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Moyaert, Marianne

published in
Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries
2019

DOI (link to publisher)
10.1007/978-3-030-05701-5_1

document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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Marianne Moyaert

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a radical shift in the relations between religions (Swidler 1990). As Catherine Cornille explains, "[r]ather than competing with one another over territories, converts or claims, religions have generally come to adopt a more conciliatory and constructive attitude toward one another, collaborating in social projects and exchanging views on common religious questions" (Cornille 2013, p. xii). Different sociopolitical factors such as globalization and various processes of secularization, pluralization, and decolonization, as well as the rise of religious extremism and the ecological crisis, help account for the so-called dialogical turn and the rapid proliferation of interfaith initiatives at local, national, and international levels (Halafoff 2013; Lamine 2004).

Toward a New Field of Interreligious Studies

Today, most mainline religious communities across the globe, whether Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, or Muslim, share the sense that promoting friendly interreligious relations is to be preferred over polemical competi-

M. Moyaert (✉)
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
e-mail: m.moyaert@vu.nl

M. Moyaert (ed.), *Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries*, Interreligious Studies in Theory and Practice,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05701-5_1

tion. Historically speaking, however, dialogue has been predominantly initiated by Christians. Especially after the Second World War and the Shoah, which happened in 'Christian' Europe, and the realization of some of the devastating effects of Christian mission on local cultural and religious communities, dialogue offered "less aggressive attitudes … for Christians to approach other religions" (Swamy 2016, p. 1). Starting in the 1960s, both the Vatican and the World Council of Churches promulgated a variety of documents promoting interfaith dialogue or addressing key theological questions related to the meeting between religions. Worldwide, this institutional support has not only given way to numerous centers for interreligious dialogue but also stimulated scholarly reflection on some of the fundamental questions related to the dialogue between religions (Moyaert 2013).

Initially, research efforts focused primarily on intentionally established encounters that took place at a formal (and often theological) level, and scholars interested in the dialogue between religions were mostly Christian theologians, often (though not always) with a Western background, who focused their attention on questions related to truth, salvation, and revelation. Is it possible for non-Christians to be saved? Are other traditions part of God's plan for salvation? Do other (read non-Christian) faith traditions contain truth? How do Christian claims to uniqueness and finality relate to similar claims made by other religions? Theologically speaking, what enables understanding across traditions? These questions were dealt with in the field of theology of religions and its by now well-known typology of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, and they were addressed by dialogical pioneers such as John Hick (1995), Paul Knitter (2002), Raimon Panikkar (1981), Alan Race (1983), and Gavin D'Costa (1986, 2000) to name some of the most important figures. However, other questions of a more philosophical/hermeneutical nature were also addressed: What are the conditions for interreligious dialogue? What are the rules for such dialogical engagement? What can we learn from the dialogue with those of other faiths? How is interreligious understanding possible and what are its limits? How do conflicting truth claims relate? But one may also think of fundamental questions about the relation between self and other, identity and alterity, openness and commitment, and questions about the (im)possibility of formulating a global ethos across traditions. Here scholars like Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway (2008, 2010), Hendrik Vroom (2006), David Cheetham (2013), Paul Hedges (2010), Marianne Moyaert (2014), and Richard Kearney (2011) come to mind.

In the meantime, interreligious initiatives continued to burgeon, taking on a variety of forms ranging from interfaith peacebuilding to scriptural reasoning, from social action across traditions to theological dialogue, from neighborly interactions at the playground to interreligious learning in the classroom, from interfaith peacebuilding to ecological initiatives supported by religious leaders from different traditions. The multiplicity of these encounters (Basset 1996) depends on who is involved, their gender and role in their respective traditions (laypeople, clergy, monks/nuns), the reason or occasion for their engagement (practical, spiritual, or theological concerns), the nature (official/informal, ongoing/one-off) and the scope of the encounter (local, national, international), and the number of traditions (bilateral or multilateral) involved as well as which religions are represented (Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.). As the interfaith movement has outgrown its original theological agenda, research into the phenomenon of interreligious relations has likewise been diversifying, and today scholars from a range of fields are starting to take an interest in the dynamic interaction between people who believe and practice differently. Pedagogues are exploring how to facilitate interreligious learning in classroom settings (Jackson 2006; Ter Avest 2012; Peace Howe 2012), sociologists probe into the impact of the multifaith movement on Western societies (Patel 2017; Halafoff 2013; Lamine 2004), psychologists ask how interreligious dialogue may contribute to a non-violent faith development (Streib 2018), and peace scholars examine the relation between religion, violence, and reconciliation (Hertog 2010; Gopin 1997; Abu-Nimer 2003). As is often the case, the more research is done, the more scholars become aware of the complexity and diversity of interreligious relations, and the more it becomes clear that the dynamic interaction between religious and non-religious communities and their adherents needs to be studied from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical angles.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, the term *interreligious/interfaith studies* is being employed to refer to the multidisciplinary scholarly field that includes those scholars who are dedicated to the study of the dynamic encounter (intentional and non-intentional, harmonious and conflictual, collective and individual, and historical and contemporary) between religions and their adherents in a variety of historico-cultural and sociopolitical contexts. “As an academic field, interfaith studies … examine[s] the multiple dimensions of how individuals and groups who orient around religion differently interact with one another, along with the implications of this interactions for communities, civil society, and

global politics" (Patel 2013). Its center of gravity is what happens in the space 'in-between' the faiths.

Part of the agenda of interreligious studies is to broaden scholarly attention from interreligious theological dialogue to other non-discursive expressions of interreligiosity that may revolve around art, song, ritual, or sociopolitical activism (or a combination of these). Theological exchange is important, but it is only one form of interreligious interaction. To better understand interreligious relations, we have to also take into account other forms of interactions. Some interreligious scholars are, moreover, concerned that a one-sided interest in interreligious dialogue, understood as an encounter between people who *represent* different traditions, may actually result in a reified understanding of religions and religious identities. Especially feminist and postcolonial interreligious scholars like Kwok Pui-Lan (2004), Anne Hege Grung (2014), and Muthuraj Swamy (2016) argue that the focus on theological dialogues contributes to a problematic presentation of collective and individual religious identities as fixed, bounded, and exclusivist, thereby ignoring the fact that, at a grassroots level, identities are often multiple, fluid, and hybrid. They continue by pointing out that, by focusing on theological interreligious dialogues, the role women play in building bridges across communities tends to go unnoticed. In addition, they take issue with the way theological dialogues have often (though certainly not always) neglected the fact that interreligious relations, both contemporary and historical, cannot be thought of apart from sociopolitical questions and power relations—as if one can discuss traditional beliefs without referencing the context in which they are practiced. To quote Anne Hege Grung, "the space of the dialogue is always connected to other spaces because the people involved are in motion." She continues highlighting how "the discourse, the conversation and the group process in the dialogue have marks of other discourses, conversations, and relations. In a critical perspective, this observation entails that inter-religious dialogues are marked in different ways by internal and external hierarchies of power and authority connected to gender, culture, ethnicity and class" (Grung 2014). Instead of imagining interreligious encounters as happening in some safe space where representatives of different traditions (often male) meet each other as equals to have a more or less rational exchange about the nature of God, feminist and postcolonial scholars draw attention to the intersectionality of identities, power imbalances, and the fact that interreligiosity is always political (Hill Fletcher 2017). That is why they underscore the

importance of shared interreligious activism, whether local, national, or international, in response to concrete oppressions and threats to human flourishing (Egnell 2003, 2009).

Broadening the Scope of Interreligious Studies: Interrituality

The current volume contributes to the critical study of interreligious relations and adds to the ongoing diversification and complexification of interreligious studies. The original idea for the book was inspired by the critical work of interreligious scholars who seek to broaden the scope of interreligious studies to redirect academic attention beyond dialogue-centered models of interfaith engagement (though many contributors, including the editor, participate in dialogue and recognize all that such models bring to theological reflection and the enhancement of friendly interreligious relations). Religion is a practice before it is a theory, and the same goes for interreligion. This volume, however, is original in that it argues that the shift from dialogue-centered models of interfaith engagement to lived interreligion should also include a turn to ritual, that is, to the way interreligious encounters happen via, through, and around age-old or new ritual practices.

Several chapters in the book showcase how a deeper understanding across traditions may be established ritually. This finding is in line with the power of symbolic practices to put together what was first separated. Symbolic actions are actions that unite (cf. *sym-ballein*): they reconcile previously conflicting parties, join individuals in a community of celebration, potentially create lines of empathy between people who inhabit different worlds and facilitate reconciliation, friendship, a shared sense of belonging or as Adam Seligman puts it "a shared as if" (Seligman 2017, pp. 65–82). Here one may think of moments of ritualized silence, prayer, or celebration, or instances of interritual hospitality; they all bear witness to the way rituals may "open a window to the deeper emotional and spiritual realities of those involved in conflict and transform a negative malignant conflict into a more positive one" (Bercovitch and Kadayifici-Orellana 2009, p. 197). However, while rituals may bond people together in communities, they also and simultaneously create boundaries, separating certain communities and their adherents from other groups and their adherents. It is not uncommon for practitioners "of any religion living in a plural society to [also] design and use rituals, or ritual behavior more

generally, as an instrument for inter-religious demarcation," protest, or even (mutual) rejection (Ter Haar 2005, p. 164). Rituals often, though not always, function as identity markers distinguishing 'us' from 'them.' Looked at from that angle, interrituality (Kreinath 2016) may also add to conflictual interreligious relations and enhance insulation.

The contributors to this book are all scholars who study interreligion through the lens of ritual, and they use the concept of *interrituality* to refer to the way(s) that interreligious encounters are concretized in the performance of embodied ritualized practices. Interrituality, as ritual scholar Ronald Grimes explains, "is the term ritual studies scholars use to describe rituals that transpire in the 'spaces' between traditions" (Grimes 2017). Here we use it to describe rituals that happen in the space between people who believe and practice differently. While the notion of the 'space in-between' may evoke an image of a clearly delineated and constructed space that ritualists may enter or leave, in reality, however, the space 'between' is far messier, the identities of the parties involved are multilayered and complex, and their intentions ambivalent. It is not always obvious to which tradition, community, or social group the ritualists belong or what facet of their identity prevails, and the question of the meaning of the ritual may receive different responses depending on whom one asks. In brief, the spaces that the 'inter' bridges are manifold. They "include those between different religious institutions, texts, belief systems, and practices; [but also] between practitioners of those diverse traditions, between those affiliated with the same tradition who differ in culture, race, gender, sexuality, literacy, and so forth; between religious and other social systems, and finally, between religion and secularity" (McCarthy 2018, p. 11). The challenge is to learn to analyze these particular cases of interrituality by mapping their complexity.

Once one endeavors to look at interreligious relations through the lens of rituals, one may find that interrituality is actually a rather widespread and multifaceted phenomenon. Interritual encounters can happen in sacred spaces (e.g., mosques, temples, churches) or in secular or quasi-secular spaces (e.g., schools, hospitals). They may be consciously organized with friendly intentions (e.g., one community inviting members of another community at the beginning of an academic year) or with antagonistic intentions (e.g., burning the Qur'an). They may be one-off choices (e.g., an invitation to a marriage) or practices that continue for a long time (e.g., multiple ritual participation possibly resulting in multiple religious belonging). They may have a political purpose of expressing a message of

peace (e.g., when religious leaders come together to pray) or belong to the intimate sphere of the household (e.g., creating new or maintaining old rituals within interfaith marriages). Old rituals may be transformed into welcoming practices, or novel rituals can be invented to accommodate challenges related to religious diversity. Sometimes religious leaders take the lead, and sometimes initiatives are taken at a grassroots level. While age-old rituals are challenged by religious others (think of a liberal university that opens the academic year with a Christian prayer and is critiqued by those who do not share the assumed Christian framework), it may also be that new rituals (sometimes in reaction to critique) are invented and designed to do more justice to diversity. Sometimes these new rituals are successful; sometimes they fail (e.g., when they, despite good intentions, lack evocative power), and the process needs to start again. Over against the view of ritual as a marginal phenomenon, this book seeks to show how often interreligious encounters are concretized ritually.

This edited volume is part of a larger four-year research project titled "Crossing Borders: Interreligious Ritual Sharing as a Challenge to Theology of Interreligious Dialogue." What prompted this research project was my realization that while rituals are at the heart of most religious traditions and are in fact among the most obvious and common religious activities (Harvey 2005), the ritual dimension of interreligious encounters has largely gone unnoticed. It is what one could call a blind spot in interreligious studies. Apart from some theological reflections on the difference between multifaith and interfaith prayer and some more practical guidelines focusing on how to be a perfect stranger, there are hardly any in-depth scholarly explorations dealing with the ritual dimension of interreligious relations (Kreinath 2016). Furthermore, those academics who did express an interest in the way that interreligious encounters happen ritually were not really interacting with each other. Their work is disconnected; it is scattered in different journals and edited volumes and discussed at different conferences and different departments.

Over the past couple of years, I created academic venues where scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds could come together to present and discuss and further develop our reflections on how the encounter between people who believe and practice differently is concretized and materialized through symbols and symbolic practices. This resulted in a first edited volume (together with Joris Geldhof, *Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue: Boundaries, Transgressions and Innovations* [2015]), the focus of which was interritual hospitality. What that volume

was examining were not newly created multireligious or interreligious ceremonies but 'indigenous' worship services to which guests are invited. One may think of *Iftar* meals to which non-Muslims are invited, interreligious meetings during *sukkot*, Christian worship services to which those who believe and practice differently are welcomed, or a *puja* ritual where holy water (*charanamrit*) and blessed sweets (*prasad*) are offered to non-Hindus. This volume brought together Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic voices to address the complexities of interritual hospitality.

This current volume, however, goes in a different direction and seeks to give a taste of the diversity of interrituality beyond hospitality, which is probably its most familiar expression. Given that interreligious relations never float *above* the action but always take on concrete expressions in different sociopolitical and historico-cultural contexts, I envisioned a book that would foreground particular cases of interrituality (mourning rituals, prayers, reading, reconciliatory rituals, etc.) in different locations (Israel, Palestine, Spain, the UK, China, and so forth), involving different agents (policymakers, monks, scholars, ordinary people, political activists, families, etc.), in different spaces (monasteries, public spaces, museums, homes). Moreover, I also envisioned an interdisciplinary book with sociologists, anthropologists, liturgical and comparative theologians, philosophers, and teachers who explore concrete cases of how interreligious relations, friendly or hostile, are concretized and materialized in the performance of embodied ritualized practices. Thus, this book, hopefully, also contributes to the proliferation of interreligious studies.

Before I present the different contributions to this volume and elaborate on how their studies may inform interreligious studies, I wish to take a step back and ask why it is that interrituality has received so little scholarly attention until now. By putting this question on the table, this chapter seeks to add to the growing body of literature that is looking to surface some of the ideological assumptions that undergird the study of interreligious relations.

Interrituality and the Critique of Religion

The fact that there is so little literature available on interrituality while interreligiosity so often revolves around ritual practices raises the more fundamental question of why. Why does the ritual dimension of interreligious relations remain under the radar of scholarly interest? Why has this

not yet been examined while so much attention has gone to understanding the opportunities and limits of interreligious (theological) dialogue?

As already alluded to above, the history of the interfaith movement holds part of the answer to this question: it were Christian theologians who initiated and continued to promote the encounter between religions, and doctrinal questions are close to their heart. Something similar could be said when philosophers of religion started considering the nature of dialogue; they too asked questions regarding conflicting truth claims and the (im)possibility of interreligious understanding, and such questions, it could be argued, steer one naturally in the direction of the workings of the mind and higher-order reflections. As Kevin Schilbrack points out, the ritualized embodiment of religious beliefs and doctrines are rarely considered by philosophers of religions (Schilbrack 2014). In a similar vein, it seems obvious that those who reflect on hermeneutical questions focus their attention on texts. After all, was it not Paul Ricoeur who said that all meaning comes through language and that whoever seeks to understand religion(s) should read, study, and compare their texts (cf. Ricoeur 1995; Moyaert 2017)? Another explanation that might be formulated is that the lack of scholarly interest in interrituality simply reflects the marginality of this phenomenon in contrast to the fact that, despite the proliferation of interreligious encounters, most continue to assume the format of dialogue.

However, the previously mentioned considerations from postcolonial and feminist scholars, who ascribe the focus on dialogue as well as the scholarly lack of interest in other forms of interreligious encounters to male dominance that privileges the mind over the body, urge us not to accept explanations that are too easy. Scholarship does not simply think through what is happening in the world; it also frames reality in such a way that some phenomena simply fall outside the research scope. And as we know, the more a topic dominates the research agenda and is covered and discussed in publications and conferences, the more other scholars (as well as other people) will regard it as important (Hedges 2010, p. 64). If interrituality remains under the radar, it may quite well be *because* it is assumed that it does not really contribute to the theorization of interreligious relations, *because* it is assumed that it does not teach us much about what is really at stake in the encounter between people who believe and practice differently and *because* it is assumed that it is of only relative importance with respect to more important questions. Given the all-pervasiveness of interrituality (which I hope this volume will give the reader a sense of), it

is necessary not only to give historical reasons for the lack of interest in the ritual expressions of interreligiosity but also to probe deeper into some of the ideological assumptions that are at the root of interreligious scholarship and may help explain why ritual has not been considered a subject worthy of consideration. I hypothesize that the eclipse of ritual practice in interreligious studies is the flipside of a modern belief-centered understanding of religion that, even though it is increasingly meeting resistance, continues to impact academia. In what follows, I will seek to bring out some of the normative ideological assumptions that underly this modern belief-centered understanding of religion and that may contribute to a disregard for ritual in religious studies as well as in interreligious studies.

Belief

For a long time, the central category in the study of religion (whether in philosophy of religion, comparative religion, comparative theology, etc.) was that of belief. Belonging to this or that religious tradition tended to be understood as believing this or that, that is, confirming or assenting to particular creedal statements such as that the world is created or that God is immanent. Indeed, ritual scholar Catherine Bell has a point when she stated that creed and belief were often seen the most plausible substitutes for the term 'religion' (2009, p. 192).

This understanding of religion in terms of belief requires some further remarks. First of all, believing is something one does with one's mind. It is sometimes said that this is why understood as thinking or reflexive beings, humans—in contrast to animals—are capable of religion. Second, beliefs do not belong to the visible, palpable, or smellable realm. Beliefs belong to the interior life; they are more or less private and may not be confused with exterior forms of religion. One cannot see beliefs, nor can they be touched or smelled. Often it is assumed that while beliefs may find expression in material and ritual practices, the latter are secondary to beliefs, which give such practices their meaning. Clearly, this does not mean that symbols, ritual practices, sacred spaces, and so on would be unimportant for particular religious communities; rather, it means that these material and ritual practices take their motivation from particular beliefs: e.g. the belief in a God who loves the least of us informs acts of charity. Fourth, the object of religious beliefs is often cast in transcendent terms—it remains hidden, unseen, untouched. Religion is understood to be "geared to a transcendental 'beyond' that [is] 'immaterial'" (Houtman

and Meyer 2012, p. 3). In its essence, religion transcends the human, temporal, and cultural realm, and any religious practice serves the purpose of directing the gaze of believers away from what is of penultimate importance to what is of ultimate importance. Little emphasis is placed here on how these beliefs connect to what human beings do with their body. Furthermore, if to believe is regarded as the essence of religion as a generic category, beliefs are regarded as the most stable aspects of religious traditions. They are the more or less unchanging core of religions and make it possible to clearly demarcate Christians from Jews and Buddhists from Hindus. This also explains why many textbooks comparing different traditions will often start by enumerating what the central beliefs of this or that tradition are. Finally, with the focus on belief comes a focus on questions of truth and questions on which religion is more true or how conflicting truth claims relate or whether or not different religions believe the same thing. Certainly, in view of the diversity of religious traditions, such questions have occupied center stage in academic debates.

To see religion as primarily a matter of belief, the human being as a mind, and the ultimate object of religion in terms of transcendence has limited the scholarly capacity to give proper weight to the material, palpable, and ritual aspects of religion: symbolic artifacts, sacred spaces, and ritual practices. Sometimes, the interior and exterior dimensions of religion were not only distinguished from each other but also placed in an antithetical and normative relation. When this happened, the result was often a certain disdain for more outward expressions of religion, that is, space, matter, and ritual (often intertwined). Massimo Rosati rightly concludes that, "seen from a cultural point of view, this emphasis on interiority, personal faith and sincerity of the beliefs ends with an idea of religiosity as a completely existential experience. … One of the first outcomes of this … focus on the introspective conscience is, from the religious point of view, the loss of relevance of ritual as a dimension of religious life itself" (Rosati 2016, p. 27).

A Very Short Genealogy of Religion

Recently, scholars of religion have begun to deconstruct this belief-centered understanding of religion, not only uncovering its history but also by foregrounding its ideological assumptions and how the latter continue to impact not only the study of religion but also the Western socio-political imagination. Scholars like Robert Orsi (2015), Richard King

(2004), Asad (1993), Manuel A. Vasquez (2011), Tomoko Masuzawa (2005), and even more recently Brent Nongbri (2013) have endeavored to develop a genealogy of the concept of religion. Without being able to do justice to the complexity and rich nuances of their work, I would like to give a highly condensed version of this genealogy, bearing in mind the central question: Whence the disregard for interrituality in interreligious studies? I suggest we focus on three key elements: the influence of Christianity, the conflict between Protestants and Catholics, and the Enlightenment and colonialism.

Several scholars have argued that the long prevailing preference for beliefs in the study of religion can be traced back to certain Christian intellectual histories and, more specifically, that the disregard for the material and ritual dimensions of religions points to the Protestant origins of *Religionswissenschaft* (Vasquez 2011, p. 3). They uncover not only the genealogy of religion and how it continues to affect our scholarly agenda but also how this belief-centered understanding of religion "has produced biased accounts of many religions, leading us to miss the diversity of religious expression in the world" (Lindberg 2009, p. 88). From its very early beginnings, the Christian tradition seems to have developed as a tradition with a great concern for orthodoxy. It can hardly be denied that a great many ecclesial controversies throughout the conciliar tradition are connected to the question of *right belief*. Over the centuries, the church defined what it was by distinguishing itself clearly from the heresies of those who had fallen away from orthodoxy. No doubt, questions about ecclesial and political power played a marked role in this history, but the theological concerns that set the agenda in Nicea (325), Constantinople (360), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451) were real and led to heated debates that sometimes lasted for more than a century. Later councils were convened to further nuance or sharpen tradition or clarify the precise position of the church on this or that theological issue, whether it be Christology, Mariology, or the nature of the Eucharist. Doctrine is at the heart of Christian tradition (both Catholic and Protestant), and philosophy offered the church the concepts it needed to formulate its creed. While those doctrinal controversies were to a large extent far removed from what occupied the minds of laypeople, one should not forget that certain doctrinal developments (certainly in the Catholic Church) actually sprang from lived religion and that the *sensus communis* was and continues to be regarded as an important source for Christian theological reflection. The example par excellence is the emergence of Mariology, which simply

cannot be understood apart from the deep spiritual devotion to Mary among the faithful. Doctrinal questions about orthodoxy were often intertwined with religious practice. Some theologians, like David Fagerberg and Alexander Schmemann, have even made a strong case arguing that liturgy is the foundation of theology and that theological insights sometimes develop while one is celebrating and that these insights may alter, transform, and correct the church's theologizing about tradition (and the other way around). For discerning truthful beliefs, they argue, liturgy is an important theological site to consider. "Lex orandi establishes lex credenda" (Schmemann 1990).

If Christianity has "long included a central focus on creedal statements, the Reformation and its repudiation of Catholic sacraments and 'works righteousness' underlined this focus on belief even more" (Schilbrack 2010). A turn inward and away from outward religious expressions was set in motion, and this turn took on polemical proportions leading to heated debates on 'true Christianity.' This depiction of 'true Christianity' would later become the model of true and authentic religiosity, understood as revolving around "private belief, imperfectly represented by 'external' manifestations such as symbols, rituals, and institutions" (Vasquez 2011, p. 3). In his work, Robert Orsi zooms in on how the collective memory of the conflict between Protestants and Catholics is deeply encoded in the DNA of our modern understanding of religion and, if I may add, is at the root of a modern suspicion vis-à-vis material and ritual manifestations of religion. I quote him at length:

> Encoded within the DNA of religion-as-belief, however, was the memory of early modern violence, in particular the mutual hatred of Protestants and Catholics, and especially, with the development of the study of religion in Protestant or post-Catholic contexts, by a fierce anti-Catholicism. "Belief" named a way of being religious that was the antithesis of Catholicism, of its hierarchy, its onerous proliferation of rules and sins, its saints, miracles, rituals, gestures, and above all the Catholic experience of the presence of the holy in matter, in things—first of all in the consecrated Host, and also in relics, in features of the natural environment (in grottos, rivers, stones, and trees), in statues, images, in the movements and gestures of bodies, in oils and water. (Orsi 2015, p. 19)

While risking the accusation of caricaturing religious history, Orsi interprets this conflict in terms of presence versus absence, a conflict that reached its climax in the debate on the nature of the divine body in the

host (Orsi 2016). The debate on the religious meaning of the table communion/Eucharist actually revolves around two different understandings of religion: one gravitating toward expression and the other toward presence. In the first case, religious symbols point beyond themselves to what is transcendent, to what cannot be grasped. In the second case, the idea is that the sacred moves in what is tangible and visible, and hence the importance of concrete religious aspects. From this perspective, it becomes understandable why bodily contact with certain symbols is so important—eating the host, kissing a statue, touching a relic, and so on.

The conflict between Protestants and Catholics took on violent form, and for a long time Europe (with France, Spain ruling over the Low Countries, and England as its key players) became the ground for the so-called bloody wars of religion. In this context, not only politicians but also philosophers began to ask how these conflicts could be settled in a way that stability could be restored and these never-ending arguments about which kind of Christianity was true could cease. This question triggered the tradition of tolerance and its accompanying privatization of beliefs as it is now known (in different forms) in liberal democracies. As is fairly well-known, this too added to the normative understanding of religion as individualized, spiritualized, dematerialized, and deritualized. Authentic religion came to be understood as humble and pious and caring little for outward show: deep down, religion is a matter between the believer and his God. Form is opposed to meaning, ritual to the spiritual, the outer to the inner, and mind to body. Material and ritual practices came to be surrounded by an air of insincerity and even worse by the risk of idolatry. They came to be "classed with superstition (shallow, unreasoning action) or with habit (a customary, repetitive, thoughtless action)" (Smith 1987, p. 31).

This suspicion vis-à-vis religious expressions that revolve too much around exteriority found an ally in the Enlightenment with its focus on rationality. Materialized and ritualized expressions of religion came to be associated with superstition and immature, childish, or even primitive religion. As this binary between form and matter, inside and outside, belief and ritual, and mind and body got caught up in the history of Western colonialism, it became part of a hermeneutical framework to understand Indigenous people and to evaluate their developmental status. From the perspective of a certain elite, strange ritual practices were regarded as remnants of a primitive past, existing solely among the "ignorant and superstitious classes of modern Europe" and "among the lowest savages surviving

in the remotest corners of the world," unable to distinguish between matter and spirit (Frazer 1993, p. 49). What began as a dispute between Christians about divergent conceptions of presence not only "became a point of absolute division between Catholics and Protestants" but also turned into "one of the normative categories of modernity" and the way religions would be conceptualized and categorized (Orsi 2015, p. 9). With the dominance of Christian Europe in the nineteenth century, this (Protestant) dematerialized understanding of religion has found its way into academia and into the study of religion as a universally applicable category: "its injunctions applied to everyone at all times and in all contexts" (Gombrich and Gananath 1988, p. 216). Thus, Protestantism, "grounded in the iconoclasm of the Reformation," came to be "regarded as the prototype of modern religion" (Houtman and Meyer 2012, p. 9). The result: a belief-oriented (and text-oriented) understanding of religion.

Toward a Ritualization of Interreligious Studies

This understanding of religion has been and continues to be challenged by religious scholars, who not only uncover its (problematic) history but also argue that it is simplistic as well as incorrect to cast off symbolic practices as archaic forms of human action belonging to the world of primitive religion. Even though no self-respecting scholar of religion would still uncritically embrace any of the above-described binaries and even though the genealogy of religion is now part and parcel of religious studies (with an ongoing debate on whether or not the term religion can be retained), the academic discipline of the study of religion is entangled with this Western European history of Christian conflicts, Enlightenment, and colonialism. Even if the genealogy of religion is being critically discussed today, the idea that beliefs provide the most obvious avenue to understanding other traditions continues to hold sway, and the turn to lived religion, that is, to the way religion is practiced, is far from standardized.

Several interreligious scholars have also engaged in a critique of religion and some have even asked how one might engage in the study of interreligion beyond religion (Thatamanil 2010). They have mainly focused their criticisms on how a belief-centered understanding of religion leads to a reification of 'world religions' as bounded and monolithic entities that are in fact far removed from lived religion. This has not, however, translated into a critique of the so-called spiritualization and interiorization of religion and how that may limit the understanding of interreligious relations.

On the contrary, I am inclined to say that the individualized and spiritualized understanding of religion sketched above continues to hold sway in the so-called interfaith movement and amongst interreligious scholars. One of the reasons for this is that this spiritualized concept of religion is understood to be beneficial to dialogical collaboration and to diminish potentially violent claims to exclusivity. This may also explain the long-term appeal of the pluralist interpretation of religions (Hick 1993), which shows remarkable similarities with some of the modern Protestantized assumptions regarding religion outlined above and the model of 'absence' rather than that of 'presence.' According to the pluralist paradigm, different religions are historico-culturally determined expressions of the Ultimate Real that is in itself ineffable and mysterious. This Ultimate Real functions as a common ground that underlies the different traditions, and the latter provide various more or less equal soteriological paths. On my reading, the pluralist hypothesis tallies with the modern bifurcation between inside and outside, that is, between religious experience and historico-cultural expressions as well as with the concern about idolatry, that is, an over attachment to the concrete, material, and ritual forms of this or that religion. The general assumption is that what is shared across traditions is *faith in this ultimate reality*, while the differences, whether doctrinal, material, or ritual, however important, are relative vis-à-vis this common core, and their importance should not be exaggerated. Indeed, by far the gravest error possible is to confuse what is of ultimate concern and what is of penultimate concern. Religious people make exclusivist claims when they forget about this distinction and may even turn violent. Interreligious dialogue, moreover, would offer believers a chance to exchange perspectives and learn to appreciate the idea that all believers are pilgrims on the way to the same ultimate, ineffable reality, albeit via other ways. The different material and ritual traditions, including their symbols, spaces, and rules, may help inspire people and orient people toward the ultimate, but they are not what matters most. Against this background, it should not come as a surprise perhaps that a great deal of research has been and continues to be focused on discursive forms of encounter, on textual exchanges and hermeneutical questions, while the way interreligious encounters happen ritually remains under the radar.

This volume seeks to contribute to the ritualization of interreligious studies and the different contributors to this volume agree that changing our understanding of religion by appreciating the centrality and importance of material and ritual practices will also lead to a more complex and

diversified understanding of interreligious relations. If we take seriously the view that rituals are at the heart of religion as it is lived, would it not make sense to make it one of the focal points of the study of interreligiosity and ask how interreligious encounters happen ritually? And, inversely, as interreligious scholars draw attention to interrituality and some of the specific challenges implied, might this not help to rectify the still widespread idea that ritual practices are, religiously speaking, only of secondary importance? Might the study of interrituality not help redirect scholarly attention to the significance of (sacred) space, (symbolic and ritual) objects, (ritual) rules of engagement, (right) performance, and distinct roles? Might it not help to nuance and complexify our understanding of the possibilities and limits of interreligious relations? To support this turn to ritual, I suppose it makes sense to build on insights from ritual studies.

Interrituality and Ritual Studies

Ritual studies emerged as part of a polemical debate on how to study religion. Scholars who later called themselves ritual scholars reacted against the so-called textualism of most religious studies, that is, the scholarly assumption "that was needed to make sense of religion was to understand the sacred books of the world's so-called major religions" (Grimes 2014, p. 81). They "resist the tyranny of the book" and reject the modern 'despising of' and 'disregard for' rituals as 'premodern,' 'primitive,' and 'unscientific' behavior. To their mind, ritual performances are the tangible, palpable, and visible evidence of the fact that there is more to religion than the affirmation of beliefs as written down in texts.

Defining Ritual

Ritual scholars struggle with defining what they study exactly. Definitions tend to be either too broad or too narrow; they tend to include *too much* (making it almost impossible to distinguish between neurotic behavior, habits, and rituals) or they include too little. When entering the field of ritual studies, one is immediately overwhelmed by the variety of definitions and the manifold theories (Snoek 2006, p. 3).

There are of course many people who regret the manifold definitions of ritual and who would like to define what ritual is in a clear-cut way. I am not one of them. I tend to agree with Catherine Bell and Ronald Grimes who state that ritual simply has too many dimensions, meanings, functions,

and locations to define it. Indeed, the meaning of 'ritual' depends on the context. Definitions tend to be too abstract to be able to capture the multiplicity of ritual behavior. Instead of formulating a hard definition in which all ritual expressions can find their place, it may help, perhaps, to formulate some family resemblances and characteristics. Most ritual scholars highlight rituality as formal, repetitive, and (more or less) stable and customized behavior; it harks back to conventional practices established by fixed traditional protocols handed down from one generation to the next in a particular community. From this perspective, ritual performance seems to imply conformity to traditional rules of stipulated patterns of behavior, clearly implying a resistance to innovation. Moreover, instead of creativity and originality, it is right performance—acting in accordance with the prescriptions of the faith community—that is an important dimension of most rituals. This focus on a fixed sequence of actions (potentially) frees the ritualist from being overly preoccupied with him- or herself, thereby enabling both a connection to the community and a participation in a greater narrative: rituality can bind people together in one religious community that shares a single destiny and a collective memory. It also frees the ritualist from the burden of being creative and original all the time and it enables him/her to navigate complex situations, for example, dealing with death and mourning.

One of the things that I have learned from studying ritual and interrituality is that the emphasis on ritual conformity and stability should not be overstated either. Rituals, first of all, do change over time, they are "dynamic, alive, supple, and open to constant flux" (McClymond 2016, p. 5). While rituals have the power to interrupt the order of daily life, there is not a brick wall between mundane life and ritual life. Changing sociopolitical conditions, unexpected events, novel experiences and findings, and so forth may interrupt and challenge ritual practices, just as the latter may help people to respond to and navigate emerging and shifting conditions in the mundane world. Ritualists are not passively programmed to enact ancient symbolic practices as they have always been performed, they are always actively engaged in the ritual: not only do they *perform* the ritual, but, as hermeneutical beings, they also *interpret* the ritual they perform and, moreover, they think through rituals (Schilbrack 2004), and in the course of ritual performance people may develop novel insights and reflections. Rituals, furthermore, can also be the subject of explicit discussion and critique (Grimes 1990, pp. 103–22), and ritualists can take a leading role in changing the ritual practices in which they are involved or can

develop new rituals in response to novel challenges. Certainly in view of the topic of this chapter, interrituality, this is important. The lived experience of religious diversity seems to demand a ritual response. The ritual response will vary from context to context, but in each context ritualists are actively involved in the process of making strategic decisions about how they will relate ritually to other religious traditions. Sometimes rituals open up fields of ambiguity, friction, and renewal.

Classifying Rituals

One of the things that will become clear from reading this book is that interrituality takes on a variety of expressions. What came to the surface during the many discussions that led to this volume is that there are so many different elements that contribute to particular manifestations of interrituality. This finding challenges abstract theoretical discussions that seek to answer questions like: *Can we pray or celebrate together with those who believe and practice differently* or *can the sacred be shared across traditions?* While this book, in its introduction, conclusion, and various chapters, seeks to contribute to the theorization of interrituality, the different contributors share an interest in some kind of bottom-up approach in which they focus their attention on concrete cases of interrituality. To understand what is happening, what works and does not work, and to what extent a ritual enabled border-crossing or, alternatively, a reinstatement of boundaries, one has to engage in an analysis of the ritual at hand. While I do not think it is useful to aim at any exhaustive overview, the following questions seem to be pertinent from this perspective:

(a) What is the *sociopolitical context* in which this ritual occurs?
(b) What is the *power relation* between the ritualists involved: more or less equal or unequal (e.g., majority/minority; colonizer/colonized; and so on) and how does the sociopolitical context affect the ritual?
(c) *Who* are the ritualists, and what is their role in their respective communities (laypeople, clergy)?
(d) *Where* does the ritual occur (spatial dimension): sacred space, shared sacred space, public realm, home?
(e) *What* do the ritualists do, and what do they not do?
(f) What is the *occasion* for this interritual performance?

(g) *When* is the ritual done (on a daily basis, in a liturgical season, occasionally, etc.)?
(h) Is the ritual under scrutiny a *novel* ritual or an *age-old* practice?
(i) Which *religious traditions* are involved, and what is their historical relationship?
(j) Is there a good balance in the religious traditions represented (actions, space, ritualists, etc.)
(k) *What kind of ritual* is performed (prayer, ceremony, worship, pilgrimage, mourning ritual, feast, etc.)?
(l) *Who is the ritual for*—those who perform it, or is there another intended audience?
(m) What *ritual objects* are handled, how and why?
(n) What is the purpose of the ritual (to communicate a message, enable deeper understanding, reinforce identity boundaries, transform boundaries, socialize children, cultivate a shared culture, etc.)? Is the purpose of the ritual the same for all those involved?
(o) Is the ritual felicitous or infelicitous and from which perspective?
(p) How is the ritual received by non-participants?
(q) Do the rituals performed have an effect on the home traditions and their theologies of the religious other?

Given the fact that ritual is such a complex and multilayered phenomenon, according to Ronald Grimes, its meaning can be grasped only by a combination of theories and by drawing on more than one discipline because each perspective seeks to explain different aspects and dimensions of ritual. This is one of the reasons why I invited scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds to contribute to this volume. Bringing different approaches in conversation with one another and making room for mutual critique will make clear which aspects go unnoticed and which issues remain unaccounted for and how single theories may be further refined.

The different contributors to this book, whether sociologists, anthropologists, liturgical theologians, or political scientists explore concrete cases of how interreligious relations, friendly or hostile, are concretized and materialized in the performance of embodied ritualized practices. They ask how do people with different religious backgrounds use rituals to negotiate their relation with those who believe and practice differently? What role do rituals play in their effort to build bridges between communities or reestablish demarcations? How does participating in the rituals of another tradition help one gain a deeper interreligious understanding that

moves beyond the discursive into the aesthetic? Can rituals facilitate the process of interfaith reconciliation, and what stumbling blocks can one expect? How do rituals play a role in the governance of religious diversity and, moving to the more 'intimate sphere' of multifaith families, how do they handle conflicting ritual practices? Each of these chapters will zoom in on a different expression of interrituality: shared pilgrimage, rituals of contest and reconciliation, multireligious public disaster rituals, and so on, and each of these chapters will bring the reader to different historico-cultural locations, whether it be Spain after the terrorist attacks on Las Ramblas or mixed families in Southern Fujian, from Christian Holy Land pilgrimages led by an Israeli-Jewish guide to Buddhist and Catholic monks engaged in acts of ritualized silence. To further promote interaction between different disciplinary takes on interrituality, I assigned a respondent to each chapter to formulate insights and questions that come to his/her mind when learning about this or that particular case of interrituality. The respondents make explicit how they would approach this specific case differently given their specific disciplinary background, that is, other theories to might be employed or areas that could be explored. They may also highlight some questions or issue that may be useful for the readers to consider or formulate criticisms about the chapter. As this book may be used in (master) programs or courses of Interreligious/Interfaith Studies, we hope the respondents will encourage debate and further reflection.

The book does not intend to be exhaustive, and many cases were not included, but that should not be a problem. The goal of this book is to enable the reader—perhaps a student, a practitioner, or fellow interreligious scholar—to start looking differently at interreligious relations and to broaden the scope of this emerging field. It is my hope that the questions I formulated above may be used (in a classroom setting) to analyze the rituals presented in this volume.

Overview of the Different Contributions

In her chapter "Interreligious Events in the Public Space: Performing Togetherness in Times of Religious Pluralism," the Spanish sociologist Mar Griera focuses her attention on the interreligious mourning ceremony held after the terrorist attacks that took place in Barcelona on August 17, 2017, killing 13 and injuring around 100. She situates this interreligious mourning ceremony within the larger framework of the multifaith movement that, especially since 9/11, has sought to develop a counter-narrative

to the dominant narrative of radicalization, extremism, and religious violence. Griera highlights that public interreligious ritual performances have served as forms of dramatization (Alexander 2010) of this interreligious counter-narrative, and she adds that these interreligious public rituals also help shape and enhance this counter-narrative. Ritual performance, one might say, has the evocative power to visualize and project an alternative to social conflict and, for those who participate in the ritual, this 'utopian perspective' becomes a reality. Writing from a sociological perspective, Griera's contribution raises questions about the way such multireligious celebrations, like the one set up after the terrorist attacks in Barcelona, are used by policymakers to *govern* religion. Indeed, the majority of public multireligious rituals, whether in Spain or elsewhere, are "either directly organized by public authorities or by a partnership between public actors and religious communities/interreligious organizations." Usually, interreligious organizations or interreligious experts are called upon to help public authorities create rituals that function as some kind of mise-en-scène of multireligious togetherness. The ritual is supposed to symbolize a plural 'we.' To explore how this plays out in an actual ritual, Griera, taking a microsociological approach, focuses her attention on the public multireligious ritual that was organized after the attack on Las Ramblas. Based on participant observation and interviews, she examines both the back and the front stage of this ritual performance. What negotiations were going on behind the scenes, negotiations about whom to involve, and on what grounds? Where would the ritual take place and why? What symbols and symbolic actions could be performed? What message were the organizers trying to convey? How did they seek to communicate their message? In my view, this chapter evokes many sociopolitical questions about how interreligious organizations collaborate with public authorities to govern religion and to what extent such multireligious rituals force religious communities in a certain direction, namely, that of 'good religion,' understood as open, liberal, and domesticated. It evokes questions about who is included and who is excluded and urges interreligious scholars to ask critical questions about some of the ideological assumptions concerning religion and religious diversity that undergird the 'interfaith movement.' However, Griera's chapter also shows just how difficult it is to negotiate religious differences, how challenging it is to find meaningful symbols capable of bridging gaps, and how difficult it is to avoid vagueness and meaninglessness. Much gets lost in translation when trying to find common ground between different religious traditions in the ritual realm.

The ritual practice Griera describes is an outward-facing (public), intentionally created, novel, multireligious mourning event set in Spain where the Catholic Church continues to occupy a dominant position, while other religious and non-religious actors are trying to claim a role in this society. The chapter by Nina Fischer takes us to a very different world, namely, that of Israel and Palestine. Rather than focusing just on one particular expression of interrituality, Fischer—writing as a cultural studies scholar—focuses her attention on the way different parties, namely, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, use prayers to protest. Without denying the spiritual nature of these prayers, their significance goes beyond that of worship. Fischer emphasizes how these prayerful performances are actually 'audience-driven'; they imply spectators. With Ronald Grimes, we might argue that these prayers are located at the border between ritual and theatrical performance (Grimes 2014). Fischer considers three different types of prayers that function as political statements about what the worshipers consider to be injustices. Her first case revolves around Palestinian Muslims and some Christians who pray on the streets to protest their marginalization in Israel. Her second example goes in a different direction and focuses on an "Israeli fringe group with growing mainstream support," that is, Jews who challenge the fact that only Muslim ritual is allowed on the Temple Mount by secretly praying there. Finally, she considers the heavily mediatized prayer of Pope Francis at the Israeli West Bank Barrier in Bethlehem in 2014, which many observers as well as Palestinians interpreted as a political statement in support of the Palestinian struggle. These three prayers clearly have a spiritual and religious dimension but they cannot be understood apart from the sociopolitical realm in which they occur. Even though one may never retrieve the *precise* intentions of the ritualists involved and even though Fischer does not have access to the way the different ritualists understand the rituals in which they participate, her point that these prayers are acts of protest is well taken. In a similar though different vein as Mar Griera, she highlights the intertwining of the religious and the political. If, in Griera's chapter, interrituality is supposed to express interfaith solidarity, Fischer's interritual prayers express protest and mutual rejection in a context of ongoing conflict and unequal power relations. As she puts it: "In the contested space of Israel/Palestine when religious ritual can become a political performance, interrituality as an interreligious practice shows a contrastive rather than a transformative impetus: these are not communities of prayer that encourage coexistence or dialogue. They draw attention to the imbalance of power relations so prevalent in this context."

In my chapter, I focus attention on an interreligious practice that has come to be known as scriptural reasoning. This interreligious practice invites the so-called People of the Book—Jews, Muslims, and Christians—to read and reflect on (engage in reasoning) their sacred scriptures together. In an effort to push back on modern critiques of religion (according to which religions are precritical and naïve), this practice and those involved in it want to show that religion is not contrary to reasoning and that scriptural traditions should be taken seriously as the rich sources of wisdom they truly are. At first glance, this practice presents itself as a textbook example of how textual fixation works: consider its focus on the mind (rather than the body); thinking (rather than doing/performing); elitism (rather than lived religion); scholars (rather than other believers); intertexting (rather than interriting); reading (rather than sensing, tasting, smelling, touching, etc.). In this chapter, I, however, develop another approach to this interreligious practice by suggesting that this practice could also be regarded as a collective performative practice of interreligious hospitality that occurs in a special space (Abraham's tent) and follows a rule-governed pattern, emphasizing interreligious courtesy. Not only is my chapter relevant for a better understanding of this specific practice, but, more importantly, it foregrounds why ritualized patterns of behavior have a key part to play in the formation of people capable of navigating our religiously diverse world. I argue that, if we want to change or alter the exclusivist mindsets of people, we need to start by developing ritualized counter-practices that invest in cultivating the virtue of hospitality. In my reading, before anything else, this is what scriptural reasoners seek to do. Scriptural reasoning is a novel interritual practice that engages Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the tent of Abraham. It is an intentionally organized expression of interritual hospitality aimed at transforming the relations between those involved. This chapter also counters any opposition between rituals and texts or between practice and dialogue or mind and body. Thus it underscores that the argument made in this book that the scope of interreligious studies ought to be broadened so as to include interrituality is not an argument 'against' texts, dialogue, or the use of the mind, it is an argument against the one-sided scholarly focus on theological dialogues. The chapter on scriptural reasoning highlights that scriptures are also ritual objects, that interrituality may revolve around texts and that interreligious learning requires a training of mind and body.

The chapter by James Farwell, though coming from a completely different perspective, also draws attention to the intertwining of theology

and rituality. Farwell is a comparative theologian with a specific interest in Buddhist-Christian engagements. Comparative theology is still a rather novel theological approach that is original in the way it combines confessional theology—faith seeking understanding—and comparative studies of religion. Considering that one of the major theological questions of today is how to make sense of Christian faith in light of the plurality of religions and vice versa, comparative theologians argue that we should probe deeply into the rich diversity of the traditions of those who believe and practice differently. If, moreover, we take seriously the view that 'religion' as such does not exist but is always embedded in particular traditions that are internally plural due to historical shifts and cultural differences, they contend that we should refrain from making generalized claims not only about religion and religious plurality but also about Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and so on and that we should rather focus our attention on the particularities of these traditions and pay closer attention to their complex (and often internally diverse) self-understanding. Comparative theology usually begins with a study of texts, scriptural texts, that have been canonized and commentaries on these texts—as well as philosophical, theological, and mystical treatises. Thus, the comparative theologian reads, contemplates, and compares religious texts from two traditions and explores how, from a careful back-and-forth reading between religious texts, new questions and theological insights emerge (O'Donnell 2018, p. 259). In an effort to avoid *Hineininterpretierung*, that is, projecting one's own assumptions onto a strange text, comparative theologians will engage in a close reading, which includes situating the text passage in question in its larger textual framework, exploring its historical/cultural context of origin, examining its literary genre, and probing its reception history and the history of its impact. Usually, they will also draw upon different commentaries, consult various translations, and seek the guidance of scholars from within the textual tradition under scrutiny. In his chapter, James Farwell asks if we can move beyond the textual focus of comparative theology and if a liturgical turn in comparative theology is possible. What would such a liturgical turn entail and how might a crossing over into a foreign 'liturgical' tradition and participation in foreign ritual practices result in novel theological insights? His contribution takes us to encounters between Buddhist and Christian monks, who met on several occasions and participated in a dialogue of experience. After mentioning several key figures in these monastic interfaith meetings—Le Saux, Merton, and

Griffiths—Farwell focuses his attention on the Gethsemani Encounters between Buddhists and Christians held at the Cistercian Abbey of our Lady of Gethsemani in Kentucky, Merton's monastic home, and on the rituals performed during these meetings. He asks what difference these rituals made to the experience of the practitioners, particularly for their engagement with their *religious other* and what this means for the so-called liturgical turn to doing comparative theology?

Jackie Feldman's chapter takes us again to Israel/Palestine, but he zooms in on Christian Holy Land pilgrimages. His main interest is the interreligious and intercultural interaction that emerges between the Christian pilgrims, their pastor, and often the Jewish-Israeli guide as well. Based on three decades of experience guiding Christian groups and interviews with guides, pastors, and pilgrims, he demonstrates how Christian pilgrims and Jewish guides negotiate their expectations and commitments through ritual performance in the charged landscape of the Holy Land. While the convergence of Christian pilgrims and Jewish guides over the significance of the Land and its sites creates avenues for shared discourse, the developing interaction reflects a wide variety of different attitudes toward Judaism, Christianity, and the relationship between the two. In these groups, Christian pilgrims' initial religious views may be either confirmed or challenged through the guide's presentation of Christian holy sites, the Bible, and his own life history. In this context, Jewish guides may struggle with their attraction to and repulsion toward Christianity and their own Jewish commitments in the course of shepherding pilgrims through the Land. In this remarkable chapter, Feldman provides a vivid picture of how Israeli tour guides make use of rituals to cross and reinforce identity boundaries and how it sometimes takes a ritual performance to notice the otherness of the religious other.

Dionigi Albera also self-identifies as a cultural anthropologist who has taken an interest in lived religion and interreligious interactions at a grassroots level. He takes us to the Mediterranean where he examines ancient sacred pilgrimage sites that are visited by both Muslims and Christians to worship Mary. He explains that the figure of Mary transcends her role in Christianity and that there is also an Islamic Mary, with a prominent role in the Qur'anic revelation. Many Christian sanctuaries consecrated to Mary have been and still are visited by Muslims. This centuries-long Muslim attendance at Christian Marian shrines offers fertile ground for the study of the interaction between believers from different religious traditions. Albera's ethnographic study provides insight into the different

strategies ritualists use at shared pilgrimage sites and draws our attention to a variety of practices that stem from interritual encounters at these sites. Albera's contribution foregrounds the different ways practitioners from Muslim and Christian communities may share and not share sacred space and rituals of worship. He mentions co-presence, interaction, and merging. Albera's chapter deals mainly with forms of interrituality that arise through individual, idiosyncratic choices at the level of the ordinary faithful. This may offer an interesting comparative counterpart to the study of more structured and institutionalized manifestations of contemporary interrituality. At the very least, his chapter challenges the idea that shared worship is impossible. Moreover, by foregrounding the long history of these practices of interritual mixing, Albera reminds us that peaceful interfaith engagement is not a new and modern phenomenon but has existed for centuries, albeit in non-dialogical forms. At the same time, one may ask to what extent these shared pilgrimage sites actually enable interfaith learning, that is, learning across traditions and whether these age-old practices impact theologies of religions.

It may be interesting to read Albera's chapter together with the chapter written by Bram Colijn, who explores interrituality in the context of contemporary China. While Colijn's chapter is set in an entirely different context, he also surfaces different strategies ritualists use to negotiate conflicting practices and beliefs. Since the end of Maoism and the initiation of political reforms in 1978, the Chinese people have had greater freedom to organize and participate in communal rituals. In this context, in the region called Southern Fujian, both a revival of popular religion and a wave of conversion to Protestant Christianity are taking place. Colijn's ethnographic research examines how practitioners in these different ritual systems live together as spouses, as parents and children, as grandparents and grandchildren. His chapter zooms in on the ethnographic example of a young married couple who converted to Protestant Christianity, a decision that was not welcomed by the husband's family. Their conversion presents them with concrete ritual challenges when they are expected to participate in the annual Spring Festival. Not unlike Albera, Colijn also asks what strategies people use when navigating a religiously and ritually diverse context. His case study brings out how, because of their conflicting ritual obligations, members of pluriprax households often face complex choices: Should they *abstain* from each other's communal rituals or engage in *polytropy*, that is, perform rituals from multiple ritual systems. He even argues that abstention, that is, to not participate, is a ritual performance itself.

The chapter written by Elisabeth Arweck also focuses on mixed-faith families, but now in the context of the UK. Arweck explores the role of ritual and interrituality in families, especially with regard to the processes of socialization. Mixed couplehood is *a doing*, that is, a way of living together that includes ongoing negotiation, and Arweck's chapter shows that ritual is an ambiguous phenomenon and a site of possible conflict. These families have to find concrete answers to questions like: What do we do together and what will we do separately? Which rituals will we hold on to and which rituals no longer have any meaning for us? What will we do with the children, given the fact that rituals play such an important role in religious formation processes? The question of how to raise children tends to bring different points of view to the fore as parents need to decide which, if any, rites of passage they will engage in and how and where these will be performed. If most interreligious scholarship has focused on discursive exchanges revolving around beliefs, Arweck's contribution brings out that, in these families, disagreement may not arise at the level of truth claims but rather at the level of what individuals consider important in terms of symbols and symbolic practices. Ritual practices are 'condensed sites' where an array of converging/conflicting loyalties, commitments, and traditions intersect: personal experiences, family traditions, and religious obligations. However, there is no need to overly dramatize these challenges, as mixed-faith families may be flexible in such matters, negotiating boundaries, creating new rituals, and finding ways to reconcile potentially divisive differences. If nothing else, these mixed families show ritual creativity at work and highlight that ritualists do not simply perform already existing rituals but also create new practices.

The chapters by Alana Vincent and Mark Godin both focus on interreligious rituals of reconciliation, albeit in entirely different contexts. Alana Vincent, a post-Shoah scholar, focuses on the complex fields of Christian-Jewish relations. She starts by pointing out that the study of Jewish-Christian dialogue is primarily the study of documents that have been promulgated over time. Ritual performances tend to be read as supplementary to, and confirmatory of, the doctrinal positions expressed in the document record. Vincent, however, suggests that scholars revisit the post-Shoah history of Christian-Jewish interactions through the lens of ritual. She focuses her attention on three areas. First of all, she approaches the production of the documents themselves as a ritualized activity, which seems to follow the same pattern time and again. While some interrituals may help to interrupt and challenge tradition, in this case—according to

Vincent, the opposite is true. The ritual of producing documents at set times actually serves to protect the doctrinal position of the Christian churches and bracket ecclesial responsibility. A second expression of interrituality that catches her attention is more obvious, namely that of the entry of Pope John Paul II into Jewish spaces (the synagogue in Rome and the Western Wall). Interestingly enough, this spatial and ritual crossing over seems to enable the Pope to symbolically and non-verbally move beyond positions articulated explicitly in doctrinal documents. Last but not least, Vincent explores some of the liturgical transformations that have occurred though the dialogue process. The changed theological appreciation of Israel, that is, the move beyond anti-Judaism and the recognition of the irrevocable bond between Christians and Jews, has been translated liturgically in different ways. Vincent's chapter is interesting because it shows how within a similar context, namely that of Christian-Jewish relations, ritualized activities may both reinforce and challenge the doctrinal status quo. Her chapter also warns against pitting theology and liturgy over against each other as she foregrounds how theological renewal, made possible thanks to dialogical interactions, has also found its way into liturgical renewal.

The chapter by Mark Godin is also set against a history of violence. He zooms in on the way Canadian churches are trying to atone for their role in the colonial subjugation of Indigenous peoples and particularly for running Residential Schools that generated child abuse and spiritual violence. Given that the harm done also has a spiritual component, both the churches and Indigenous groups have understood that any attempt at reconciliation should also include a spiritual reckoning. Furthermore, for a spiritual healing to be effective, it must not only be "communicated, but [also] lived out and embodied: hence, the incorporation of ritual, ceremony, devotional practices in the work of atonement and repair." That is why several events organized by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Canada include different rituals of reconciliation. These are novel or invented rituals that try to make space for and do justice to the different traditions involved. Thus, these newly created rituals have become a meeting place for people from different religious traditions. However, Godin not only provides insight into the power of rituals to reconcile groups and to start a process of healing, but is also critical of some of these rituals and doubts whether they really succeed in bringing about transformation. The reason for his suspicion is that the churches especially tend to neglect the continuing power imbalance between them

and the Indigenous peoples, and, as a consequence, their hegemony is not 'interrupted' and 'challenged.' The rituals of healing and reconciliation are not matched by concrete financial or property decisions that would recompense Indigenous peoples. Ritually speaking, I see two problems. First, if the power disparity is not addressed, including or incorporating Indigenous elements into newly created Christian rituals, may result in problematic forms of appropriation. This is not showing respect but rather a reestablishment of the churches' hegemony. Second, I see a problem of (in)authenticity (cf. also the contribution written by Alana Vincent). A ritual that symbolically promises and embodies transformation but is not matched by real transformation becomes empty and insincere. In Godin's words, "By neglecting to explicate the power relationships involved in inter-religious rituals of reconciliation more thoroughly, churches demonstrate a failure to see the difference between having cultural hegemony and controlling it, and undercut their own efforts towards positive transformation."

There are different ways to read and use this book just like there may be different ways of ordering the expressions of interrituality suggested in the following chapters. In my introduction, I have refrained from suggesting any clear-cut typology and my use of the term interrituality is still rather open: the way interreligious encounters happen through, via and around rituals. Some might desire more structure or a more clearly delineated definition of what interrituality is and what it is not. The concluding chapter by philosopher of religion, Kevin Schilbrack, addresses that need as he suggests a preliminary typology. According to him, interreligious scholars should ask "which ones should be counted as examples of interrituality and which should not? And what *types* of interritual connections are there?" In his chapter, Schilbrack seeks to answer both questions with "the aim of making 'interrituality' into a coherently bounded and therefore useful concept." While I have no doubt that his typology, like all typologies, will be contested, I am convinced it will also advance the scholarly debate about interrituality as I hope all of the chapters will.

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