

Beginnings in Ritual Studies according to Ronald Grimes

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1. Introduction

1.1. Preamble: resistance

These days within liturgy studies, and theology and religious studies in general, it is possible to come across numerous references to, or cross-references from, so-called Ritual Studies. This often involves an indication of partnerships and alliances in the open and multi-disciplinary research design of modern liturgical studies.² In some cases Ritual Studies is used in reference to a specific sub-section of social sciences concerning rites, or certain trends in ethnology, biology and neurology, such as the so-called '(new) cognitive science of religion'. Elsewhere the suggestion is put forward that Ritual Studies concerns a specific theory or method, or at the very least a movement or school. Based on the

¹ This contribution is based in part on a master thesis by T. SWINKELS: *Inculturatie en de grondhouding van liturgical supinity. De bijdrage van Grimes aan de liturgiewetenschap gethematiseerd via liturgische inculturatie*, Theologische Faculteit Tilburg (Tilburg 2002).

² The term 'Ritual Studies' features explicitly in P. POST: *Programm und Profil der Liturgiewissenschaft. Ein niederländischer Beitrag*, in W. RATZMANN (ed.): *Grenzen überschreiten. Profile und Perspektiven der Liturgiewissenschaft* (Leipzig 2002 = Beiträge zu Liturgie und Spiritualität 9) 81-100; IDEM: *Personen en patronen. Literatuurbericht liturgiewetenschap*, in *Praktische theologie* 28 (2001) 86-110 (in particular 89-96 on Bell, Rappaport, Grimes, Stringer and Lukken); IDEM: *Life cycle rituals: a ritual-liturgical perspective*, in *Questions liturgiques/Studies in liturgy* 83 (2002) 10-29; IDEM: *Interference and intuition: on the characteristic nature of research design in liturgical studies*, in *Questions liturgiques/Studies in liturgy* 81 (2000) 48-65; M. BARNARD & P. POST (eds.): *Ritueel bestek. Antropologische kernwoorden van de liturgie* (Zoetermeer 2001); P. POST: *Ritueel-liturgische Bewegungen: Erkundungen von Trends und Perspektiven*, in A. GERHARDS & B. KRANEMANN (eds.): *Liturgie im Umfeld von Sterben und Tod im Kontext der säkularen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig 2002 = Erfurter Theologische Schriften 30) 25-60 (esp. 30, footnote 12); IDEM: *Overvloed of deritualisering: Lukken en Grimes over het actuele ritueel-liturgische milieu*, in *Jaarboek voor liturgie-onderzoek* 17 (2001) 193-212; G. LUKKEN: *Rituelen in overvloed. Een kritische bezinning op de plaats en de gestalte van het christelijk ritueel in onze cultuur* (Kampen 1999); IDEM: *Ritual in abundance* (Leuven 2004 = Liturgia condenda 17, in preparation); M. BARNARD: *Liturgiek als wetenschap van christelijke riten en symbolen* (Amsterdam 2000). Cf. G. ROUWHORST: 'Ritual Studies': drie benaderingen van een complex verschijnsel, in *Tijdschrift voor liturgie* 86 (2002) 266-280 (on Bell, Grimes and Lukken).

latter perspective we see an increase in a certain conceptualisation concerning Ritual Studies in theology and liturgical studies circles. Instead of an alliance, the connection, Ritual Studies and liturgical studies, is somewhat illogically and imprecisely positioned as a certain profile or program of liturgical studies, particularly sacramental theological focused research.³ That profile, in part designated by Ritual Studies, invokes a certain degree of resistance. This would apparently amount to all sorts of ill-considered and unrestrained anthropological reflections and interpretations of the Christian ritual praxis. Based on a strong emphasis of the inalienable singularity of Christian rituality, warnings against 'an all to enthusiastic flirtation with Ritual Studies' have been issued. Characteristic for the setting and this point of view is an essay by Hans Geybels in *Tijdschrift voor theologie*.⁴ He warns against Ritual Studies as an integral part of theological projects. It is not our intention to focus further on the critical development of this debate concerning the identity of Christian rituality, and the study thereof.⁵ We would however refer here to the complexity of the debate and the use of Ritual Studies therein. The open platform of Ritual Studies finds itself in a particularly stratified force field. In connection with this, the question as to what exactly is meant by Ritual Studies, and particularly what type of research is carried out here, what insights are achieved, becomes a relevant one.

³ Cf. S. VAN DEN BOSSCHE: Geen wijn in water veranderen. De onherleidbare particulariteit van het christelijk geloof, in *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 38 (1998) 109-119; G. DANNEELS: Rituelen in, sacramenten out?, in *Tijdschrift voor liturgie* 86 (2002) 306-322; H. GEYBELS: Algemeen menselijk of eigen christelijk? Rituelen en de identiteit van religies, in *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 41 (2001) 221-230; for a general framework covering a diversity of positions see: L. BOEVÉ, S. VAN DEN BOSSCHE, G. IMMINK & P. POST (eds.): *Levensrituelen en sacramentaliteit: tussen continuïteit en discontinuïteit* (Kampen 2003 = Meander 5). In addition to this there are authors such as Lukken and Schillebeeckx who deploy Ritual Studies without hesitance: G. LUKKEN: De 'overkant' van het menselijk ritueel: herbezinning vanuit fenomenologie en semiotiek op antropologische en theologische lagen, in *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 41 (2001) 145-166 (this article can be seen as a supplement to the close of IDEM: *Rituelen in overvloed*; E. SCHILLEBEECKX: Naar een herontdekking van christelijke sacramenten. Ritualisering van religieuze momenten in het alledaagse leven, in *Tijdschrift voor theologie* 40 (2000) 164-187 (= Hin zu einer Wiederentdeckung der christlichen Sakramente. Ritualisierung religiöser Momente im alltäglichen Leben, in A. HOLDEREGGER & J.-P. WILS (eds.): *Interdisziplinäre Ethik. Grundlagen, Methoden, Bereiche. Festgabe für Dietmar Mieth zum 60. Geburtstag* (Freiburg i.Br. 2001 = *Studies zur theologischen Ethik* 89) 309-339.

⁴ GEYBELS: Algemeen menselijk.

⁵ See here: BOEVÉ et al. (eds.): *Levensrituelen en sacramentaliteit*.

1.2. Theme and organization

Following this preamble we can now present the theme of this contribution concerning Ritual Studies. It is not intended to provide a further exploration or orientation of Ritual Studies within the force field of disciplines. A separate article dedicated to this will appear in the next issue of the *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*.⁶ Following a brief indication of the general definition of Ritual Studies, our current contribution will focus on a particular concrete line of Ritual Studies in practice. This concerns the ritual-theoretical work by one of the pioneers and most influential representatives of Ritual Studies within liturgy studies: Ronald Grimes. Grimes is not only a good exponent of the emergence and development of Ritual Studies, he is also interesting because he is in constant critical discussion with liturgists and theologians. More than authors such as Catharine Bell⁷ and Roy Rappaport,⁸ Grimes is a good example or exponent for a contribution concerning the influence of Ritual Studies in relation to liturgical studies.

Following a brief positioning of Ritual Studies in general terms (2), we will be presenting the work of Ronald Grimes as an exemplary exponent of the practice of Ritual Studies, with particular focus on his ritual theory, gradually developed since 1982 (3). This contribution will expressly take the form of a presentation rather than a critical analysis. It can be seen as an introduction to his work. A number of perspectives relating to liturgy studies will be presented in closing (4).

2. Ritual Studies: a brief general orientation

During the 1990's theological and liturgical studies circles began to show interest in Ritual Studies, that under that name had emerged within the domain of religious studies during the 1970's. During the period 1977-1982, Ritual Studies received more or less official status within the American Academy of Religion (the term Ritual Studies is documented for the first time within the AAR in 1977).⁹ In the United States, Ritual Studies developed during the 1980's

⁶ P. POST: Einführung und Ortsbestimmung im Hinblick auf die Liturgiewissenschaft, in *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* (2003/4) [in preparation].

⁷ C. BELL: *Ritual theory, ritual practice* (New York/Oxford 1992); IDEM: *Ritual. Perspectives and dimensions* (New York/Oxford 1998). See also IDEM: Ritual change, and changing rituals, in *Worship* 63,1 (1989) 31-41.

⁸ R. RAPPAORT: *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity* (Cambridge 1999 = Cambridge studies in social and cultural anthropology 110).

⁹ According to R.L. GRIMES: *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Washington 1982) preface (unnumbered pages). For all references to Grimes, see our appendix, which includes a bibliography.

to become an open scientific field positioned at the interface of a variety of different disciplines, a platform within which all attention was focused on rituality. The disciplines in question include a broad array of human and social sciences, in particular social sciences and religious studies.

A diversity of individuals and interest groups came into contact with one another via that platform. In the United States this concerned, as it still does today, four groups in particular: theologians, anthropologists, liturgists and individuals from the varied world of ritual performance, such as researchers in theatre studies.¹⁰ During this pioneering period education and congress curricula in which Ritual Studies was included were important, as were various thematic and programmatically defining and profiling publications. Ronald Grimes was an important stimulating factor here. We refer in particular to: *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* from 1982,¹¹ the bibliographical textbook *Research in Ritual Studies*¹² from 1985 and a number of contributions to encyclopaedia and textbooks.¹³ In the programmatic introductory essay in *Research in Ritual Studies*, Grimes advances Ritual Studies as a new field within 'religious studies'. Later both he and others would put this link into perspective and refer to an open platform where the interest in ritual was the most important binding factor. The opening paragraph of the aforementioned essay is illustrative in this respect:

Because ritual studies comprise a newly consolidated field within religious studies, a high degree of methodological and bibliographical self-consciousness is necessary. And because this subject's aspirations are interdisciplinary, it is obligated to differentiate and relate its task to several other disciplines such as liturgical theology, symbolic anthropology, art criticism, history of religions, and psychology of religion. Three major goals of ritual studies are (1) to mediate between normative and descriptive, as well as textual and field-observational, methods; (2) to lay the groundwork for a coherent taxonomy and theory that can account for the full range of symbolic acts running from ritualization behavior in animals, through interaction ritual, to highly differentiated religious liturgies and civil ceremonies; and (3) to cultivate the study of ritual in a manner that does not automatically assume it to be a dependent variable.¹⁴

¹⁰ This initial orientation became apparent in the USA through the interest shown by three bodies for the Ritual Studies platform, namely: the American Academy of Religion, the American Anthropology Association and the North American Academy of Liturgy.

¹¹ GRIMES: *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*.

¹² GRIMES: *Research in Ritual Studies: a programmatic essay and bibliography* (Chicago 1985) 1.

¹³ GRIMES: Ritual, in W. BRAUN & R.T. MCCUTCHEON (eds.): *Guide to the study of religion* (London 2000); IDEM: Ritual Studies, in M. ELLADE: *The encyclopedia of religion* 12 (New York 1987) 422-425.

¹⁴ GRIMES: *Research in Ritual Studies*.

At another point during the 1980's, Grimes elaborated on certain aspects of this field description. Among these: emphasizing that this concerns a field rather than a specific method, emphasizing the interdisciplinary character ("Ritual Studies is a field, not a single, prescribed methodology. [...] There is no 'ritual studies viewpoint,' but rather a field upon which are focused multiple viewpoints."¹⁵), the independence from religious persuasion or institutes, the comparative and cross-cultural perspective, and the connection with religious studies.

We also include two other field descriptions within which Grimes attempts to illustrate the specific and the new of Ritual Studies. In *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (1982) he suggests:

Ritual Studies, or 'ritology', is a new field, not because doing ritual or thinking about it is new, but because the effort to consolidate methods from the humanities and social sciences for the study of ritual in a context that is free to be cross-cultural and comparative is new. It is new as a distinct sub-discipline of the academic study of religion.¹⁶

In Eliade's *Encyclopedia of religion* (1987) he states:

The study of ritual is not new. Theologians and anthropologists, as well as phenomenologists and historians of religion, have included it as one of their concerns. What is new about Ritual Studies is the deliberate attempt to consolidate a field of inquiry reaching across disciplinary boundaries and coordinating the normative interests of theology and liturgics, the descriptive ones of the history and phenomenology of religion, and the analytical ones of anthropology. As a result of this goal, the discipline of Ritual Studies is less a method one applies than a field one cultivates.¹⁷

From our liturgical studies point of view it is important to note how liturgical studies ('liturgics') was contained in Ritual Studies from the beginning. This is apparent from the ten 'field-clusters' in the bibliography of *Research in Ritual Studies* where 'liturgics' is included in the first group together with 'religious studies', 'theology', 'ethics' and 'history of religion'. Here, but also in later programmatic work on Ritual Studies, reference is made to well-known liturgists such as Kavanagh, Power, Taft and Worgul. It is interesting to note that this also involved dogmatic studies and/or works on sacramental theology.¹⁸ The first issue of the *Journal of Ritual Studies* contains a contribution

¹⁵ IDEM: *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* preface.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ IDEM: *Ritual Studies* 422.

¹⁸ Cf. G.S. WORGUL: *From magic to metaphor: a validation of the Christian sacraments* (New York 1980).

by Ted Jennings concerning this peripheral traffic.¹⁹ It is also the case that prominent figures from the 'field' of Ritual Studies such as Bell, Grimes and Rappaport feature regularly in publications such as *Worship* and *Studia liturgica*.²⁰

Initially, three major fields of interest characterized the Ritual Studies podium in particular: a primarily theoretical, conceptual interest, an inter-religious and inter-cultural interest and a pointedly comparative bias. As a result of the influence of individuals such as Grimes, Ritual Studies now enjoys a much broader profile.

It is, in our opinion, important to note that Ritual Studies is now a platform within which diverse researchers cross paths, the general binding factor here being ritology. This considerable platform encompasses numerous quarters within which the combination of a diversity of disciplines takes form in a great variety of ways. It is consequently incorrect to reserve the designation Ritual Studies for a specific disciplinary contribution to that podium, for instance that of cultural anthropology. In spite of his own preferences and fields of interest, this broad bandwidth was also recognized by Grimes in the initial phase of the development of Ritual Studies. In the aforementioned thematic and bibliographic aid that *Research in Ritual Studies* of 1985 aims at being, the focus is on the full spectrum of the humanities and social sciences, including art history and historical studies, rather than social sciences alone. In light of this, a display of some caution is advisable when deploying the designation 'school of Ritual Studies', as was deployed by Schillebeeckx recently in an interesting preview of his major sacraments book.²¹

For further elaboration of the positioning of Ritual Studies, as well as recent trends within that platform, we refer to the aforementioned contribution in the *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*. Previous surveys are also relevant here. From a liturgical studies point of view for instance, there is the guide by Nathan Mitchell;²² Grimes offered a synthesis of Ritual Studies on two occasions;²³ there is a well-known survey by Bobby Alexander that reviewed twenty-five to thirty years of Ritual Studies in 1997;²⁴ and finally there are readers and anthologies that provide their own description of Ritual Studies.²⁵ By this time

¹⁹ T. JENNINGS: Ritual Studies and liturgical theology. An invitation to dialogue, in *Journal of Ritual Studies* 1 (1987) 35-56.

²⁰ Cf. for instance the publications from the notable congress 'Reclaiming our rites' (Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy 1992) with contributions by Rappaport, Bell and Grimes in *Studia liturgica* 23,1 (1993).

²¹ SCHILLEBEECKX: Naar een herontdekking 168-171.

²² N. MITCHELL: Liturgy and the social sciences (Collegeville Min. 1999).

²³ GRIMES: Ritual; IDEM: Ritual Studies.

²⁴ B.C. ALEXANDER: Ritual and current studies of ritual: overview, in St.D. GLAZIER: *Anthropology of religion: a handbook* (Westport Conn./London 1997) chapter 5, 139-160.

²⁵ GRIMES (ed.): *Readings in Ritual Studies* (Upper Saddle River NJ 1996); R.A. SEGAL: *The myth and ritual theory: an anthology* (Malden Mass. 1998); A. BELLIGER & D.J.

Ritual Studies was also being acknowledged in liturgist circles, with Grimes in particular receiving explicit attention.²⁶ Here we will be following the trail of 'Ritual Studies in actu' via the work of Grimes. In so doing we will be focusing on a very specific course within Ritual Studies. Without elaborating here on existing trends in Ritual Studies, we would like to briefly point out the remarkable current trend where two extremes of Ritual Studies in particular are drawing attention. On the one side there is great interest for a 'hard' (neuro)biological approach towards ritual enactment: the school of the '(new) cognitive science of religion' is clearly gaining ground.²⁷ On the other side we see at the same time considerable interest for the open, indicative, strongly qualitative and narrative methodologies such as the deployment of 'personal ritual narratives'. Here, stories of personal experience are preferred source, as well as medium and reference point in the analysis, interpretation and research reporting. Grimes is clearly an exponent of the latter approach. The last two books by Grimes are to a great extent based on 'ritual narratives'.²⁸

3. Ritual studies according to Ronald Grimes

3.1. A brief academic biography of R.L. Grimes²⁹

Ronald L. Grimes, born in 1943 in California, can be considered as one of the most prominent representatives of the Ritual Studies platform. Since 1974 he has held the position of Professor of Religion and Culture at the Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario (Canada). In 1970, Grimes graduated from Columbia University with a thesis on the English poet, painter and engraver William

KRIEGER (eds.): *Ritualtheorien. Ein einführendes Handbuch* (Opladen/Wiesbaden 1998).

²⁶ POST: *Personen en patronen*; ROUWHORST: *Ritual Studies*.

²⁷ As examples we refer here to: E. D'AQUILI & Ch.D. LAUGHLIN Jr.: *The neurobiology of myth and ritual*, in E. D'AQUILI, Ch.D. LAUGHLIN Jr., J. McMANUS & T.R. BURNS (eds.): *The spectrum of ritual. A biogenetic structural analysis* (New York 1979) 152-182; E. D'AQUILI & A. NEWBERG: *The mystical mind: probing the biology of religious experience* (Minneapolis 1999); P. BOYER: *Religion explained: the evolutionary origins of religious thought* (New York 2001) in particular chapter 7: *Why ritual?* 169-202; A. NEWBERG, E. D'AQUILI & V. RAUSE: *Why God won't go away: brain science and the biology of belief* (New York 2001); I. PYYSIÄINEN: *How religion works. Towards a new cognitive science of religion* (Leiden 2001); J. ANDRESEN: *Religion and mind. Cognitive perspectives on religious belief, ritual and experience* (Cambridge 2001); J. JANSSEN: *Aan de onbekende God. Reiken naar religie in een geseculariseerde cultuur* (Amsterdam 2002).

²⁸ R.L. GRIMES: *Marrying & burying: rites of passage in a man's life* (Boulder 1995); IDEM: *Deeply into the bone: re-inventing rites of passages* (Berkeley 2000).

²⁹ The biographical information concerning the scholarly career of Ronald L. Grimes was derived in particular from: IDEM: *Marrying & burying*.

Blake.³⁰ He then worked in the field of rites and myths at the Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin (from 1970 as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies). During the period 1970-1973 he came into contact with Victor Turner. Inspired by Turner Grimes decided in 1973 to carry out field research in Santa Fé, New Mexico. His book *Symbol and conquest* is based on this field research.³¹ The collaboration with Turner had considerable influence on Grimes. After being initiated in fieldwork, Grimes took up the position of Associate Professor at the Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario, Canada, where he set up the Ritual Studies Laboratory in 1975.³²

The experience gained during fieldwork in Santa Fé and the sessions in the Ritual Studies Lab form the basis of Grimes' innovative approach to ritual. A focus on the actual meaning of the ritual act, the acting body and the position of the researcher within the whole, independent of the existing ritual theories, forms the basis for Ritual Studies in Grimes' interpretation. In 1982 Grimes characterizes Ritual Studies as follows:

Ritual Studies attends to styles, stories, and experiences of both observer-interpreters and participants. It also attends to theories, typologies, and phenomenologies in order to interpret symbolic actions.³³

In his thinking and speaking about ritual, Grimes developed his own vocabulary within which combinations of four terms feature recurrently. It is relevant to present these terms here. The term 'rite' is used when referring to a specific, prescribed act, at and in a concrete time and place. These are acts that are generally recognized by members of a certain (groups) culture. 'Ritual' refers to the general idea, of which the rite is a specific instance; it is the concept that academics formulate. Grimes uses the word 'ritualizing' to describe the phenomenon of creating awareness of, and developing and cultivating rites. The fourth term, 'ritualization', refers to activities that are not considered to be rituals within the cultural frame of reference, but that are interpreted by an observer as potential rituals. We will return to the terminology and its development at a later stage.

In service of a thematic illustration of 'Ritual Studies in practice', we will focus on three central publications by Grimes in which his ritual theory is formulated. These are *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, *Ritual criticism*, and *Reading*,

³⁰ IDEM: *The divine imagination: William Blake's major prophetic visions* (Metuchen 1972).

³¹ IDEM: *Symbol and conquest: public ritual and drama in Santa Fé, New Mexico* (Ithaca 1976).

³² IDEM: *Marrying & burying* 47. The principal aim of the Laboratory, that was in existence for twenty years, was the study and assessment of ritual processes whereby the emphasis was placed on practical aspects, and on the performer's role: "Students are expected to absorb the attitudes and skills necessary to the construction of effective rites."

³³ IDEM: *Beginnings in ritual studies* 75.

writing, and ritualizing. We will not include the latest book *Deeply into the bone* here,³⁴ as this primarily concerns a thematic study of the position of rites of passage in present day culture. Where he addresses elements of ritual theory in this publication, this tends to involve repetition of existing positions (as in 'ritualizing' and 'reinvention'). We will however refer briefly to a new definition of ritual in relation to spirituality and religion.

3.2. *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (1982)

Beginnings in Ritual Studies is the first study in which Grimes systematically develops and presents his thoughts concerning ritual. The book is made up of four parts. In the first part he elaborates on the 'field within which ritual exists'. In the second part the focus is on the 'ritual process' based on three descriptions and analyses of 'everyday' acts. The third part is a discourse on 'ritual theory' based on theories from Gotthard Booth, Theodor Gaster and Victor Turner. In the fourth part Grimes turns his focus to the relationship between ritual and theatre, an interest that he shares with his teacher Victor Turner (and with the latter's wife Edith Turner). He bases this on the 'Poor theatre' concept developed by the Polish theatre critic Jerzy Grotowski. Here we will now focus on the first part of the book that deals with the theoretic framework of Ritual Studies in four themes.

3.2.1. The ritual field

The first theme is the ritual as it is experienced 'in the field' by the researcher, whereby the emphasis is on the place, the role and the 'style' of the participant/observer (both roles of the researcher can not be strictly separated in Grimes' opinion). Grimes considers fieldwork to be an essential phase in the research of ritual. According to Grimes, the style deployed in observing ritual is a determining factor. This 'style' differs from person to person, as it is a product of personal, critical attitude towards the cultural forms: "Style is the total outcome of conscious and unconscious, intellectual and emotional, bodily and attitudinal aspects of a participant-observer."³⁵ The 'style' is therefore the basic critical attitude of the participant/observer in relation to him-/herself. Grimes accuses many liturgists, among others, of not embracing this 'style', with the result that they merely observe rituals from a normative praxis without a critical diagnosis at the level of ritual acting. In addition to this certain properties of sensory dimensions are neglected: "...Christian ritual tends to idolize the so-called 'higher' senses, namely speech, and secondarily, vision."³⁶ Grimes also accuses liturgists of over emphasizing action and activity, of

³⁴ See here: POST: *Personen en patronen* 91-94.

³⁵ GRIMES: *Beginnings in ritual studies* 2.

³⁶ *Ibidem* 5.

forgetting passion and passivity, and of failing either to recognize or develop the dramatic qualities of their own ritual. Finally he accuses them of paying other ritual a disservice by mistakenly connecting Christian unicity with the Christian 'style'.³⁷ Grimes proposes approaching ritual acting openly and without bias and 'imperialism'.

3.2.2. Mapping the field

The 'style' of the participant/observer is linked to the second theme of the theoretical framework: mapping ritual. This should be done in such a way that in the description, the ritual speaks for itself; here Grimes argues for a so-called 'thick description'. For this descriptive research phase Grimes recommends six categories that function as a set of instruments. The categories that Grimes presents are known in both anthropology and liturgical studies circles and they form the basis of almost all ethnographic instrumentation: ritual space, ritual objects, ritual time, ritual sound and language, ritual identity and ritual action.

3.2.3. Modes of ritual sensibility

The third theme addresses the typification of ritual. Grimes considers the classical types such as sacral/profane, rites of passage/seasonal rites etc. to be inadequate. He proposes a breakdown of ritual in modes of 'ritual sensibility'. The six modes are: ritualization, decorum, ceremony, liturgy, magic, and celebration. These modes of ritual sensibility are complementary and not mutually exclusive.³⁸

- 'Ritualization' refers to activity that is not culturally defined as ritual but which someone, often an observer, interprets as if it were ritual. This involves everyday acts that no longer have a self-evident, pragmatic function. Ritualization starts when the performance of an act itself becomes more important than the function of that act. The process of ritualization is a basic human embodiment that is also presupposed in the other five modes of ritual.

- 'Decorum' results from our social life, as does ritualization from basic anthropological nature. Decorum concerns the social relationships of individuals within a group, and the relationship that the individuals of that group have with their surroundings. Decorum particularly entails acts and signs that are assumed to regulate the interaction between individuals. Decorum characteristically formalizes and stylises behaviour, it is conventionalised behaviour.

- Where decorum concerns the regulation of communication between individuals, 'ceremony' regulates communication within, and between, large groups. Ceremony involves an imperative force; it is a 'social drama' with power at its core.

³⁷ *Ibidem* 4-5.

³⁸ Grimes describes this mode of ritual sensibility in *Ibidem* chapter 3.

- As is the case with Rappaport,³⁹ Grimes approaches 'liturgy' in a particularly individual manner. He considers liturgy to be broader than Christian liturgy alone. Liturgy is every ritual act with an ultimate frame of reference where the enactment is considered to be of cosmic necessity: "Liturgy is as far 'beyond' us as ritualization is 'below' us."⁴⁰
- 'Magic' includes ritual enactment that, in addition to being focused on meaning, is also focused on effect. The execution is focused on power in relation to the transcendent; the transcendent framework is used to create change in the everyday reality of social interaction. Despite this focus on power, magic does not have to be manipulative. The pursuance of, or acquirement of control and/or power is not in itself manipulative, concealing that pursuance is however.
- 'Celebration' has play as its basis. That is why it seems as if this mode is spontaneous expressive play which is not aimed at achieving a result. This mode touches the important, and is often focused on categories of feast and festivity.⁴¹

3.2.4. Ritualizing, a 'soft' definition

The final theoretical theme that Grimes presents for his basic rites theory in the first part of *Beginning in Ritual Studies*, is the phenomenon of ritual dynamics: rituals emerge and develop. Grimes refers here to 'nascent ritual' and introduces the concept of 'ritualizing' for which he provides a 'soft' definition. Here he distances himself from 'hard' definitions of ritual such as provided by his teacher, Turner, in 1978: "Formal behavior prescribed for occasions not given over to technological routine that have reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers."⁴² The main objection that Grimes has here is that these definitions are too 'hard' from the point of view that they are much too exclusive and static. They label by means of exclusion. Grimes provides the following 'soft' definition of ritualizing: "Ritualizing transpires as animated persons enact formative gestures in the face of receptivity during crucial times in founded places."⁴³ In this definition the term ritualizing is very close to the already mentioned first mode of ritual: ritualization. By using the term ritualizing/ritualization, Grimes attempts to place the emphasis on the developmental dimension of ritual, on the changing and creative moment of the ritual. In this way, in addition to focusing on structure and paradigm,

³⁹ RAPPAPORT: *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity*, in which he refers to 'liturgy' and 'liturgical order', cf. 47, 118, 169s, 350.

⁴⁰ GRIMES: *Beginnings in ritual studies* 43.

⁴¹ POST et al. (eds.): *Christian feast and festival* (Leuven 2001 = *Liturgia condenda* 12) 27-41.

⁴² GRIMES: *Beginnings in ritual studies* 54.

⁴³ *Ibidem* 55.

attention is also paid to the 'originative moments' of ritual.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Grimes illustrates with this definition that ritualizing can only take place in the presence of persons who can enact (actors) and 'receive' (participants) formative gestures in concrete time and space.

Grimes goes on to link this process of ritualizing with physical embodiment, a recurring theme in Grimes' work. Grimes illustrates in numerous case studies that the body is textual from the point of view that it is 'readable'. Gestures and postures are the smallest units that the ritologist considers to have meaning.⁴⁵ These gestures and postures are stylised into actions by the actors, from which in turn ritualistic and dramatic processes (ritualizing) are created that eventually result in concrete rites that are then further developed to become ritual system. The study of ritual begins with observing gestures and postures as the first components of ritual enactment. The focus is subsequently turned to ritual system.

3.2.5. Ritual and drama

Another recurring theme is that of the fundamental link between ritual, drama and their common denominator: the performance, a concept that Theodor Gaster and Victor Turner also developed previously.⁴⁶ As in the case with physical embodiment, this is a classic theme within Ritual Studies, which is also topical in liturgical studies. Turner suggests that ritual and drama have a number of aspects in common, such as: the playing of roles and the use of rhetoric. Both are also 'performed' for an audience, knowledge and acceptance of certain rules is presumed and both progress towards a climax. For the connection, ritual, drama and theatre, Grimes focuses on the work of the Polish theatre director and theorist Jerzy Grotowski. Grotowski is of great importance to Grimes because in his 'theatre of rituals' he illustrates 'the moulding of ritual', the creation of ritual as opposed to the traditional view that ritual is 'discovered' or 'uncovered'.

3.3. *Ritual criticism* (1990)

During fieldwork and sessions in the Ritual Studies Lab, Grimes is confronted by the experience that when he observes a rite, the participants and actors are curious about his critical opinion. In addition to this, Grimes noted that when people are aware of being observed, and that their actions are being interpreted, they become more critical of themselves and those actions. This led Grimes to

⁴⁴ *Ibidem* 56.

⁴⁵ In his focus on corporeal enactment, Grimes is further provoked by the work of, among others, Gotthard Booth: G. BOOTH & A. SIIRALA: *The voice of illness: a study in therapy and prophecy* (Philadelphia 1964).

⁴⁶ Grimes discusses their theories in detail: GRIMES: *Beginnings in ritual studies* chapter 9.

the insight that the enactment of, and critical reflection on, rites are complementary. In his second book, *Ritual criticism*, he makes a structural link between ritual enactment and ritual criticism. He emphasizes this via a series of case studies. A conscious choice is made for a great diversity of cases in order to enable describing how criticism of rituals shifts in relation to the various types of ritual.⁴⁷

In *Ritual criticism*, Grimes takes up a number of issues that he presented previously in *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, including his vision on Ritual Studies: "Although ritual studies may include textual analysis, it pays primary attention to performance, enactment, and other forms of overt gestural activity."⁴⁸ Grimes goes on to use the terms rite, ritual, ritualizing, and ritualization here again. The question of the definition of ritual also returns. Where in his first book Grimes provides a 'soft' definition of ritual, in his second book he prefers to present a list of qualities that researchers have observed from rituals.⁴⁹ The advantage of this list of qualities of ritual is that it is more comprehensive than a definition and that no single quality is seen as absolute. By working with a list of qualities it is not necessary to criticize ritual because it does not belong to a particular genre: it is only required to determine which qualities are present in the rite and whether these qualities are also manifest in the 'performance' of the ritual. In this way it is possible to evaluate and improve rituals.

We will not recapitulate on this list of qualities here. This incidentally involves a list that displays strong similarity with what others do refer to as functions and dimensions of ritual (cf. performed, collective/social, emotional etc.).⁵⁰

3.3.1. Context of ritual criticism

We will focus first of all on the new concept: 'ritual criticism'. Ritual criticism is not a 'scientific field' nor is it a scientific discipline for which models are available. It is an open practice of judgement and evaluation. The practice of ritual criticism itself should not remain free from critical appraisal. Criticism can only be valid where there is also attention and understanding for the participants and observers and their personal evaluative activities. Grimes' choice of the term 'criticism' as opposed to 'interpreting' is a deliberate one, ensuring that the aspect of criticism is not concealed and that any suggestion of objectivity existing outwith the ritual process is avoided. The process of ritual criticism includes 'giving and taking' between observer and participant. The

⁴⁷ It should be noted here that all of these cases were situated in a North-American urban context.

⁴⁸ R.L. GRIMES: *Ritual criticism: case studies in its practice, essays in its theory* (Columbia 1990) 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem* 14.

⁵⁰ Cf. summarizing: LUKKEN: *Rituelen in overvloed* 47 and P. POST, A. NUGTEREN & H. ZONDAG: *Rituelen na rampen. Verkenningen van een opkomend repertoire* (Kampen 2002 = Meander 3) 39s.

observer is both specialist and authority, as well as student without an understanding of the 'true nature' of the rituals that he/she sees.

When Grimes refers to ritual criticism he presumes that ritual can also fail; here Grimes uses the term 'infelicitous ritual'. Grimes now searches for criteria against which the validity of a ritual can be measured. In order to illustrate the success or failure of a ritual, Grimes employs theories developed around speech acts (the work of Austin in particular), whereby the link between 'things that are said' and 'things that happen' is relevant. Here Grimes' theory is clearly dated.⁵¹ The Anglo-Saxon philosophical speech acts theory had at that time great influence in many sections of ritual and religious studies, something which later decreased, partially due to the specific language orientated focus.

3.3.2. Ritual criticism and Catholic liturgy

Grimes develops this perspective of ritual criticism for two specific contexts, Roman-Catholic liturgy and drama. Here we will restrict ourselves to a brief presentation of the first.

Grimes emphasizes that, as experts in the field of Christian, for example Catholic rituals, it can be expected of liturgists that they follow the functioning of the rituals critically. In his view, liturgists have long lacked a critical attitude. They miss for instance the cross-cultural perspective of the anthropologist, and it was only with the emergence of the historical-critical method in the late 19th century that they became aware of historical contextuality. With some considerable hesitation, liturgy began to be put into perspective and some attention was paid to the issue of the inculturation of liturgy. Inculturation (which Grimes does not develop as a concept) is in Grimes' opinion a fundamental process of the determining effect of the context within which liturgy takes place: "Environment is not ancillary to liturgy; it is generative of it."⁵² Grimes' criticism here is that liturgy is in many aspects as yet not adapted to the new environment to which it belongs, something which Grimes nonetheless considers to be essential: "I believe the Vatican II liturgical reform ought to continue deepening its commitment to localization in every respect, because local knowledge is the only truly universal knowledge."⁵³ Another central theme in this development of ritual criticism in relation to Catholic liturgy is the issue of sensory experience. If liturgy is to be embodied it will be necessary to pay more attention to the senses, and less to the visual and auditive dimensions of ritual enactment:

I mean that so much is aimed at eye and ear and so little at belly and foot. Liturgy, as well as the architecture and artefacts it inspires, calls upon participants to think,

⁵¹ J.L. AUSTIN: *How to do things with words* (Cambridge Mass. 1975).

⁵² GRIMES: *Ritual criticism* 53.

⁵³ *Ibidem* 53.

reflect, decide – all of which is good and necessary. But where does the worshipper have either the time or space or bodily inclination to meander in the spirit?⁵⁴

3.4. *Reading, writing, and ritualizing* (1993)

Reading, writing, and ritualizing is a volume in which Grimes collected a number of lectures and essays at the invitation of the Pastoral Press. The framework of the collection is formed by a number of domains or social settings (liturgical, public, fictive). The first part, which deals with ritual in a liturgical setting, continues along the line of liturgical criticism just dealt with. Keywords here are terms such as reinventing ritual and emerging ritual, in previous works also referred to as nascent ritual and ritualizing. The second part deals with concrete components of ritual such as objects, space and acting. In this, Grimes addresses subjects such as processions and the issues that arise when religious artefacts are exhibited in museums – themes that have also been focussed on in European literature on ritual in recent years (cf. trends towards ‘musealization’). In the last part of the book, Grimes turns his focus to ritual as it appears in literature; here he attempts to discover the ritual dimensions of a number of literary works ranging from Saul Bellow to Sören Kierkegaard. We shall now focus on the first part and on the introduction of the concepts, reinventing ritual, emerging rituals and liturgical supinity.

3.4.1. (Re)invented ritual

Starting point for Grimes’ reflections on ritual dynamics is the observation that North America is experiencing a deluge of ‘new’ invented rites. Grimes sees this as a striking example of the dimension of moulding rituality that he referred to previously via ritualizing: “Ritualizing is the activity of incubating ritual; it is the act of constructing ritual either self-consciously and deliberately or incrementally and editorially, as it were.”⁵⁵ In Grimes’ opinion it is evident that every rite has been formed by people and is continually being subjected to change and adaptation. Scientific theories concerning ritual however often fail to consider ritualizing. Grimes considers the changes that emerged in the 1960’s as a result of Turner’s ritual theory to be an improvement. Through Turners’ ideas on liminality and ritual processes, ritual is no longer conceived of as being static, structural and conservative but rather as flowing, procedural and subversive: “In effect he (Turner) reinvented ritual.”⁵⁶ Somewhat provocatively, Grimes now develops this line of reinventing ritual by means of a four-point criticism of accepted theory forming. He creates new theoretic perspectives

⁵⁴ *Ibidem* 55.

⁵⁵ IDEM: *Reading, writing, and ritualising: ritual in fictive, liturgical and public places* (Washington D.C. 1993).

⁵⁶ *Ibidem* 6.

based on the perspective of actual new rites and emphasizing the process of ritualizing. In spite of innovative impulses from Turner, among others, Grimes accuses researchers of requiring to see ritual as traditional (as opposed to invented), collective (as opposed to individual), pre-critical (as opposed to self-conscious and reflexive), or meaningful (understood as referential, as opposed to implicit and embodied). In Grimes' opinion, the phenomenon of ritualizing, once considered, will enforce a review of this vision.⁵⁷

Grimes is particularly opposed to the view that a ritual is traditional as this negates the possibility that ritual can also be invented and creative.

With regard to ritual as a collective affair, Grimes suggests that ritual is indeed necessarily collective to a certain extent: "It is necessarily collective only in the sense that anything human is; nothing escapes socialization."⁵⁸ This does not however mean that ritual cannot also be individual. For many, within the process of ritualizing, the forming of new rites is precisely an expression of their individualism, and from that point of view ritual does not by definition have to be a collective act.

In ritology it is often assumed that during rites the focus is on physical enactment, whereby reason and therefore critical awareness are switched off. We have already seen how, according to Grimes, ritual enactment and criticism can in fact coincide. This in Grimes' opinion is apparent from rituals themselves that after all involve improvisation, adaptation and amendment.

Another view that merits similar critical amendment is that ritual must necessarily be 'meaningful' in the sense that the ritual points to and contains reference to meaning outwith the actual ritual. This touches the extremely complex aspect of the function and meaning of ritual. Here the symbolic dimension of ritual is important to Grimes, in other words, to what extent symbols are the building blocks of ritual, are the carriers of meaning, and to what extent the meaning of the symbol exists in that to which the symbol

⁵⁷ By suggesting that ritual does not per definition have to be traditional, collective, pre-critical or meaningful, Grimes goes against various 'limited' ritual theories. The idea that ritual is not required to be 'meaningful' is a reference to the illustrious article by Frits Staal: F. STAAL: The meaninglessness of ritual, in *Numen* 26 (1979) 2-22; cf. IDEM: *Rules without meaning: rituals, mantras, and the human sciences* (New York 1989). Like Grimes, Staal also turns against the prevailing 'inadequate' theories that attempt to determine the meaning of rituals. The criticism delivered by Grimes (and Staal) is focused on interpretation models of a comparativist and functionalist character (Frazer, Durkheim and Geertz), psychoanalytical character (Freud, Jung) and structuralist, semiotic and culture-historical character (Lévi-Strauss, Greimas, Girard). In contrast to Staal however, Grimes argues that not all of these methods are pointless, here he is more in line with C. Bell and W. Doty who suggest that none of these theories can be exclusive and that all of them in fact contribute to the study of ritual. Cf. C. BELL: *Ritual: perspectives and dimensions* (Oxford 1997); W.G. DOTY: *Mythography. The study of myths and symbols* (Tuscaloosa 2000²).

⁵⁸ GRIMES: Reading, writing, and ritualizing 11.

refers. In this way ritual is directly linked to (referential) meaning. Subsequently Grimes is of the opinion that ritual only becomes significant or meaningful when it has a social effect. Grimes is at odds with the fact that many rites theories link the meaning of ritual to a form of reference to something outwith the ritual. According to Grimes the meaning should not be primarily sought outwith the rite but in fact within the rite itself. Grimes considers the meaning of ritual to be implicit knowledge. A rite is meaningful to the extent that it arouses memories and feelings that invoke the implicit inner knowledge of the actor/participant: "... I believe that the most interesting cultural knowledge is tacit, which is to say, preconscious, implicit, and embodied."⁵⁹

It is the new emerging, invented rites in particular that are prescribing the amendment or reinvention of current thinking surrounding ritual.

3.4.2. Emerging ritual

After invented rites, a second focal point for reflections on ritual is that of emerging ritual. This part of the book is based on a lecture given at the invitation of the North American Academy of Liturgy. The term was in fact initially provided by liturgists and would later be coined by liturgists such as Nathan Mitchell.⁶⁰ As was the case with invented or reinvented ritual, Grimes approaches emerging ritual, the new surfacing of ritual, the appearance of ritual that is still wet behind the ears, so to speak, from his own central concept of ritualizing. The process of ritualizing often takes place on the fringe, in the periphery of the culture and established mainstream repertoires. This is why it receives so little attention. Grimes deploys the theme of emerging ritual in order to present ritualizing in eight principles for the target group of theologians and liturgists.⁶¹ It is sufficient here to deal with most of these briefly. These involve (a) the principle of the basic attitude (style) of the 'student of ritual', and (b) the embodied criticism inherent in the ritual itself. For (c) Grimes proposes that ritualizing is most effective when it is meditative in nature: it assumes an attitude of acquiescence; Grimes calls this the principle of attunement.⁶² (d) The fourth principle is that ritualizing as interactive ritual has as its basis stylised and repetitive scenarios from daily life: the principle of gestural ordinariness. (e) Grimes then goes on to present the principle of the dialectic relationship between body and culture as well as between individual

⁵⁹ *Ibidem* 21.

⁶⁰ Cf. N. MITCHELL: Emerging ritual in contemporary culture, in *Concilium* (English ed.) 31 (1995) 121-129. Cf. GRIMES: Emerging ritual, in IDEM: *Reading, writing, and ritualizing* 23-38.

⁶¹ The eight principles of ritualising are bundled by Grimes in GRIMES: *Reading, writing, and ritualizing* chapter 2. The principles also feature in his earlier work: IDEM: *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*.

⁶² The term attunement, used by Grimes, is a musical analogy of an open and meditative attitude. IDEM: *Reading, writing, and ritualizing* 26-27.

and society, as a basic component of ritualizing. We have already addressed the role of physical embodiment. (f) The sixth principle is that of momentaneous community. Grimes wishes to refute the idea that in order to be effective, a community within which ritual takes place must be a sustained community. This involves a principle that is currently again high on the liturgical studies agenda: the reassessment of the central principle of liturgical renewal, namely: active participation by the entire congregation. (g) The principle of performance-dependence has also appeared regularly in Grimes' work, as has (h) the principle of ritual moulding or that of ritual inventability.

These principles caused a number of questions to arise among liturgists. The central general question is, how these principles of ritualizing are now applicable to liturgy. Grimes admits to having no ready answers to these questions, but is of the opinion that ritualizing is most effective in the periphery of society. There is a theological and church-politics spotlight directed on the centre that considerably hampers ritualizing. In relation to Roman Catholic liturgy, there is also, according to Grimes, the fact that since the Vatican Council II, the emphasis is on ritual centre in particular and that there is little ritual periphery. It is very important that once again ritual periphery is created and that it is also accepted as a creative source, as vanguard and laboratory.

3.4.3. Liturgical supinity

The phenomenon ritualizing, just now linked in particular to reinventing ritual and emerging ritual, raises the question as to how 'existing' liturgy relates here. Grimes addresses this issue by means of a lecture that he held during a symposium at the University of Notre Dame in 1992. The symposium was given the title: 'Reclaiming our rites. Reasserting ritual's authority in a pluralistic, privatized culture'. The previously mentioned motto of liturgical renewal, active participation of the entire congregation, was confronted critically with the opinion that ritual and liturgy exist by the grace of a fixed pattern supported by tradition and authority. From this point of view the development of all sorts of new and personal rituals could be seen as threatening to liturgy and its authority. Grimes opposes this anxious attitude towards ritualizing. Here he focuses particularly on that fundamental attitude. He sketches two options: liturgical erectitude and liturgical supinity.⁶³ Liturgical erectitude refers to the upright position of the body that implies a 'rising above' the surroundings: "Liturgical erectitude is a style typified by poise and verticality."⁶⁴ Next to this, liturgical supinity is introduced as the second position, referring here to lying on the back. This position is characterized by flexibility and close proximity to the ground and by integration with the

⁶³ Both terms are taken from existent attitudes within liturgy that are not restricted to certain persons, nor linked to gender or tradition.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem* 40.

surroundings. Lying down also implies a certain form of openness and vulnerability.

In Grimes' opinion, liturgy has up until now mainly adopted a position of liturgical erectitude in which the unvarying constancy of the liturgy is considered meritorious. This attitude has led to the situation where 'liturgy' is considered to be the only centre of ritual tradition and liturgists and church authorities have begun to consider this 'traditional' liturgy as the norm against which they judge the (ritual) culture within which it exists. In agreement with Lukken, we could describe this as a deductive liturgical attitude. Grimes refers to 'liturgiocentrism', in which liturgy is considered to be separate from and above the culture.⁶⁵ The attitude of liturgical erectitude denies the connection between liturgy (ritual) and culture. Grimes on the other hand proposes an inductive approach: "In short, liturgy is a cultural process itself in need of constant reformation and revision."⁶⁶ Liturgy and liturgists must adopt a more vulnerable and flexible attitude; the attitude of liturgical supinity. In this way it will become possible for liturgy to be adapted to the culture within which it exists, and as a result connect with the people that live in that culture.

In relation to this, Grimes addresses the question of liturgical authority separately. Here Grimes is critical and argues for a ritual authority that is not derived from the fact that it is bestowed or ratified by a higher power, or granted by tradition or sacred (liturgical) texts. The new attitude of liturgical supinity offers the perspective that it is possible to base the authority of ritual in another manner, from the viewpoint of the ritual itself. He refers, in connection with this, to the function (within the social context) and the effectiveness (whether it achieves explicit objectives) of ritual, and to what extent ritual is justified according to moral criteria.⁶⁷ Ritual can therefore derive authority from a preceding tradition, as well as from that which it effects. When too much emphasis is placed on the first aspect there is a danger that liturgy is considered as paradigm or norm, as heteronomous and transcendent, above all criticism and change, detached from the culture. Too much emphasis on the second aspect brings with it the risk that ritual is seen merely as a pragmatic aid, and that symbols are interpreted outwith their traditions and therefore their context. Grimes considers the presentation of the attitude of liturgical supinity to be a challenge to liturgy and liturgical studies, to for instance pose questions to its own (predominantly white, male) authorities and to listen to (female) ritual criticism: "I hope for continued, strengthened moral and cultural pressure on Christian liturgies in the direction of a more collaborative, less hierarchical, less androcentric sensibility for handling ritual power."⁶⁸ Grimes hereby considers it

⁶⁵ *Ibidem* 46-47, where Grimes explains the term liturgiocentrism.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem* 47.

⁶⁷ Grimes presents these forms of ritual authority as being popular within feminist circles.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem* 55.

to be essential that key concepts such as authority, power, order and tradition are reconsidered and reformulated.

3.5. Recent work

In this introductory contribution we have concentrated on Grimes' rites theory work from the period 1982-1993, as this contains the simultaneous development of his rites theory and vocabulary. Grimes also published regularly on theoretic aspects after this period. He compiled *Readings in Ritual Studies* 1995⁶⁹ and published an important review 'ritual' in the *Guide to the study of religion* (2000).⁷⁰ The most ecclesiastic-liturgical orientated contribution is that to a congress of European theologians (published: 1998).⁷¹ However in addition to this there is another emphatic accent that dominates his work. He focuses on the rites of passage and makes increasing use of so-called personal ritual narratives. *Marrying & burying* (1995) is entirely a personal account⁷² and also, in connection with 11 September, in his contribution to a collection dealing with disaster ritual, he investigates the boundaries of scientific discourse via a personal account.⁷³ These lines of thought come together in 2000 in the monograph on rites of passage, *Deeply into the bone*.⁷⁴ This book has been referred to previously. Besides the use of ritual narratives again, all of the theoretic perspectives already addressed are resumed, sometimes unchanged, and sometimes slightly adapted. From this rich book we will limit ourselves to presenting the ritual-description. In addition to a series of ritual qualities Grimes also provides a definition of rite by means of describing three domains in their mutual connectedness.⁷⁵ He describes ritual as "sequences of ordinary action rendered special by virtue of their condensation, elevation, or stylization"; spirituality as "practiced attentiveness aimed at nurturing a sense of the interdependence of all beings sacred and all things ordinary" and religion as "spirituality sustained as a tradition or organized into an institution." What is so refined about this description in connectedness is that attempts are made to avoid playing the social aspect against the individual aspect, to avoid separating the holy from the profane, and the spiritual from the religious.

⁶⁹ IDEM: *Readings in Ritual Studies*.

⁷⁰ IDEM: Ritual.

⁷¹ IDEM: The initiatory dilemma: cinematic phantasy and ecclesiastical rarification, in *Bulletin ET 9* (1998) 161-212.

⁷² IDEM: *Marrying & burying*.

⁷³ IDEM: Ritualizing September 11: a personal account, in P. POST, R.L. GRIMES, A. NUGTEREN, P. PETTERSON & H. ZONDAG: *Disaster ritual* (Leuven 2003 = Liturgia Condenda 15) 199-213.

⁷⁴ IDEM: *Deeply into the bone*.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem* 71.

That Grimes still concerns himself about current developments in rites theory and in particular the question of definitions and descriptions of what ritual enactment is, is apparent from a recent contribution to a volume about ritual and the media.⁷⁶ This contribution reads as a series of criticisms of the currently circulating theories on ritual, and as an argument against 'conceptual laziness' with regard to the use and description of central concepts such as ritual. We refer further to the enclosed bibliography.

4. Conclusion: three perspectives

Instead of a critical review of this concrete illustration of Ritual Studies (it was our particular intention to take a descriptive and to some extent engaging position),⁷⁷ we would like to close by presenting three perspectives of liturgical studies.

- Firstly there is, in our mind, the general perspective of the great value that 'Ritual Studies according to Grimes' can be to liturgical studies. It specifically involves working close to, or from within ritual enactment itself. For liturgical studies as theological study, this means that the question must be raised as to whether perhaps in current sacramentology too great a distance is kept from the actual ritual praxis, with the resultant failure to appreciate the integral anthropological-cultural dimension of liturgy as ritual.

- Also important as a perspective is the insight that the programme of the practice of Ritual Studies (Ritual Studies in actu as it were), as we have now presented it via Grimes, with as its sustaining concepts, ritual criticism, ritualizing and the argument for ritual supinity, in fact directly or indirectly affects the basic perspective of every liturgical studies project, namely that of liturgical inculturation.⁷⁸ It is interesting to note that within Ritual Studies, with the exception of liturgical studies, the concept of inculturation as such is non-existent. Nevertheless, it is in its own way very much present. There would now seem to be excellent prospects for linking the traditional concept of liturgical inculturation and concern for the 'liturgia condenda' in liturgical studies, with ritual criticism, ritualizing, supinity and exploration of ritual competence within Ritual Studies.

⁷⁶ IDEM: Ritual and the media, in S.M. HOOVER & L.S. CLARK: *Practicing religion in the age of the media. Explorations in media, religion, and culture* (New York 2002); cf. IDEM: Jonathan Z. Smith's theory of ritual space, in *Religion* 29 (1999) 261-273.

⁷⁷ For a critical comparison of Grimes and Lukken see: POST: Overvloed of deritualiseren; IDEM: Life cycle rituals 21-24.

⁷⁸ For liturgical inculturation see: G. LUKKEN: Inculturatie van de liturgie. Theorie en praktijk, in J. LAMBERTS (ed.): *Liturgie en inculturatie* (Leuven/Amersfoort 1996 = Nikè-reeks 37) 15-56 = Inculturation de la liturgie. Théorie et pratique, in *Questions liturgiques/Studies in liturgy* 77 (1996) 10-39.

- An important agenda item for the liturgical studies that do not avoid the Ritual Studies podium, is finally scientific-theoretical reflection on the trans-disciplinary dimension that the platform of Ritual Studies creates. Schillebeeckx wrestles with this point,⁷⁹ as does Gerard Lukken in his design of a liturgical studies programme incorporating both anthropology and theology, as yet under development.⁸⁰ We have also recently attempted to design a matrix of a liturgical studies research design in which Ritual Studies alliances have an integral place.⁸¹ Here it could prove productive to look at how Grimes wrestles with his attitude towards theology. We use 'wrestles' deliberately here. On the one hand he attempts to avoid talking about theology, while on the other he continues to talk about it in the margin. It seems as if he considers his examples of Ritual Studies to be 'pre-theological'. In the epilogue of *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* from 1982 he develops an almost theological programme with a prominent role set aside for anthropology and liturgical studies.⁸² Here we are primarily interested in what he has to say in that theological respect about religious studies as a possible 'home' for Ritual Studies. We consider this a fitting closing to this contribution:

Ritual Studies has no home. Or its home is anywhere – which amounts to the same thing. I have suggested that the field be housed in religious studies. But I am less convinced than some that theology and religious studies should, or can, divide the labor between them – theology claiming normative methods, and religious studies, descriptive or explanatory ones. If ritual studies finds a fellow traveler in hermeneutics, as I have suggested, it will regard this dualism as untenable. Description presupposes prescription and vice-versa.⁸³

⁷⁹ Cf. SCHILLEBEECKX: Naar een herontdekking.

⁸⁰ Cf. his most recent supplement to *Rituelen in overvloed*: De 'overkant'.

⁸¹ POST: Interference and intuition; IDEM: Programm und Profil der Liturgiewissenschaft.

⁸² GRIMES: *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* 267-270.

⁸³ *Ibidem* 267.

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⁸⁴ Not intended to be comprehensive.

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