must be charted and critically measured against the requirements of hermeneutic interpretation. And since these interpretations differ from one time and place to another, they are subject to research as well. Unless one defines liturgical quality in static terms, notions of ritual participation, ritual perception and ritual appreciation require empirical, comparative research. Of what professional use is the study of liturgical forms of meaning if one does not study the reception of ritual signs, the actual understanding of liturgical texts, the attitudes towards religious codes, the perceived relevance of sacred metaphors? At present we simply don't know how liturgies are experienced, and even if we were to seek an answer in the pastoral expertise that has been built up in liturgical routines, this would still not offer insight into liturgy from the participants' perspective.

There is no direct link between empirical research in liturgical studies and training programmes for liturgical performance. One can argue, however, that research is a condition for understanding professional issues in liturgical performance, and that the acquired knowledge

increases understanding of the requisite skills. Hence this article concludes with an example of a formal approach to ritual expertise and the type of skills that are needed.

In a widely known definition the anthropologist Geertz describes religion in a way that pinpoints distinct characteristics of liturgical practice as well.[40] Religion, according to him, is "a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic". Geertz's definition can be applied to liturgy as the public and cultic expression of religion, and we can use it to identify basic skills for ritual expertise.

Firstly, it calls for skills that reflect attitudes of a general order of existence and apply these in the face of the chaos that people experience. The skills that are required are communicative and rhetorical. Expertise is needed to comfort and challenge, but not without due differentiation of the vicissitudes of daily life. It is in the face of these brutal contingencies that convictions flourish. Without this art of identifying the ultimate in common reality liturgy is likely to become repetitious and dull.

Secondly, skills are needed to apply forms of meaning that fit general attitudes to the reality that people experience. Here expertise at encoding is crucial. Signs and texts have to be represented in appropriate ways, following established liturgical codes while referring to actual frames of reference that reflect the idiosyncrasies of daily life. This applies even more to metaphors, which also have the capacity to encode but are far more effective for triggering the decoding process in participants. The type of expertise needed is semiotic inasmuch as it seeks to reconstruct the forms of meaning implied in liturgy, and hermeneutic inasmuch as it seeks to facilitate processes of interpreting these forms.

Thirdly, expertise is needed to clarify the moods and motivations aroused by the forms of meaning and their enactment. Here skills are needed to deal with the emotions that are inherently connected with good liturgy. It calls for insight into the function of emotions in general and into the specific emotional dispositions that affect people's

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[40] Geertz, C. (1968). Religion as a cultural system. In: D. Cutler (ed.) *The world yearbook of religion. The religious situation*, vol. I. London, Beacon Press. 639–688.

participation in, and perception of, liturgy. Expertise is also required to differentiate and correlate the different ritual roles in liturgy, as they imply processes of transference and counter transference that may be either conducive or detrimental to good liturgical practice. This expertise is basically therapeutic, taking into account that ritual may be experienced positively or negatively.

Fourthly, a basic liturgical skill is ortho-practical in that it directs the aroused moods and motivations to action tendencies. These practical consequences of liturgy ultimately answer the question whether liturgy is a self-contained meaning system or has pragmatic relevance for the practice of faith beyond its ritual expression. This skill is basically ethical: it requires insight into the values that guide action and the norms that make these values obligatory, and the prudence to relate these norms to the specific requirements of action in varying situations.

Finally there is the performative aspect of ritual, which enacts the attitudes of a general order of existence, the forms of meaning that refer to that order, the emotions that reinforce the perception of these forms, and the moral orientations flowing from these forms of meaning. This skill is basically performative, that is, it puts into effect, carries out and displays a series of actions, and in so doing discharges an official obligation. However, one should not mix up the simple fact of enactment with the expertise needed to clarify the processes of ritual decoding and encoding implicit in liturgical performance. A performance is not necessarily an accomplishment, since it begs the question of competence that arises whenever ritual succeeds or fails.

These five skills are merely samples of the types of skills required for ritual expertise in liturgical practice. But whatever skills one chooses as examples, one can still ask whether any ritual expertise is needed at all. There is a strong anthropological tradition which holds that ritual is basic expressive action and cannot be defined in terms of inherent conditions or purposes, let alone professional ones. However, if one acknowledges a need for ongoing hermeneutic interpretation of liturgical adaptation to changing ritual scenarios, one can hardly deny the need for ritual expertise. This article was written in response to that need.

PART THREE

HERMENEUTIC PERSPECTIVES

FROM RITUAL TO HERMENEUTICS
AN EXPLORATION WITH ETHICAL INTENT

Jean-Pierre Wils

1   APOLOGIA

The study of ritual does not lie on the main line of my travels in cultural history. I am neither a specialist in ritual nor a liturgist. Yet nothing prevents an ethicist with an interest in hermeneutics from branching off onto side track that leads into the territory of ritual studies as one of its destinations. For rituals, like moral norms, are standardized and prescriptive sets of behaviours. Despite some major differences—rituals are primarily symbolic actions, while ethics is about real actions, and rituals thus have a referential character that moral actions do not necessarily possess—ethicists can learn a great deal from specialists in ritual. But—to remain within the foregoing metaphor—on the terrain of ritual I become a traveller on foot, a slow and wondering observer of the trains rushing past in quick succession. The high-speed locomotive of ritual studies is one that I know only from the outside and the methodological instruments that its engineers must master as a matter of course are closed books to me. Which brings us to the subject of hermeneutics…

2.   WHAT IS A "RITUAL"?

Before turning to the topic some definitions are in order. First, we will need at least a working definition of what a ritual is. Rituals exist in nearly all spheres of life, and are by no means exclusive to the areas of religion or the sacred. So, although religious rituals are the privileged object of ritual studies, a sufficiently formal definition seems indicated. The renowned ritualist Roy A. Rappaport summarizes the essence of ritual as "the performance of more or less invariant sequences of

formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers".[1] A few comments on this definition are in order.

As Rappaport points out, rituals are performative in nature; they are events. They not only refer to something, but they enact it; they cause that something to happen. They are also highly invariant, which means that they are repetitive in nature and are expected to meet the standards set by past performances. They are surprisingly resistant to intervention in their sequence of events and in their scenic repertoire. As for their content, rituals consist of actions as well as utterances, both of which are formalized. Formalized in this case means that as a rule the occasion, the time, the location and so on of their performance are precisely established, and that those who perform the ritual have little personal input into codifying or establishing it. On the contrary: the ritual is characterized to a very large degree by being supra-temporal in the sense that its subjects neither know nor necessarily want to know when the ritual first began. The periodicity of ritual performance means that in the perception of their participants, rituals are experienced as perpetually present and thus also perpetually valid. The reasons for creating a ritual can be varied, but always they are significant experiences that concern not the individual as such but the individual as part of a collective that is either undergoing the same experiences or at least is affected by them. Consequently a "private ritual" is a contradiction in terms.

As for hermeneutics, let us content ourselves with a simple definition: Hermeneutics is the theory and the method of the interpretation of texts or of linguistic documents. Hermeneutics concerns itself with analysing the meaning of such texts and documents. The relationship between ritual-oriented culture and interpretation-oriented culture, and the tensions underlying this relationship, will be the focus of the remainder of this paper. My approach will be mainly commentative, and will be based largely on the ideas put forward by two important authors who have written about the role of ritual and interpretation.

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[1] R. A. Rappaport, Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity, Cambridge 1999, 24.

3   No religion without ritual

An unconventional thesis about the relation between ritual and religion was developed by the Czech-Brazilian Jew Vilém Flusser in two essays entitled "Judentum als Ritualisierung" and "Jude sein". At the centre of his reflection is not only Judaism, which is often characterized as a highly ritualized religion, but also the specific function of ritual in the context of religion per se. Although one might object at this point that such an abstract approach fails to do justice to actual religion or to actual ritual, Flusser does shed an extraordinarily interesting light on one *constant* function among the many that rituals serve.

According to Flusser, participation in ritual lies at the core of all religions and of Judaism in particular. Ritual thus is not merely in important aspect of religious performance or religious existence, but nothing less than *religion itself*. Bypassing ritual means bypassing religion as such, and religions without well developed rituals are thus not real religions at all. Above all it is the "myth of origin" that is preserved by the religion that is repeated again and again in ritual. This myth concerns the origin of the religion, not necessarily the origin of the world, although in many religions the two are practically indistinguishable. In ritual, the origin—that which occurred "*in illo tempore*" (Mircea Eliade)—takes places over and over again. "Myths are revelations of the hidden. In them appears that which is veiled, the holy."[2] In the cyclical rhythm of rituals the truth of the myth is revealed again and again. The origin of the religion is made visible—literally—as a still living presence. But this revelation, this being made visible, is ambivalent: In the ritual, the origin remains hidden at the same time as it is made visible. More important than its mere visibility, therefore, is the partaking in the origin, which occurs in the mode of participation in the ritual. Flusser calls this participation a partaking in the divine, in the sacred. *The hiddenness of the sacred shows itself in the participation in the ritual*. This is the somewhat paradoxical statement by which this complex relationship might be summed up.

Flusser goes further, though, and argues that the person who *truly* participates in the ritual and who *realizes* the myth of origin in the presence of the sacred is *not* focussed, in *intention recta* as it were, on the myth

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[2] V. Flusser, "Judentum als Ritualisierung", in: Jude sein. Essays, Briefe, Fiktionen, Mannheim 1996, 87–93, 88.

or the origin narrative. On the contrary, the ritual virtually prevents consciousness of the myth *as such*. *Rituals keep reflection at bay*, so that performance is not disrupted. Rituals, Flusser contends, are only *true* rituals when they have become "conditioned reflexes".[3] As soon as we talk *about* them and *they* no longer exert their unquestioned objectivity over us, they become objects of reflection and loose their *performative validity*. Because of the identity that Flusser postulates between ritual and religion, when participation in the ritual becomes an object of questioning, then the power of religion too is questioned. When ritual is gone, then so is religion. For, as Flusser argues, the reflexive standpoint is always also an ironic one, and irony is fatal to ritual and hence also to religion. In other words: once deconstruction has begun, construction is no longer possible. Flusser does not shy away from radical statements in this regard. "Ignorance of the mythical character of the religion", he writes, "ignorance in the sense of 'I know nothing' and 'I don't want to know', is a sign of the authenticity of faith."[4]

That statement is of course irritating in the extreme. Flusser maintains that ritual holds back, as it were, potential insight into religious matters. The performing of ritual prevents the participants from adopting a reflexive attitude toward their religion, and the ritual destroys itself when the experiential richness of the ritual is no longer enough to overpower any tendencies to such reflection. At the portal that gives access to the inner sanctum of religion, ritual stands as a gatekeeper of faith keeping out the unwanted visitors of critical thought. Some might call this line of reasoning the wishful thinking of the fundamentalist. On the one hand we have the *pure* consciousness of the person living the sacred in the ritual and experiencing the collective performance of the ritual as the agent that binds the community together—*orthodoxy through action*. On the other hand stands reflection with its cascading mirrors and questionings which—by creating distance between the reflecting observer-participant and the performance—edges the presence of the sacred out of the ritual and strikes at the very heart of the religion itself. This is what might be called *heterodoxy through reflection*. One might conclude from this that Flusser is nostalgic for a golden age of religious practitioners not wracked by reflection-induced doubts, an

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[3] Ibid., 90.
[4] Ibid., 88.

age in which religious performance was still unclouded and its subjects still untroubled by the urge to think.

4   Ritual—"Paradigm Lost"

Flusser, however, is far from being a fundamentalist in his thinking. He does not want to go back to the past and nurtures no desire to turn away from the present and future. He claims that he himself is no longer familiar with most of the Jewish festivals and consequently most of the rituals of his religion. In any case a return to the past is no longer possible. Our culture has already long since accorded reasons and arguments at least equal status with rituals. The myths have been probed and deliberated, their validity made dependent on the cogency of their premises, and so the rituals that enact these myths are part of an irretrievable past. Myth and with it the sacred have departed from our lives.

Rituals naturally still have a role to play in the context of religious praxis. But ritual is not what it used to be. It is worthwhile turning to Flusser once more to see what really happens when ritual is beset by reflection. "From that moment on", writes Flusser, "the participant knows that he is performing, and the myth evaporates. The actions of the participant in the celebration are transformed from rituals into gestures, and the content of the performance may be aesthetic or ethical, but not religious…The transformation of the religious celebration into a theatrical performance, of the ritual act into a theatrical gesture, is not reversible. As soon as religious innocence is lost, the myth as such unveiled, then, no matter how hard we try and how much piety we practice, the belief and the feeling of what Heidegger called *Behaustsein*, of 'having a home', can never be regained."[5]

As soon as the participant in the ritual reflects on himself or on the ritual, the ritual takes on something of the nature of a theatrical performance. The participant becomes an actor. This has nothing to do with insincerity or simulation. Anyone who questions the meaning of the ritual is also questioning the ritual itself. The ritual becomes not only the object of reflection, but also the object of criticism of its form, its formal and stylistic qualities. In other words the ritual becomes

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[5] Ibid., 69/92.

aestheticized. It is subsumed into a new, *secondary* performance overlying the original one, in which the form of the ritual has taken precedence over its content, which consists of the presentation of the sacred and the affirmation of the myth. In the aestheticization of ritual, as in the aestheticization of other activities, there is a shift of attention from content to form and style: Only through a highly developed stylistic will, through concentration on the form, does the content become more or less visible or experienceable. Of course even the simplest, the most primordial ritual has form and is enriched by style, but we can speak of aestheticization when form and style begin to dominate. Max Weber's view of the attitude of the intellectual toward religion in general applies also to the attitude toward ritual: For fear of being accused of clinging to tradition for the sake of tradition, the intellectual turns to the aesthetic qualities of religion. This often goes so far that the aesthetic interest turns its back entirely on the orthodoxy of faith and on the power of ritual as a revelation of the sacred.

Nor does the ethicization of ritual offer a way out. While it is certainly possible to inquire into the power of ritual to strengthen humanitarian values, to do so would be to functionalise ritual. For ritual is not primarily about ethics, but rather about sacrality. Only on the heels of the holy, only in a semantics still bound by the narrativity of myth, can morality be articulated *in* ritual. But to misunderstand ritual as a vessel of moral proclamation is to be deceived—about the nature of ritual as well as about the nature of morality.

Flusser's remark that there is no returning to ritual innocence, that the process is irreversible, gives pause. Not only does this statement represent the exact opposite of the fundamentalist idea, but at the same time it marks the sorrow that surrounds the reflection on ritual. In an age of permanent reflection—and what is modernity but precisely that?—ritual no longer stands a chance in its original world of religious experience. In a culture in which, as Wilke put it, festivals are converted to flux, structures of fixed terms of reference to processes of recursive self-reference, ontologies of what is true to deontologies ofwhat is right,[6] ritual's resistance to change, with its ascendancy of repetition over novelty, its preference for the exemplary over the

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[6] H. Wilke, Atopia. Studien zur atopischen Gesellschaft, Frankfurt a.M. 2001, 237.

innovative, is an alien element, an irritant. Modernity appears to be an age unreceptive to ritual.

5 THE BURDEN OF IRONY

The word "irony" has already been uttered. Beyond Flusser's claim that reflection is always associated with irony, irony has indeed been called an epochal characteristic of modernity. In the famous *Athenaeum* fragment 108, Friedrich Schlegel said of irony: "*In ihr soll alles Scherz und alles Ernst sein, alles treuherzig offen und alles tief verstellt. Sie entspringt aus der Vereinigung von Lebenskunstsinn und wissenschaftlichem Geist, aus dem Zusammentreffen vollendeter Naturphilosophie und vollendeter Kunstphilosophie. Sie enthält und erregt ein Gefühl von dem unauflöslichem Widerstreit des Unbedingten und des Bedingten, der Unmöglichkeit und Notwendigkeit einer vollständigen Mitteilung* [In irony, everything is supposed to be both jest and sincerity, everything naively open and deeply dissimulated. Irony arises from the merging of a feeling for the art of living and scientific spirit, the coming together of perfect philosophy of nature and a perfect philosophy of art. It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication]."[7] The fragments came into being shortly before the beginning of the 19th century. The Enlightenment, it seems, had left as its legacy not only a critical view of the ideological stock of pre-modernity, but also the oft described and oft lamented experience that all has become flux and instability. Schlegel's diagnosis concentrates on pairs of opposites, and the bringing together of that which is not readily reconciled—sincerity and jest, life and science, nature and art, the absolute and the relative. In each case, the first term of each pair is the one that was typical of ritual and religion—something that could be designated abstractly as *positionality* or as *unquestioningness*.

On the other side is the opposite: jest as the ability to distance oneself, science as criticism, art as the world of the secondary, the relative as knowledge of the difference from the absolute. This second attitude might be called, with Helmuth Plessner, "*exzentrische Positionalität*", or a *standpoint with no fixed point of reference*. In this attitude, says Plessner, the

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[7] F. Schlegel, Kritische Fragmente, Fragment 108, in: Werke I, Berlin/Weimar 1980, 163–186, 181.

human being stands "behind himself"",[8] reflecting on and thereby upsetting his own positionality, and *he can do no other*. The analytical spirit, which dissects and often also corrodes, triumphs. Even presenting the pairs of opposites together is ironic, for where neither complete sincerity nor mere (cynical) distance prevails, and the two are presented as one, irony reins. Irony could be seen as the most honest expression of the new age, an admission that under the new conditions of subjectivity, characterized by the emphasis on self-reflection and the normativity of the individual, reconciliation of the infinite with the finite is no longer feasible. Here indeed we can say, with Wolfgang Schluchter, that a revolution, or more precisely a transformation from within,[9] has taken place.

The series of those who identify irony as a characteristic of modernity goes on. There is no overlooking Søren Kierkegaard, whose treatise "The Concept of Irony", published little more than half a century after Schlegel, contains a sharp condemnation of its object. Kierkegaard calls irony "absolute negativity". To its subject, reality has become "foreign": "For the ironist, the given reality has become entirely invalid; it has become to him an imperfect form that has become tiresome in every respect…The ironist has stepped outside the ranks of his own time, and has taken a stand against it." In irony, Kierkegaard says, there is only the "enthusiasm of destruction".[10] Here too one can say that irony is the expression of a certain 'homelessness', a dissolution of the societal and even the cosmic life structures that leaves the subject to his own devices. The ironist has neither past nor future, for both would be associated with a project, an "idea". Lacking any ties that bind beyond the now, he has only the present. He participates in nothing—except in the knife edge of the present. Seen thus, rituals could also be called *irony avoidance mechanisms*. In them people enter into, or have always been bound by, deep connections. This becomes especially clear when we turn to the next 'witness' to irony.

Thomas Mann—like Flusser after him—explicitly established a link between myth and irony. Myth, said Mann, was once "*die Legitimation*

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    [8] H. Plessner, Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch, in: Gesammelte Schriften IV, Frankfurt a.M., 1981, 364.
    [9] W. Schluchter, Die Entstehung der bürgerlichen Lebensführung. Max Webers Modell, in: Unversöhnte Moderene, Frankfurt a.M. 1996, 186–199, 190.
    [10] S. Kierkegaard, Über den Begriff der Ironie, in: Auswahl aus dem Gesamtwerk, edited by E. Hirsch, Wiesbaden 1964, 65ff.

des Lebens",[11] encompassing all of its aspects and giving a home to all of them. In myth, and in ritual as the performance of myth, the temptation of what might be called the 'quoted life' appears to have been at work, the seduction of leading life as imitation, as a following-in-the-tracks, as identification: an identification with the "*Urzeit, jener Brunnentiefe der Zeiten, wo der Mythos zu Hause ist und die Urnormen, die Urformen des Lebens gründen* [a primordial time, that well-depth of the ages where myth lives and where the primordial norms, the primordial forms of life have their origin]."[12] That primordial time, however, is long gone. Today, says Mann, the mythical realization has its place in the observer, not the observed. Subjective perception therefore predominates and that perception is what Mann calls "*ein ironisch überlegener Blick*",[13] an ironically superior gaze.

Another prominent witness in this regard is Octavio Paz. Paz confronts irony, again viewed as the signature of modernity, with 'analogy'. Whereas analogy was at home in a world in which correspondences and similarities prevailed and all strived toward unity, irony announced the end of this capacity for comprehensive synthesis, the end of the age of analogy. The world is no longer fixed and it can no longer be decoded and symbolized along a series of references. Paz too warns that the return to analogy and thus to the reign of myth and ritual has become impossible. "Irony and analogy are irreconcilable. The first is the child of linear, sequential and unrepeatable time; the second is the manifestation of cyclical time: the future is in the past, and both are in the present." Analogy belongs to the time of myth; it is the foundation of myth; irony on the other hand belongs to historic time; it is the consequence of history (and the consciousness of it). "Irony is the wound through which analogy bleeds to death."[14] It would be difficult to state the diagnosis with greater clarity or precision. Anyone who still strives for participation in a world sated with sense and meaning,

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[11] Th. Mann, Die Einheit des Menschengeistes. Reden und Aufsätze Bd. I, Frankfurt a.M. 1965, 395.

[12] Th. Mann, Freud und die Zukunft, in: Essays, Bd. III, Musik und Philosophie, edited by H. Kurzke, Frankfurt a. M. 1976, 173–192, 184f.

[13] Ibid., 126. Cf. J.-P. Wils, Ästhetische Güte. Philosophisch-theologische Studien zu Mythos und Leiblichkeit im Verhältnis von Ethik und Ästhetik, Munich 1990, 105–161.

[14] O. Paz, Analogy and Irony, in: Children of the Mire. Modern Poetry from Romanticism to the Avant-Garde, translated by Rachel Phillips. Cambridge 1974, 58–77, 74.

in which myth and ritual as one attested to the oneness of all things, is under an illusion—the illusion of what Hans Blumenberg called the straightforward "readability of the world".

Neither auto-suggestion with its tendency to construct an illusory world from the refusal to acknowledge loss, nor the permanent state of mourning for that which has been lost, are helpful in coming to terms with the new place of myth and ritual. The metaphor of the "readability of the world", however, sets us on another trail that we will shortly pursue—that of hermeneutics. But Octavio Paz himself has already pointed us in this direction. Continuing his line of reasoning about the turn away from analogy, he declares, "Irony shows that if the universe is a script, each translation of this script is different, and that the concert of correspondences is the gibberish of Babel...The universe, says irony, is not a script; if it were, its signs would be incomprehensible for man".[15] This brings us to hermeneutics. But before we proceed, let us recapitulate what has been said so far.

Looking back, Flusser's thesis could be paraphrased as: Ritual is the praxis of religion. Performance of the ritual guarantees the presence of the holy. For this to be so, the unreflected acceptance of the validity of the ritual is essential. Only in the unquestioning repetition that takes place according to pre-reflexive rules and that must neither problematize its content nor be at the mercy of critical doubts, does ritual fulfil its function, which is to keep alive the currency of myth and suppress the distancing attitude of reflection. As soon as the objectivity of the ritual becomes an object of reflexive inquiry, the aestheticization of its form and the problematization of its content begin. Irony is the signal, as it were, of the decline of ritual. The embrace of the ironic participant or observer infects the core of the religion with the poison of doubt. "*Mit der Ironie ist durchaus nicht zu scherzen*", admonished Schlegel admonished; "irony is nothing to laugh about."[16]

6   FROM RITUAL TO HERMENEUTICS

Vilém Flusser's thesis that religion *is* ritual is of course highly susceptible to criticism and challenge. To a large extent this has to do with the

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[15] Ibid.
[16] F. Schlegel, Über die Unverständlichkeit, in: Werke II, Berlin/Weimar 1980, 197–211, 208.

near absence of any definition of key concepts. Neither "myth" nor
"the sacred" are explicitly defined and, what is worse, the concept of
ritual itself remains undeveloped. Nevertheless, that the decline of ritual
is profoundly rooted in the culture of modernity is something we all
sense. That permanent reflection and its institutionalization in science
and academia can weaken and has weakened, nearly to the death, ritual
participation in the affirming myths with which religions establish their
truth claims, is beyond doubt. Octavio Paz's coordinating thesis that the
decline of analogy has brought with it the end of the readability of the
world as a universe rich in references and correspondences, so that
the text of things cannot be decoded without outside help—without the
help of what I would call "hermeneutics"—takes us a step further.
This complementary thesis might be summed up in the words "from
ritual to hermeneutics".

    A most remarkable debate is currently under way in which a flanking
claim, as it were, is being elaborated. That claim is that the transition
"from ritual to hermeneutics" is a caesura in cultural history that is
practically irrevocable. While this caesura does not occur in all cultures,
and in those where it does occur it does not occur at the same time by
any means, the process, when it does take place, is nevertheless highly
dramatic. The debate to which I refer is the debate about the forms
of cultural memory initiated by the Heidelberg Egyptologist Jan Ass-
mann. Assmann's basic premise is that every culture needs to ensure
its own coherence and permanence and that it does this by means of
what he calls "connective structure". Connective structure comprises
three aspects: a "reference to the past" through "remembrance", the
creation of "identity" through "political imagination", and "cultural
continuation" through "tradition-building". All of this takes place along
two dimensions: a social and a temporal one. Cultures must be able
to offer their members a socially compatible *Lebensraum* by providing
"directions" on how to live. And they must keep the past alive as a
formative experiential time by providing access to mythical and histori-
cal narratives as forms of remembrance.

    The formative principle of what Assmann calls connectivity, or the
cohesiveness of a culture, however, is "repetition". Whatever the inmates
a culture do, their "lines of action" must not be lost in singularity or
become "dispersed in the infinite", but must be in some way compat-
ible. A certain regularity must be discernible, a pattern that weaves the
individual actions into a meaningful, understandable and clearly laid
out whole. Assmann refers in this connection to "ritual coherence". It

is based on the (stylized) repetition of the founding experiences that underlie the identity of the culture, but also on the "*Vergegenwärtigung*", the "representation", of those experiences. The two are not the same, although they are closely related. Whereas in repetition there is a stronger focus on the formative power of the ritual as such, representation or "represented memory" has to do with the "interpretation of tradition". Compared with Flusser, who concentrates almost exclusively on the first aspect of ritual, namely its power to form through repetition, Assmann targets both. But he too proposes a thesis characterized by a tension between shifting poles:

> All rituals have this dual aspect of repetition and representation. The more strictly they follow an established order, the more the aspect of repetition predominates. The greater the freedom they accord to the individual execution, the more the aspect of representation emerges into the foreground. These two poles define the span of a dynamic within which text becomes an increasingly important part of the connective structure of cultures. In connection with the textualization of traditional accounts, there is a gradual transition from the dominance of repetition to the dominance of representation, from 'ritual' to 'textual' coherence, and a new connective structure is created. Its connective forces are not imitation and preservation, but interpretation and remembrance. Liturgy is replaced with hermeneutics.[17]

Of course something of a compromise between the dominance of ritual and the primacy of interpretation also exists, and that is the ritualization of the use of text, as we know it from the liturgies of so-called high religions. But that too is a transitional phase. In the long run the sacredness of the text cannot defend itself from interpretation that no longer feels obliged to make the meaning of the text subordinate to the sacred authority of the letter. In this case too, the ascent of hermeneutics begins.

Before we look more closely at this thesis, it is important to introduce another central concept used by Assmann, that of the "canon". By establishing a canon, says Assmann, a culture seeks to strengthen its connective structure, to increase its "temporal resistance and invariance". "Canon is the 'mémoire volontaire' of a society, the remem-

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[17] J. Assmann, Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen, Munich 1997, 17f.

brance owed".[18] One could also say that the canon on which a society establishes its practice of remembrance represents a pruning of the possibilities of remembrance, a limitation of the multiplicity of potential objects of remembrance. What a culture remembers in its canon is decided neither by the whim of the individual nor by the free choice of a group. Because *this* memory is not freely chosen, the it might more fittingly be called "mémoire *in*volontaire" than Assmann's "mémoire volontaire". We shall return to the role of the canon shortly.

First, though, we turn back to the thesis that forms Assmann's starting point. It is important to note that it is a statement about *cultural morphology*. Assmann is of course deeply interested in the phenomenology of ritual and hermeneutics, but his primary focus is on the ways in which cultures are ritual-oriented or hermeneutics-oriented in order to safeguard their connective structure. Another important aspect—and in this Assmann differs from Flusser—concerns the interwovenness of the two orientations. Assmann is concerned not so much with either ritual or interpretation, but rather with the connective structure, and ritual and interpretation are both forms of safeguarding connectivity, albeit with different emphasis. *All* rituals include mechanisms of repetition and representation, but it is the differences in the relative emphasis of these mechanisms that lead to the taking of different evolutionary paths: where repetition is emphasized, ritual coherence predominates; where representation is emphasized, textual coherence becomes the most important aspect. One could say that the canon, or rather the formation of the canon, is the attempt to shift the highest possible degree of repetition to the interpretive orientation. In this case, although the representation of the origins is part of the process of interpretation, interpretation itself is limited to a finite catalogue of texts and to normative rules of interpretation.

Behind this position is the view that cultures must normally relax their ritual coherence at some point so as to move toward textual coherence and with it the adoption of the less restrictive methods of interpretation. At the beginning of every culture is the ceremonial ritual, the ritual enactment of the foundational experiences to which the culture owes its identity. Ritual is the "primary organizational form of cultural memory".[19] The collective assembles around the periodic ceremonial

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[18] Ibid., 18.
[19] Ibid., 56.

performance of this act of memory. With the phase of the textualiza-
tion of this memorialization, however, a different structure emerges.
Although the transitions and branchings between ritual and text are
many and complex, the radicality of this shift is not to be underesti-
mated. Here I will point to only a few important aspects.

The performance of ritual is periodic and fixed. It is always a collec-
tive that participates in the ritual, although the ritual may be performed
by only one person. The repetition that characterizes ritual avoids,
wherever possible, any significant modification of order and rhythm.
Rituals are highly change-resistant. To modify them too much is to
destroy them. This is not the case, however, for textualization and the
accompanying praxis of interpretation. I emphasize again that the
transitions are fluid and not clear-cut, but nevertheless interpretation
does create something that is essentially new. As soon as memory takes
on a written form, that form is, as a general principle, accessible at
any time. Text is always available. The reader of the text, meanwhile,
is ultimately always an individual, although there are of course also
forms of collective reading, as for example during religious instruc-
tion. The articulation of the text does however have an individual
signature, whereas this individuality is not a consideration in ritual.
Every articulation and every reading of text already contains a subtle
interpretation. The mental representation of the text in itself makes
such interpretation practically inescapable. And with interpretation,
an element of irreducible modification, of alteration of the content
of the text, is introduced.

The following question that Assmann poses concerning the central
content of any form of safeguarding of cultural memory must there-
fore be answered with an unconditional yes: "The question however is
whether this meaning on which the connective structure of a society is
based did not have a significantly stronger and more secure vessel in the
rituals than in the texts…The texts are only a riskier form of mean-
ing transmission, because they at the same time offer the possibility of
moving the meaning out of the circulation and communication, which
cannot be done with ritual."[20] Textualization does indeed constitute
a kind of caesura, from which point on the transmission of meaning
becomes more perilous. The formation of the canon is an important

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[20] Ibid., 90.

part of this process, for it is with the establishment of the canon that textualization becomes a *real* caesura.

I noted earlier that there are many transitional stages between ritual coherence and textual coherence, such as the ritualization of the reading of texts. Assmann very accurately observes that not *every* form of textualization must immediately trigger the process of interpretation. Important in this regard is the difference between 'sacred' and 'canonical' texts. "A sacred text is a kind of linguistic temple, a representation of the holy through the medium of the voice. The sacred text requires no interpretation, only ritually protected recitation with careful observance of the rules as to place, time, cleanliness and the like. A canonical text on the other hand embodies the normative and formative values of a community, the 'truth'. These texts seek to be taken to heart, followed, and turned into a living reality. This requires not so much recitation as interpretation…Therefore the interaction between canonical texts and addressees requires a third party, the interpreter, who steps between the text and the addressee and releases the normative and formative impulses locked up in the surface of the text."[21]

The formation of the canon is essentially a paradoxical act. On the one hand it constitutes a selection of and hence a limitation on the texts that are *normative* for a culture. Not everything can be part of the canon. On the contrary—the majority of texts are not included. Frequently, therefore, it is the sacred texts that are first designated as canonical. Yet it would be better to speak of the *formerly* sacred texts, for their canonization sets off a process that will, over time, undermine their sacredness, for hand in hand with canonization goes the need for interpretation. And it does not take a great deal of imagination to see how the process of interpreting the sacred texts also secularizes them, for now they are accessible at all times, can be read anywhere and, as a general rule, by anyone. Canonization leads to the very thing for which hermeneutics is regularly purported to be responsible: the *democratization* of the interpretation of the text.

Of course the process of canon formation also applies to the rituals themselves. In this case the canon stands for a tradition that demands a high degree of fixedness and invariability with regard to its cultic-religious practices. Yet as soon as canonization is applied to a selection of texts, this initial invariability that is supposed to safeguard the

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[21] Ibid., 94f.

sacredness of the origins and the representation thereof, is inevitably gradually dissolved in a process magnified by the scarcity of interpretations and competent interpreters: Energies that will *vary* the meaning of the text creep in during the process of interpretation, for no text is without ambiguity. This process is accelerated as the pace of change of the culture as a whole increases, as the life choices of its members become increasingly variable and new, and as non-exemplary elements appear on the horizon with increasing frequency. In such a cultural situation the ritual canon is subjected to huge pressures, which in some cases will be enough to cause it to collapse in on itself. But the textual canon too is not spared by these changes. At some point the idea of being subject to a canon of any kind becomes tiresome. Or, as Assmann puts it: "*Wer sich einem Kanon unterwirft, verzichtet damit auf die kasuistische Flexibilität lavierenden Handelns zu verschiedenartigen Situationen* [He who subordinates himself to a canon thereby foregoes the casuistic flexibility of adaptive manoeuvrability in response to different kinds of situations]".[22]

Much remains to be said about the sense and necessity of canon formation. Particularly in times of stepped up text production and the concomitant increase in text consumption, the whole issue of the canon is more pertinent than ever. Efforts to re-establish a canon of world literature, for example, are under way on all sides. It appears that there do exist *necessary* texts, texts that, in terms of both their form and their content, set normative standards. But the fact alone that the canon has become an object of deconstruction and reconstruction illustrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that we reserve for ourselves the "casuistic flexibility of adaptive manoeuvrability". For ritual, even more so than for hermeneutics, which is by nature attuned to variance and multiplicity of meaning, the age of unquestioning reception and undisputed authority appears to be long gone.

7. Ritual *or* Hermeneutics?

If the two positions commented on here are to be believed, the age of ritual *is indeed* over. Naturally one would expect a paper on ritual to arrive at a positive conclusion about the role of ritual. Yet I must

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[22] Ibid., 126.

admit that I am sympathetic to the positions of Flusser and Assmann, as different as these two authors are in their initial premises and their intent. At the same time it would be rash indeed to speak of a *general* disappearance of ritual.[23] Such cannot be said to be the case either worldwide or in the Western cultures. Nonetheless, when the positions of these two authors are viewed in relation to each other, it is evident that both are correct on several significant points.

First of all, it is difficult to argue with Assmann's reconstruction of cultural history which shows that *we* no longer maintain the cohesiveness of our culture *primarily* through "ritual coherence". I emphasize the word *primarily*. Clearly, numerous rituals still exist even in our own culture. They can be observed and participated in on state occasions, at major sporting events and as part of religious ceremonies. Even so, we need to be cautious about applying the word "ritual" to what goes on in all of these instances. By Roy A. Rappaport's definition, some of these performances are *no longer* or *not yet* rituals. And many of them take place in what might be called cultural niches—in the religious niches, or in the fossilized and largely decorative realm of royal protocol. There is a reason why the word ritual is often used in the expression "empty ritual", for working rituals depend on appropriate cultural representativeness, on rootedness in the lives and the hearts of the people, a meaningful and evidential basis in their real worldview. Much of what we call "ritual" in everyday speech is really no more than a habit or convention that by no means fulfills the criteria that make up Rappaport's definition. It is wise not to use too broad a definition. If ritual is too vaguely characterized, then virtually everything becomes a ritual. Naturally even people in what might be called 'enlightened' cultures like their actions and convictions to be clothed in a certain public status, but these only rarely achieve the level of real ritual.

Many rituals, especially those of religious provenance, today are subjected to modifications or interventions by their participants. A simple example can be found in the many attempts to update the Catholic rites after Vatican II. These attempts have largely failed. Evidently rituals can survive interventions in their course and coding only if these are kept to a minimum. The precarious equilibrium and the complex

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[23] Two books that report on the continuing creative power of ritual are T. F. Driver, Liberating Rites. Understanding the Transformative Power of Ritual (Boulder/Oxford 1998) and E. B. Anderson et al. (eds.), Liturgy and the Moral Self (Collegeville 1998). I thank Th. Quartier for bringing these works to my attention.

interdependence of the elements that make up a ritual are highly sensitive and susceptible to disruption. Not only can excessive change, even when made with the best of intentions, prove deadly to ritual; a similar effect will be produced when the rituals no longer make sense, no longer are meaningful for their participants. Rituals calcify and become a mere skeleton when they cease to possess cultural representativeness. In our own culture this loss of representativeness has afflicted the religious rituals in particular (and with them a large proportion of other rituals as well). In many cases they have been suffocated by the stringency of the ritual canon. For just as rituals must be resistant to intervention, they must also allow of *appropriate* modifications.

It is far easier to talk about inappropriate modifications than about appropriate ones. Much of the overly hasty reforms of religious rites in the past three to four decades was effectively a liquidation through banalisation. As simplistic as it may sound, Bach cannot simply be replaced by Madonna. The function of rituals will surely be destroyed in short order if they are subjected to arbitrary 'modernization'. Many an 'updated' marriage rite performed in the church is simply an acute embarrassment. This is because ritual is, after all, not so much about the present as it is about the presentation, or re-presentation, of a normative past in which the present can be reflected back to us. A more sophisticated approach to modifying rituals is to aestheticize them. But we have already seen that aestheticization is frequently accompanied by a loss of bindingness that, like it or not, is typical of the aesthetics of modernity. An *appropriate* modification of ritual generally involves what might be called "de-cluttering", with careful thought given to the preservation of the essential elements. Such an *elementarization* of ritual is far more likely to be successful. Elementarization may frequently be associated with a certain aestheticization as well, but in this case the latter is not the primary objective.

In general, however, it can be said that a modern culture of reflection is not exactly ritual-friendly. Its coherence is not so much ritual-based as it is text-based. The greater instability and susceptibility to changing interpretations that characterizes textual coherence compared to ritual coherence, will necessarily affect the coherence of the society as a whole. In any case such arguments will not hold back the pace of change in modern societies. Not only that, but the modern dictatorships have all been attempts to destroy the precarious and by nature conflict-rich textual coherence of liberal-democratic states in favour of a regressive legitimation, enacted in grand rituals, of a societal vision.

Flusser's diagnosis of the intimate association of ritual and religion leads to similar conclusions. If ritual and religion are practically inseparable—and much suggests that they are—then in a ritual-poor culture religion too is subject to the conditions of textual or hermeneutic coherence. Even so, religion will not be able to jettison its rituals with the same radicality with which this is being done in other sectors of the culture and still remain religion. Change, to be successful, must take the form of *appropriate* modification, as I have briefly alluded to. And we have much to learn in this regard.

"CAN YESTERDAY GET BETTER?" THE TROUBLE WITH MEMORY AND THE GIFT OF THE EUCHARIST SYSTEMATIC-THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST

Georg Essen

1 "CAN YESTERDAY GET BETTER?" REFLECTIONS ON A LIMINAL THOUGHT

The groves of academe bring forth some strange fruits! Or so it would seem when two leading historiographers engage in a disputation, albeit a friendly one, about a cartoon strip. The two academics in question are *Jörn Rüsen* and *Ernst Schulin*, and the comic strip is Charles M. Schulz's *Peanuts*, known for its deep philosophical insights. In the particular strip that inspired this debate, the melancholic Charlie Brown responds to a question from his friend Linus. "I guess it's wrong to always worry about tomorrow", muses Linus. "Maybe we should only worry about today". To which Charlie Brown replies, "No, that's giving up. I'm hoping that yesterday will get better" (Schulz 1979, no. 699).

The debate was triggered by the fact that Jörn Rüsen had used this last sentence, not without irony, as the motto for one of his collection of essays on the theory of history. In one of these essays, "Die vier Typen des historischen Erzählens" (The four types of historical narrative), he reflects on the function of the meaning formation or sense-making (*Sinnbildung*) that we call "history" (Rüsen 1990). In the process he builds on the (post-Kantian) tradition of historiography that conceives of history as a process of construction (cf. Lorenz 1987). The basic idea is that historical thinking is a mental procedure in which the human past is made present or "re-presented". In order to become history, the past must first be transformed, which is done by narratively establishing an inner connection between past and present. In his essay, Rüsen considers the question of why it makes "sense" (*Sinn*) to human beings to "transform" the past into history, and what conditions must be met for this to occur. The answers that Rüsen ultimately arrives at are condensed

into the succinct formula: "Historical narrative as a way of making of sense of temporal experience through remembrance"[1] (157). Rüsen's fundamental insight is that the interest in the construction of "history" is rooted in the present desire for orientation of a subject existing in time, which places itself in a qualified relation to the past because it experiences time as a threat of loss of self as a result of the changing of its world and of its self. By forming meaning, or "making sense" of temporal experience (157) the historian to some extent gainsays the experience of time as negation and loss. This is done, according to Rüsen, through the medium of narrative, which establishes the relation between the past, which is present in memory, to the present. At the same time, this narrative meaning-formation makes "sense" only inasmuch as experiences of the past can be related to present-day praxis, so as to orient the recognition, action and suffering of human beings. Historical thinking provides an orientation knowledge that enables experiences and expectations of time to be integrated in such a way that we human beings do not lose our selfhood in the flow of time. If we consider, moreover, that through this process historical thinking seeks to contribute to a human search for meaning that endeavours to feed this past into intentional and especially future-oriented human action, then one thing above all becomes clear: The historical gaze at the past is not only a way of allowing us to make sense of contemporary life. Rather, it also aspires to show future perspectives for human action and consequently claims nothing less than that the past is overflowing with expectations.

But what does all of this mean for the past? On the one hand, memory protects the past from being forgotten; historical thinking is interested in the preservation of everything transitory. At the same time, by re-presenting the past as present in story—or history—form, historical narrative claims nothing less than that this present is the future of the past. And insofar as this present in turn is open toward the future, the re-presented past contains future opportunities that extend beyond therespective nows of memory.

So is Charlie Brown's hope justified? Can yesterday get better? *Ernst Schulin*, plumbing the depths and shallows of what he describes as the

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[1] To the best of our knowledge, the works cited have not been published in English translation. Therefore, all quoted passages are this translator's renderings of passages which are German in the original.—*B. Schultz.*

"historiographical mirage", concluded that it cannot (Schulin 1998[2]) At first glance, says Schulin, that statement is absurd, because the "irretrievable, remote, dead past" can be neither undone nor changed (5), and in this sense Charlie Brown seems to be hoping in a "hopeless direction" (6). While Schulin takes into account that the use of the saying in a historiographical essay is intended to draw attention to the progress of science, which can indeed lead to an "improvement of insight into the past" (6), he then rejects this interpretation, since it clearly contradicts the intent of the statement, which explicitly refers to an improvement of the past as such. He devotes more attention to the possibility that the statement expresses the hope that the past was actually better than we thought it was and that this gives cause for hope for the present and future (cf. 7–9). But in the end Schulin rejects this interpretation as well, since it is not supported by Charlie Brown's wording: Charlie Brown does not say he hopes that yesterday *was* better, but that he hopes it *will become* better (9). Consequently it is tempting to approach the saying from an ideology-critical perspective on the suspicion that the hoped-for improvement of the past may be attributable to the constructive action of the historian, who bestows meaning on the past and subordinates the historical process to the ideal of progress (cf. 9f.). In this case, however, the sentence would be giving history the power of conferring meaning (*Sinnstiftung*), which would ultimately be the equivalent of an idealistic historical thinking that already exists in Christian theology of history (10). It is therefore entirely logical that Schulin should at this point caution against the danger of history "degenerating into an ideology controlled by those in power" (11). Nonetheless, Schulin's reflections do not end merely with an admission that he is at a loss as to how to interpret the statement. What the motto leaves us with, he suggests, is an empathy for the past that *once* had an open future. Good beginnings, even if they eventually failed, must be preserved in memory because otherwise the human aspects of the past would not survive, and the loss would be absolute (12).

Still, one wonders, does this interpretation not turn Charlie Brown's statement into its opposite? He clearly bases his hope for the future and his worries about today on the hope that yesterday could become better and not merely on the hope of setting in motion contemporary contingencies of action by turning a solidary gaze on the historical past!

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[2] The page numbers cited in the following refer to this essay.

Jörn Rüsen in any case seized the opportunity for a response to detail once more his reflections on the ability of the past to give birth to the future (Rüsen 2003, 17–44).[3] First off he admits that the quality of "getting better" naturally cannot refer to pure factuality. But, he says, memory is not concerned with actual facts in any case, because it accords value to "sense" and not to "facticity" (19; cf. 33f.). Meaning-conferring (*sinnstiftende*) interpretation of the past is thus aimed at placing the past in the "time perspective of an unfulfilled future of our own present" (41). Precisely because our actions are purposeful in that they are guided by meaning and hence by an ideal of "happiness" (c. 31), historical thinking concerns itself with discovering sense- and hence also meaning-laden ideas and perceptions about the course of time. These ideas, however, would be inhuman if they denied the non-sensicality of the (multiple) pasts and of past suffering. With this Rüsen approaches a fundamental liminal idea in our thinking about history: Does the axiom of the unfinished past apply also to the dead, to the past victims and the conquered? Rüsen affirms that it does, describing historical remembrance as an act of "temporal intersubjectivity". History, he says, establishes "a connection between the people of the past and those of the present" (37). This means, however, that the dead are not dead but become "part of our own lives" (39). And that in turn occurs in the sense that historical remembrance becomes a process of mourning, refusing to accept the "non-sensicality to which the dead were subjected" (41). In this regard, argues Rüsen, historical narrative becomes in a sense a "posthumous testimony to the hopes of those […] whose life-sense was destroyed" (42).

2   THE AFFLICTION OF MEMORY. A HISTORICAL-PHILOSOPHICAL INTERMISSION

At this point, at the very latest, the question of how far the sense, or meaning, that historical remembrance wants to bestow on the dead can actually extend imposes itself. Can it deliver the "better future" that it claims to confer? The act of remembering is an approach to past events that expressly acknowledges their temporal status of being in the past and re-presents them in the medium of narrative while maintaining

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[3] The page numbers cited in the following refer to this essay.

the historical difference. This means, though, that in its historicizing action, namely the actualizing re-presentation of the past, historical remembrance refutes what may appear to be simple recognition of a fact: that the past is completely past and finished. If, finally, we bear in mind that the past being remembered is above all the historical-communicative praxis of subjects, then we have to say that historical remembrance as a category of historical sense-making is at the same time bound by the categorical imperative of moral requirement, meaning that it is determined by the normative implications of unconditional acceptance. As "temporal intersubjectivity", remembering does not merely establish an abstract connection between past and present, but is the expression of an intertemporal solidarity linking those living in the now with the dead of history. Thus historical remembrance is an act of "anamnetic solidarity" (for the concept of anamnetic solidarity see Peukert 1978, 252–355). Consequently the act of remembering, when performed sincerely, already stands in defiance of the death of the other, of the definitive past-ness of the victims. And yet: By unconditionally intending the being of the past victims, historical remembrance wishes them a future that it cannot in itself either promise or bring about. Or, turning the statement around, "anamnetic solidarity" is a paradoxical intervention in the past that appears to be aporetic.

3   "Do This in Remembrance of Me". Theological Reflections on the Mnemotechnics of the Eucharist

To summarize the foregoing, one could say that historical remembrance is a paradoxical intervention in the past that remains *utopian* because it cannot give the remembered suffering and the demise of the victims or, more specifically, the victims themselves, a *real* place of resurrection. That such a place does exist is, nevertheless, one of the basic tenets of the Christian faith. Of key importance for our subject is that inherent in the Christian hope of the "resurrection of all flesh" is a structure in which past, present and future are interwoven. Immanent in the Christian hope, just as in the modern concept of history, is a view of time that breaks through an exclusively linearly and chronologically oriented temporal experience (cf. Hoping 2000). For the Christian hope is not directed merely to the resurrection of the dead on the "Last Day". Rather, the future in which this is expected to occur has already begun and has taken form in the resurrection of the Crucified

One. The kingdom of God, that universal kingdom of the future, in which God's justice will be established for the living and the dead, has already dawned and become present in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This story about Jesus is believed by Christians as the singular eschatological turning point in history and one which has already taken effect. It constitutes an unconditional beginning, which is anticipatory nevertheless in the sense that although redemption is claimed to be already actually present, its full realization is yet to come. For *on the one hand* the work of Jesus of Nazareth, this one individual human being, remains finite and conditional; it remains, in its historical contingency, fragmentary and partial. God's raising of the crucified Jesus is also—for the time being at least—singular and particular. And yet the salvation tied to the singular person of the crucified and resurrected Jesus and already worked in him is supposed to be effective and real for all, here and now. *On the other hand*, however, the promise already unfolded in the story of Jesus will not be completed until Israel's prophetic-apocalyptic hopes—that God, acting through history, will remain true to his salvific will, saving that which has been lost and effecting a real reconciliation of suffering—are fulfilled.

Out of this understanding of the Christian faith with its inherent tension between the salvation that has already occurred and that which is anticipated, arises the interweaving of past and future in the present. Even if the practice of the faith naturally is realized in all of its "performative acts of praise, thanks, petition and lamentation" in the time between remembrance and anticipation (Pröpper 2001, 60), it is nevertheless in the sacraments in which this interweaving of times is singularly heightened. *St. Thomas Aquinas* expressed this situation most succinctly in his famous definition of the sacrament. The sacrament, he declared, was first a *signum rememorativum* of that which has gone before, namely the suffering of Christ, and secondly a *signum demonstrativum* of what is effected in us through this suffering, namely grace. And finally the sacrament is a *signum prognosticum*, a foretelling of future glory (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Theol. III*, 60, 3). In the same *quaestio* in which Thomas reflects thus about the temporal structure of a sacrament, it becomes evident that he seeks to understand the interweaving of times from the point of view of the individual's own particular present: The sacraments, he says, were instituted in order to signify our sanctification (*ad significandam nostrum sanctificationem*). This sanctification, which becomes real for us as grace and virtue in our own present through the sacrament, points both to the past and to the future. In the past lies the

"cause of our sanctification itself, namely the suffering of Christ". The opening to the future, meanwhile, occurs inasmuch as the sacrament serves as a sign pointing to "the ultimate goal of our sanctification": eternal life (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Theol. III*, 60, 3).

Now since the beginnings of the Church, the Eucharist has been the most important of the explicit acts in which the interweaving of the three temporal dimensions to which we have just alluded is both performed in reality and expressed through signs. In the following I would therefore like to examine more closely the temporal structure of the Eucharist. My aim in doing so, however, is *not* a theology of the Eucharist. Instead, from a *theological* reflection about that which is celebrated by the Christian congregation in the Lord's Supper I will attempt to develop models of argumentation and starting points for further thought, with the intent of applying these to the problem of *historiographical* theory outlined at the beginning. This in turn explains the basic *methodological* choice of reflecting the theological thoughts on the temporal structure of the Eucharist in the medium of a culturally-oriented historiography.[4] When in the following we therefore refer to a certain "mnemotechnics" of the Eucharist, this should by no means be understood as advocating a functionalist understanding of the sacrament and even less so as an attempt to reduce it to a particular form of cultural technology. Rather, the methodological approach was chosen as a way of thematicizing the handling of time as experienced in the Eucharist as an orientation knowledge which can be related back to the fundamental historiographical problem outlined at the beginning.

In the following, I will adhere to *Johann Betz's* widely received structural model which I believe to be particularly suited to describing the temporal structure of the Eucharist. This model comprises three aspects of Christ's presence in the Eucharist: first, the personal, pneumatic actual presence of the risen Christ as principalis agens in the performance of the sacrament (the principial actual presence); second, the anamnetic presence of His singular salvific work (anamnetic, memorial actual presence); and third, the substantial presence of the person of Christ incarnate in the form of bread and wine, referred to in received theology simply as 'real presence' (Betz 1973, 267).

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[4] The following thoughts are based above all on a cultural understanding of historiography, as developed particularly by Aleida and Jan Assmann. See inter alia A. Assmann 1992; J. Assmann 1992; J. Assmann 2000; Assman/Hölscher 1988.

3.1   *The "principial actual presence" of Jesus Christ as the personal ground of a "contra-presentist" covenantal memory*

To begin, we note that the celebration of the Eucharist can be sub-sumed under the concept of cultural memory, and understood as a rite of "collective and connective remembering" (Assmann 2000, 22).[5] For if we understand the concept of knowing in its deep existential dimension, then the celebration of the Lord's Supper is actualized in a "knowing" which, in the specific interactional framework of the congregation, "guides action and experience and is available from generation to generation for repeated rehearsal and initiation". According to the constitution on the liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, the Eucharist is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows" (SC 10). Thus the Eucharist fulfils the quality of what Assmann calls "concreteness of identity or group-relatedness". The Eucharist, furthermore, is characterized by the aspect of "reconstructivity" in two respects. It is reconstructive in that it creates a memorial space that contains, in the form of the crucified and risen Lord, a "fixed point" to which the memory refers. The memory in turn is kept awake by "cultural forming" (for example texts, rites, symbolic actions) and "institutionalized communication" (for example recitation, prayer, communion). These are, as we will show further on, "memorial figures" that form what Assmann calls "time islands" or "islands of a completely different temporality" in the "river of everyday communication" (Assmann 1992, 12). The celebration of the Eucharist is also reconstructive in the sense that in it the story of Jesus Christ is continually being "reconstructed" in the context of an actual situation in the present: the present places itself in a relationship to this story that is "appropriational, confrontational, preservational and transformational" (Assmann 1992, 14).[6]

   Because Assman occasionally also refers to this last-named specific function of cultural memory as what might be termed "covenantal memory" (*Bindungsgedächtnis*: Assmann 2000, 11–43), the question is

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[5] In the following I will seek to transfer the interpretive categories of the concept of cultural memory to the celebration of the Eucharist. The concepts and quotes cited are from J. Assmann, (Assmann/Hölscher 1988, 12–14).

[6] It should not be difficult, moreover, to decode other characteristics of the Eucharistic celebration that are basic to Assmann's idea of cultural memory: texts and rites offer "formedness", the "organization" of the Lord's Supper is guaranteed by the Church, which also stands for the "bindingness".

raised in what respect the celebration of the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of Jesus' death and resurrection takes on the form of such a covenantal memory. It is structured by a character of memory that is both "collectively" and "connectively" binding or, more precisely, it establishes identity *through* "re-membering" (Assmann 2000, 22). According to Assmann, this English word succinctly expresses the peculiarity of covenantal memory because the memory aims at the "re-collection" (*Wieder-Vereinigung*) and "re-connection" (*Wieder-Zusammenfügung*) of the "members" scattered in time and space. Thus it re-establishes a connection that was (seemingly) lost and re-consolidates a collectiveness that is constitutive of the identity of the congregation celebrating the Eucharist—in two senses: As the continually repeated founding event of the shared faith, the celebration of the Eucharist is intended as the explicit founding of the community of faith. And here it becomes evident for the first time to what extent the Eucharistic celebration, as covenantal memory, involves the interweaving of past, present and future that breaks up the continuum of history: The congregation celebrating the Eucharist in the present expressly includes the dead in its celebration, knowing itself to be just as closely connected to them—in the hope of the resurrection—as it is to all the "saints". The celebration of the Eucharist is a *memento vivorum et mortuorum*. Examined more closely, this intertemporal *communio sanctorum*, embracing the living and the dead, finds in the *communio in sacris* its community-building ground. Therefore, too, the Eucharist is by no means a constructive act by the congregation, but rather a *representative* one. Because it does not contain the ground of its being in itself, and because Jesus Christ, as that personal ground of being, has been taken from it, it remembers and thereby re-presents Jesus Christ in the Eucharist (cf. Pröpper 2001, 258–261). As the host of the supper, He is the primary subject of the Eucharist. As the "head" of the Church, which is expressly constituted in the Eucharist as his "visible body", Jesus Christ establishes the communion between himself (and through him, with him and in him God the Father) and the faithful.

Against this background it becomes clear that the covenantal memory that is fulfilled in the Eucharistic celebration takes on a "contra-presentist" (Assmann 2000, 21) character and why. Fundamental is, first, the idea that the "community of the faithful with Jesus Christ is founded outside of ourselves in Christ" (Pannenberg 1993, 267). In this form, however, the celebration of the Eucharist is the communion of the congregation with its crucified and risen Lord. The focal point of the

Lord's Supper therefore is Jesus Christ and thus the promise of His presence to the community of those partaking in this celebration. How, though, do we go about thinking and conceiving of this "real presence" as a personal and undivided present and presence? First and above all, the whole of the Eucharistic doctrine turns on the central importance accorded to the present time in which the Eucharistic liturgy takes place, and in which the participating congregation becomes a part of the community with Jesus Christ. So it was logical that in the early Church the Alexandrine theology in particular should speak of the Eucharistic incarnation of Christ and see this as the sacramental continuation of the incarnation of the divine logos (cf. Betz 1973, 212ff.), implying that the Eucharist was therefore a real and direct encounter with Him. Herein the unbroken nature of the salvation given in Christ is brought to awareness, along with the realization that in every time the partaking in this saving grace must be a direct one. For at the centre of the communion must be Jesus Christ, combined with the promise of his presence in community with those partaking in his Supper. The presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is claimed as a presence that wholly overcomes the "terrible wide abyss" (as it was described by Gotthold Lessing) between the then of the story of Jesus and the now of the congregation. The temporal difference that separates the celebrant congregation from Jesus Christ is said to be overcome, allowing us to speak of a real and direct encounter with Jesus.

3.2   *The "memorial actual presence" as a paradoxical intervention in the past*

The question, however, was how the "contemporality" stipulated by Eucharistic theology can reconciled with the insight that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a form of cultural memory that references time and specifically the past.[7] Here the Alexandrine model that seeks to understand the Eucharistic presence of Christ by direct analogy to the incarnation appears to come up against its limits. The concept of the actual presence establishes the Eucharist—and rightly so—as a celebration of the presence of Christ, its actual host. Yet the Eucharistic presence of Christ is not to be understood solely as a "descending" of the risen Christ in his transfigured bodily form into the elements of the supper prepared below. This view would deny the *historical* dimension

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[7] For the concept of time-based remembering in contrast to a cosmos-oriented remembering see Assmann 2000, 23f with reference to Lévi-Strauss (1962).

of the real presence of the divine logos that stands for the direct and undivided personal presence: Remembrance of Jesus Christ is remembrance of the person of the Son of God incarnate and consequently embraces his concrete fate in the unity of life, death and resurrection. The Christ of the liturgical present is therefore supposed to be none other than the historical Jesus. More precisely, in the liturgical celebration, the celebrants' contemporality with Jesus' salvific acts—historically past yet promised for all time—is conveyed and effected. Salvation is believed to originate in a past event, but one that at the same time is not beyond the reach of the present.

The foregoing brings us face to face with two questions that are important to the theme of my study: How can the *Christus Praesens* present in the Eucharist be identified as the Christ who became man in the historical Jesus of Nazareth? And how is it possible that in the celebration of the Eucharist a past event is made present?

First, the Eucharist is by no means the ritualistic representation of a mythical origin, but rather of a past event that is locatable in time and space and as such historically contingent. Therefore too the category of "repetition" is inappropriate, because it would encroach on the historical singularity of Jesus' life and destiny. If we speak of iteration at all, then only in the sense that the recurring celebration re-presents the bestowal of salvation once and for all time in the story of Jesus. The traditional terminology according to which the power of the historical sacrifice on the cross is applied and made fruitful in the sacrifice of the mass (*applicatio*) therefore needs to be further specified: The representation of the salvific meaning of Jesus' self-sacrifice is lastingly tied to the real presence of the salvific event itself. Or, in other words, the historiographic axiom of the unity of fact and meaning (cf. Pannenberg [3]1979; Essen, 1995) has an analogy in Eucharistic theology: the unity of *repraesentatio* and *applicatio*.

Now in the early Church and during the early Middle Ages there was no shortage of attempts (cf. Betz 1973, 218f.; Kretschmar 1977)—and this brings us to the *second* question—to maintain the Eucharistic reference to a historically contingent event along the lines of an *Urbild-Abbild* typology. This, however, was possible only under very specific conditions. The *Urbild-Abbild* relation that underlies the Eucharist connects together events from different times. The Eucharistic celebration by the congregation is the typological *Abbild* or representation of an *Urbild* or prototype that is irreducibly tied to the form of its historic givenness. Its object is Jesus' entire work of salvation from the incarnation to the

ascension; the culmination is suffering, death and resurrection. This in turn, however, raised the question of the medium in which the real presence of the historic events believed to be present in the Lord's Supper should be conveyed. The use of the *Urbild-Abbild* typology in Eucharistic theology initially suggested turning to the "mimesis" model and understanding the celebration of the mass as the dramatic and allegorical representation of Jesus' life and fate (cf. Kretschmar 1977, 78f.; Angenendt 1997, 499–503). The Eucharist, in this model, would have been the representation of the outward events of his life. But, it was asked, is a mimetic-allegorical representation of the historic events of salvation of itself a "repraesentatio" of the one passion of Jesus Christ? The rememorative allegory of the mass that had its heyday in the early Middle Ages, appears from a mnemotechnic viewpoint to have been more of a memory aid or "mnemonic", on which every form of remembrance must rely to some extent (cf. Assmann 2000, 19f.). But how can an allegorical reference to the past or its ritual depiction be protected against becoming merely a historical reminiscence? This reservation was to be overcome in the Antiochian theology of the Eucharist by bringing the concept of anamnesis into the *Urbild-Abbild* typology. Retrospectively at least, it seems that—again from a mnemotechnical perspective—the critical steps toward clarifying the concept of "repraesentatio" were taken within the framework of the Antiochian theology of the Eucharist (cf. Betz 1973, 218–222; Kretschmar 1977, 60–62). Of course turning back to the concept of anamnesis (Jantzen et al. 1993) was risky in the extreme because of its Platonic connotations, which could not but fall short of the intention of the Eucharistic celebration. For in contrast to the Platonic tradition, the "prototype" of the Lord's Supper is expressly not an *a priori* rational truth and the anamnesis consequently is not solely remembering, that is, the rational re-cognition of previously known (divine) truth. Rather, the Eucharistic anamnesis refers to the historic series of events making up the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The concept of the "memorial actual presence", a term created essentially by Betz, accordingly aims at the representation of these past events in the medium of memory and remembering, albeit in a way that does not eliminate their historic contingency and with it the form of historic givenness.

Thirdly and consequently, the discussion about the concept of Eucharistic anamnesis thusly understood centres around the problem of how it is possible to speak of a *repraesentatio passionis* in the medium of *memoria*. It is asserted, of course, that the anamnesis is not merely a "representa-

tion in consciousness, a *commemoratio passionis Christi, quae per cogitationem fit*" (Iserloh 1977, 129). This assertion requires closer examination! First, it is certainly and fundamentally the case that from a structural point of view the Eucharistic anamnesis is identical with the concept of historical remembrance developed at the beginning. The anamnesis in the Eucharistic celebration *narratively* establishes an inner connection between past and present: "And on the night that he was betrayed, he took bread…" And it asserts the actualizing representation of the past: The past life and fate of Jesus is believed *as* present in the medium of the anamnesis. In this sense the Eucharist is first of all a commemoration that takes place in the modality of human remembering. Consequently the Eucharistic anamnesis is subject to the same epistemological conditions as human remembering: It is an intentionally determined act directed toward the past and thus a mentally structured process of consciousness that is coextensive with the concept of history presented at the outset: History is the past as present in the medium of historical consciousness. The modal conjunction "as" implies that the present serves only as a mental construct to the comparative nominative of the past. The claim of the Eucharistic anamnesis goes further, however, because it wants to represent a past event not just mentally but really. In other words, it wants to be an intervention in the past that guarantees and makes real that which historical remembrance realizes only in the modality of hope. The Eucharistic memorial lives from the conviction that it crosses the boundary at which a purely human remembering must remain aporetic: A past event is brought back to reality in the celebration of the Lord's Supper and is really present in it.

Before we examine the mnemotechnics of this form of memorial, I would like to *fourthly and lastly* consider a statement that has so thus far been accepted at face value. What is meant in terms of Eucharistic theology by the claim that a past event is made present in the celebration of the Eucharist? In 20th century Catholicism, this question was prompted principally by the mystery theology of *Odo Casel*, who described the Eucharist as a "holy cultic act" in which a "fact of salvation becomes present under the rite" (Casel 1960, 79). According to Casel, the original salvific event itself—the Passah mystery in its unity of the death and resurrection of Jesus—is made present in the Eucharist, and the celebration of the liturgy is also the only way for the congregation to enter into a direct living relation with this event. *G. Söhngen* affirms this view of an "actual presence of the passio Christi" in which the "historical act" is in fact again "made present" (Söhngen

1967, 78–81). One must ask, however, whether such an understanding does not rob the salvific event of its historical-contingent character as a singular event in time and space. *Helmut Hoping* rightly noted that even the Christian liturgy is not about making present past events *as such* (Hoping 2000, 186). The representation of the history of Jesus in the Eucharistic anamnesis is not about pure actuality in the sense of facticity in time and space. In this respect the Eucharistic anamnesis is subject to the same conditions as those underlying the concept of remembrance (*Erinnerung*) as used in historiography. The Eucharistic anamnesis, or memorial (*Eingedenken*), is also a treatment of past events that expressly recognizes their temporal status of past-ness and treats them as present while preserving the historical difference in the medium of narrative. Were it not so, this would be tantamount to pretending to revoke the constitutive and lasting historical bindingness of God's self-revelation; it would mean claiming to rescind the eschatological definitivity of the divine salvation promised once and for all as reality in the history of Jesus. For reasons of revelation theology alone, the understanding of the Eucharist must incorporate the historiographical axiom that, in the field of history, sense (*Sinn*) is tied to facticity. But then, under what conditions can the Eucharistic theological axiom of the oneness of *repraesentatio* and *applicatio*, of *factum passionis* and *usus passionis*, be valid? For at first glance it leads to the paradoxical determination that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, the *temporal difference* that separates the celebrant congregations from the history of Jesus Christ is supposed to be overcome, and yet the *historic difference* between the long-ago of the history and the now of its memorial is preserved. What, then, would be the intertemporal continuum that connects these two aspects? To answer the question of how a past event can become actually present, it is worthwhile to think further about an answer that Betz considered: "historical salvific facts", said Betz, are present in the person of Jesus Christ and thereby attain a "perenity moment" (Betz 1967, 1230). Developing this idea further in a historiographic sense, (cf. Essen 1995, 352–385; Essen 2001, 173–191)[8] one can say that *on the one hand* there exists a close relationship between person and history, inasmuch as the concept of the person points to the self-ness of a subject that is, under the conditions of time and space, interested in

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[8] The constraints of the present article preclude a discussion of the ideas of Paul Ricoeur on the relation of time, experience and identity as they apply to the subject of this study (cf. Ricoeur 1983–1985; Ricoeur 1990).

intertemporal identity. Consequently the defining of a personal identity must be understood as a formation process that takes place in the medium of history. Because the personal identity of a human being takes form in the process of his or her life stories, we have access to our own identities only through our own stories. And therefore too remembrance and narrative function as forms of "identity presentation", in which even the past events and experiences that determine our self-ness can be related to our own identity. *On the other hand*, though, there is also a close connection between the person and the body inasmuch as the material-physical body is the medium of transmission and expression of self. The body of the individual is consequently the modality for both the possibility and the reality of his communication with the whole of his world and history, as well as of his being woven into and encumbered with that world and history. Because "corporeality is the form in which the personality is consummated" (Wendel 2002, 295; cf. ibid., 283–308), the body must also be understood as "identity presentation" that has taken form in time and space: Time leaves its traces, as we know. This historiographical reflection opens access to one of the central aspects of the Eucharistic understanding: The understanding of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper is conceived as a personal presence inasmuch as that presence is understood as the bodily presence of the Christ resurrected and ascended to His Father. This in turn assumes a particular interpretation of Jesus' resurrection. In the action of resurrection, God "turns back" to the Crucified One and the action refers to the whole of Jesus' life and fate. Consequently the relationship between the "new" and "old" life realities of Jesus must be thought of in such a way that this story in its concrete and personal wholeness is subsumed in the everlasting and eternal life of the Resurrected One. In the Christological and eschatological context however, this "subsuming" is understood as the incorporation of the bodily wholeness of the earthly existence. In the concept of the "bodily resurrection", Christian theology thus reflects on a future beyond death, which implies the final salvation of concrete, earthly existence in terms of the enduring, real validity of history. Finally, from a Eucharistic theological perspective, it is true also that the reality of the resurrected Christ present in the Lord's Supper is the reality of the story of His earthly life (Pannenberg 1993, 344–348).[9] It is to this, then, as we have seen, that the Eucharistic anamnesis refers: The presence of Jesus Christ in the Communion

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[9] For the concept of the bodily resurrection cf. Essen 1995, 352–385.

occurs in the medium of the memorial of his earthly story and passion.
On the one hand the presentation of these concrete events in the form
of remembrance affirms the historical difference. But at the same time
the bodily presence of Jesus Christ that occurs in this anamnesis stands
for the dissolving of the temporal difference, without which there can
be no real partaking in Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

3.3   *"Real presence" as a revolt against the continuum of history*

This last conclusion, admittedly, still does not answer our question.
For the "actual presence" of Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper after
all contains two aspects: the "personal, pneumatic actual presence of
the risen Christ" and the "anamnetic presence of His singular salvific
work" (Betz 1973, 276). What is critical is that the relation of the
present reality of the resurrected Jesus to the historical Jesus must be
understood differently than in the sense that people generally in their
temporal lives can be identical with what they were in earlier phases of
their lives (cf. Pannenberg 1993, 347). To put an essentially eschatologi-
cal problem (Pannenberg 1993, 618ff.) in terms of Eucharistic theology:
how does the anamnesis affirm the identity of the present life of the
resurrected Christ with the singular history of Jesus? For the vital sense
or meaning of remembrance is to recall the Risen One's identity with
the earthly and crucified Jesus. Yet how, in a mnemotechnic sense, can
the Eucharistic anamnesis fulfil the claim of re-presenting the past not
only mentally but really? Eucharistic theology offers two answers to this
last question: the understanding of the epiclesis as a correlate to the
anamnesis, and the association of Christ with the gifts of bread and
wine known as the real presence. Both seek to articulate a represen-
tational power of the Eucharistic anamnesis that extends further than
the act of mere human remembering.

The *first* answer starts from the concept of the principal actual
presence and draws attention to the fact that it is not human beings
who are the actual subject of the memorial, but rather Jesus Christ.
And this is true also inasmuch as the Eucharistic anamnesis finds its
enabling reason in the self-presence of Christ. It is consistent, then, that
the newer studies in Eucharistic and liturgical theology should empha-
size the close relationship between the epiclesis and the anamnesis of
Jesus' story (cf. Gerhards 1995, 715ff.; cf. Pannenberg 1993, 352–357;
cf. Congar 1982, 454–495): the Eucharistic memorial transitions into
the invocation of the Holy Spirit, through whose action the presence

of Christ is transmitted. Considered again from a mnemotechnic perspective, of critical importance here is that the Eucharistic concept of anamnesis is structured and constructed in terms of this pneumatic reference. Fundamental to this understanding is above all John 14, 26: The Father sends the Holy Spirit as the "Comforter" who shall "remind" the faithful of Jesus and of God's word. This is not about the false alternative that suggests that the Eucharistic anamnesis is *either* an act of human remembering *or* the working of the Holy Spirit in the faithful. Instead, human remembrance is requalified as founded in the working of the Spirit: it is now no longer merely a human act of remembrance, but a doing made possible and supported by the Spirit. The anamnesis is determined by the presence of the power of the Spirit. The significance for the anamnesis of the invocation of the Holy Spirit consequently lies in that the human memorial is opened up existentially in the performative speech act of the epiclesis and turns toward the divine ground of human remembering.

From a historical-theological perspective, the focus of attention has been and still is of course on the *second* of these answers. For it is precisely the binding of the real presence of Christ to the elements of the holy sacrifice of bread and wine that is supposed to differentiate the memorial of the Eucharist from a merely human act of consciousness. Mnemotechnically it can be said that the Eucharistic transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ forms the spatially materialized correlate to the anamnesis: the change in significance which the elements of the sacrifice undergo in the celebration of the Eucharist does not occur only in the intention of the people but—*sit venia verbo*—in the thing itself (Pannenberg 1993, 335). Therefore it is only logical that theological theorizing about the correct understanding of the "real presence" in the Eucharist has always consisted in seeking to understand the "transformation" that occurs in the celebration of the Lord's Supper as a "transubstantiation" of bread and wine; the term is intended to signify, as it were, an "ontological exceeding" of the limited nature of human memory that allows the past to be represented only as a mental construct.[10]

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[10] Virtually all of the controversies of Eucharistic theology—from the first two in the 9th and 11th centuries respectively, through the doctrinal oppositions that led to the separation of the Protestant from the Roman Catholic church in the Reformation and all the way to the present day—have concentrated on the problem of the philosophical form in which the presence of Jesus Christ in the elements of the Eucharistic meal

In the process the Eucharistic forms of bread and wine are, through the presence (in the Spirit) of the Risen One, qualified as active signs to us of His actual-eternal bestowal of salvation. This aspect is extremely interesting for a theory of cultural memory. In the concept of the real presence, the temporal structure that is particular to the Eucharistic anamnesis but also to every form of human remembering, is translated into the category of materiality and thus of space. The "contemporality" between the story of Jesus and the congregation that is conveyed by the anamnesis, meanwhile, is translated into the category of "identity". The binding of Jesus Christ's presence to the elements of the holy sacrifice establishes identity between the earthly and the sacramental body of Christ. The function of this transformation of the time category into one of space as it applies to cultural memory is clear: in the manifestation of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic offerings of bread and wine, the "*extra nos*" of the contemporality conveyed by the memorial converges with the history of Jesus. Or, we could say that in a mnemotechnical sense the commemorative actual presence corresponds to our historical situation and bodily-spiritual constitution when the Risen One (like the earthly Jesus before him) himself turns toward the people in a sensual-symbolic manner: His self-presence reaches the people through the use of the Eucharistic forms of bread and wine. That these are themselves legitimated by the remembrance of Jesus therefore qualifies them especially as the form of an "identity presentation" in which the Eucharistic memorial takes on the visible form appropriate to it.

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are to be conceived and how the essential term "real" is to be understood as a mode of presence. The genuinely modern question, meanwhile, arises from the objection that the rise of modern philosophy, to put it in simplistic terms, inevitably entailed a readjustment of the relation between ontology and epistemology, and as a consequence the classic doctrine of transubstantiation was no longer available for clarifying the understanding of the "real presence". According to a far-reaching research consensus, the concept of symbol is very promising in this regard. A prerequisite is, however, that 'symbol' be understood as the reality in which a not empirically perceptible content "coincides" with a temporal-spatially given form in such a way that the form becomes the expression and thus the "being-ness" of precisely that content (cf. Winter 2002, 13). On the more recent discussion on the sacramental-theological use of the symbol concept cf. especially the works of L. Louis-Marie Chauvet that have been important for T. Scheer: Chauvet 2001; Chauvet 1995; Chauvet 1979; Chauvet 1988.

4 Recapitulatio of All That was Lost, or "Yesterday Can Get Better". An Enigmatic Closing Thought

A closing thought and surely an enigmatic one seeks to show the Eucharist as a "revolt" against the continuum of history from quite a different angle. Crucial to the concept of anamnesis is that it is not a "mere" remembering of events from the past that remains without practical consequences. For the Eucharistic memorial is also the initiation into the succession of Jesus, the aim of which is to make us like him. As a practical act, the Eucharist also forms, as we have suggested, an "island of completely different temporality". It is not, however, an unworldly enclave of "atemporality" (Assmann 1992, 12), as it were. For the Eucharist draws its power from the tension between what Hoping has called "liturgical salvation time (*Heilszeit*) and human calamity time (*Unheilszeit*)" (Hoping 2000, 193); it is the memorial of the One as yet unredeemed. As such it stands against attempts to dissolve everything into contemporality, and yet it nonetheless defies the irreversibility of time because that which is still promised and foretold is already present in it. In this sense the Eucharistic meal is celebrated as the anticipation of eschatological fulfilment—anticipation because Christ is present in the Eucharist as the Risen One but not yet as the Returned One. Rather, his return is hoped for *as* the "end of time", because God's eternity means an end to the disjunction in time that constitutes a real threat to the human struggle for identity and is inevitably the cause of fear and terror, grief and sadness. In this regard too, as a protest against the fundamental experience of time as negation and loss, the Eucharist is a revolt against the continuum of time. And this protest too is upheld and made possible by remembrance, namely remembrance of the promise of an eschatological future already dawning in the resurrected Crucified One. This form of anticipation announces itself as an interest in the immortality of all that is mortal and transient and that stands in opposition to the pain of our daily experience of time: namely that the index of temporality hangs over the identity of each human being inasmuch as he does not exist in a directly experienced contemporality with all the events and experiences that have influenced the process of his identity formation. Just as the ultimate meaning of the Eucharistic anamnesis lies in that the reality of the Risen One that is present in the Lord's Supper *is* the reality of his earthly life story, so too does it contain God's own promise of human perfection. The question of inter-temporal identity thus takes on an eschatological quality in the

hope that God's eternity will mean the "restoration of all things", the *recapitulatio* of all that has been lost and destroyed by death. The ground of its possibility lies in God's eternity—the eternity that, as the reality that prevails over all time, has not only no future but also no past outside itself. And is this not precisely what is meant by the "re-membering" that shapes every cultural memory: the "re-membering" of the "members" scattered in time and space!

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