



“Whoever Did Not See the Rejoicing of the House
of Drawing, Never Saw Rejoicing in His Life”
(mSukkah 5:1): *The Role of High-Arousal Memories
in Post-Destruction Judaism*

Tamás Biró

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

biro.tamas@btk.elte.hu, <http://birot.web.elte.hu/>

May 25, 2018, Groningen, Netherlands

Emotions in Rabbinic Literature: Methods and Approaches

Overview

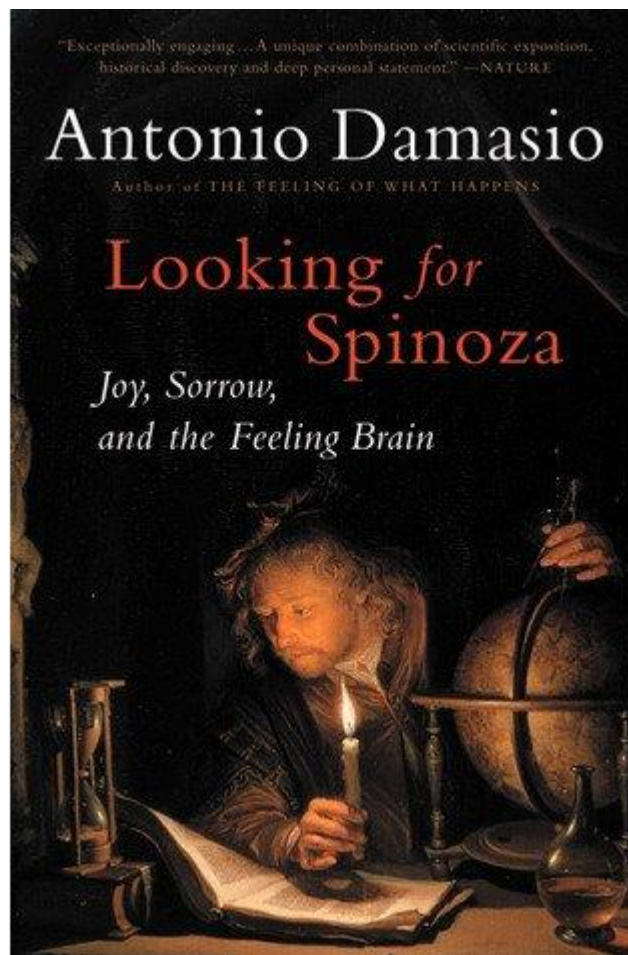
1. What are emotion? *(Antonio Damasio)*
2. Emotions as a dimension for the analysis of rituals *(CSR)*
3. Emotions as a component of a complex system
4. How to use this perspective to read Jewish texts?
5. Joint discussion *(in lieu of a summary)*

Overview

1. **What are emotion?** *(Antonio Damasio)*
2. Emotions as a dimension for the analysis of rituals *(CSR)*
3. Emotions as a component of a complex system
4. How to use this perspective to read Jewish texts?
5. Joint discussion *(in lieu of a summary)*



Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)





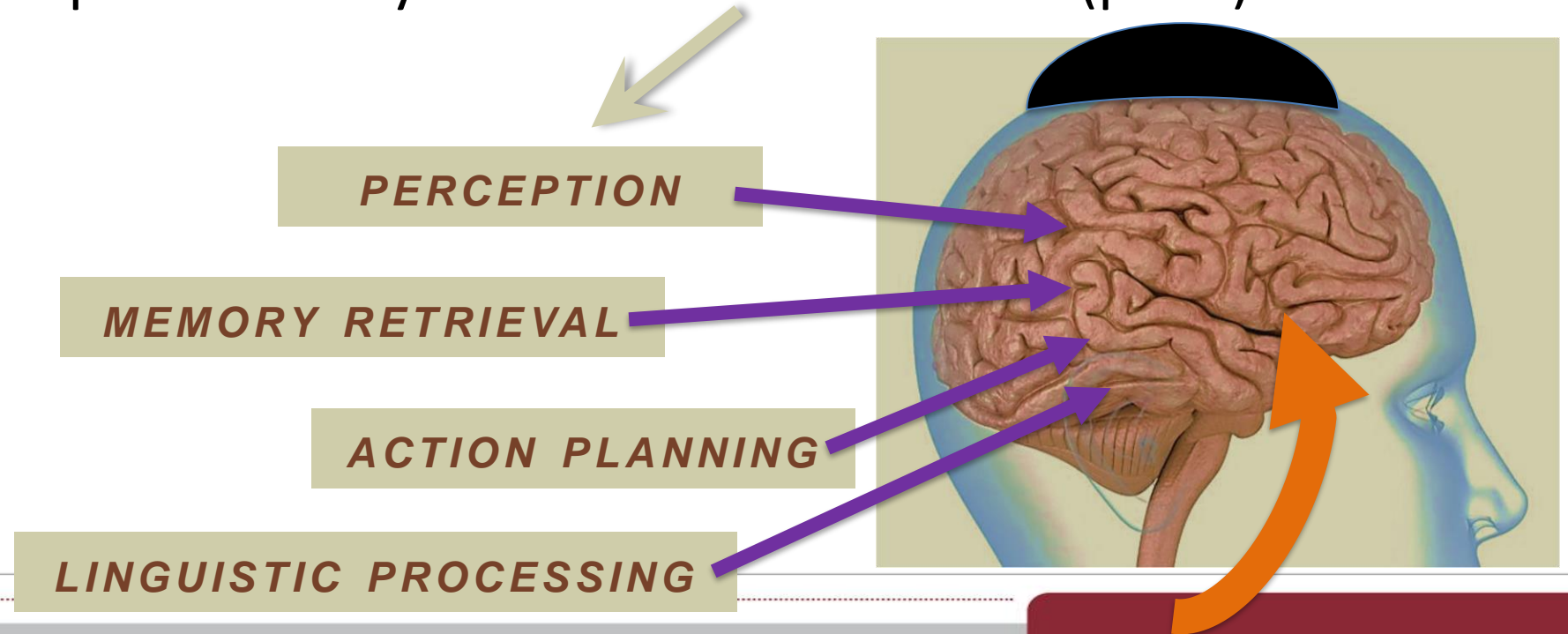
Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)

1. “Feelings of pain or pleasure or some quality in between are the bedrock of our mind.” (p. 3)
2. “a feeling is the perception of a certain state of the body along with the perception of a certain mode of thinking and of thoughts with certain themes” (p. 86)
3. “because [the feelings’] essence consists of the thoughts that represent the body involved in a reactive process.” (p. 86)



Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)

1. “[a] feeling of emotion is an idea of the body when it is perturbed by the **EMOTING PROCESS**” (p. 88)





Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)

1. “the most advanced variety of the phenomenon... encompasses the following: the body states that are the essence of the feeling and give it a distinctive content; the altered mode of thinking that accompanies the perception of that essential body state; and the sort of thoughts that agree, in terms of theme, with the kind of emotion being felt” (p. 89)
2. “there is a rich interplay between the object of desire and a wealth of personal memories pertinent to the object – past occasions of desire, past aspirations, and past pleasures, real or imagined” (p. 95)



Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)

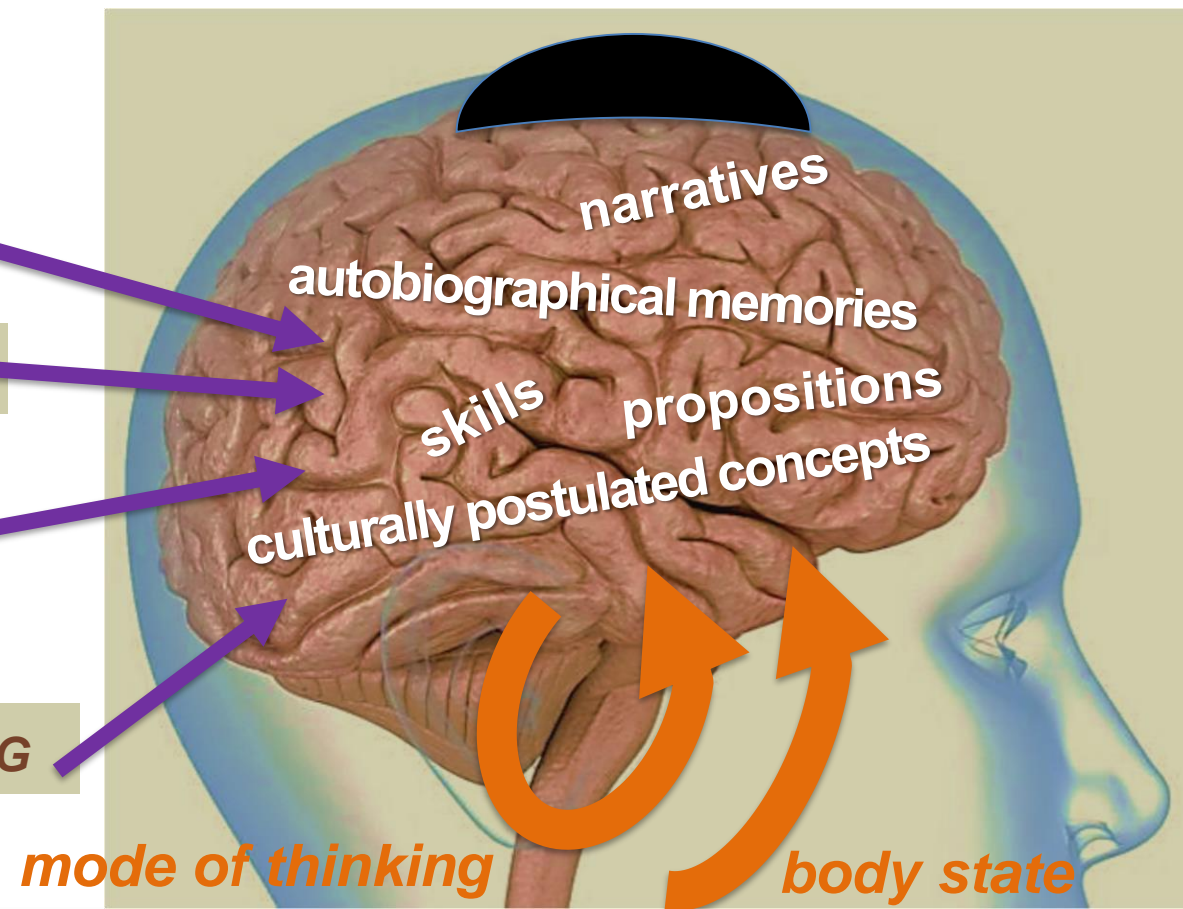
EMOTING PROCESSES:

PERCEPTION

MEMORY RETRIEVAL

ACTION PLANNING

LINGUISTIC PROCESSING



Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)

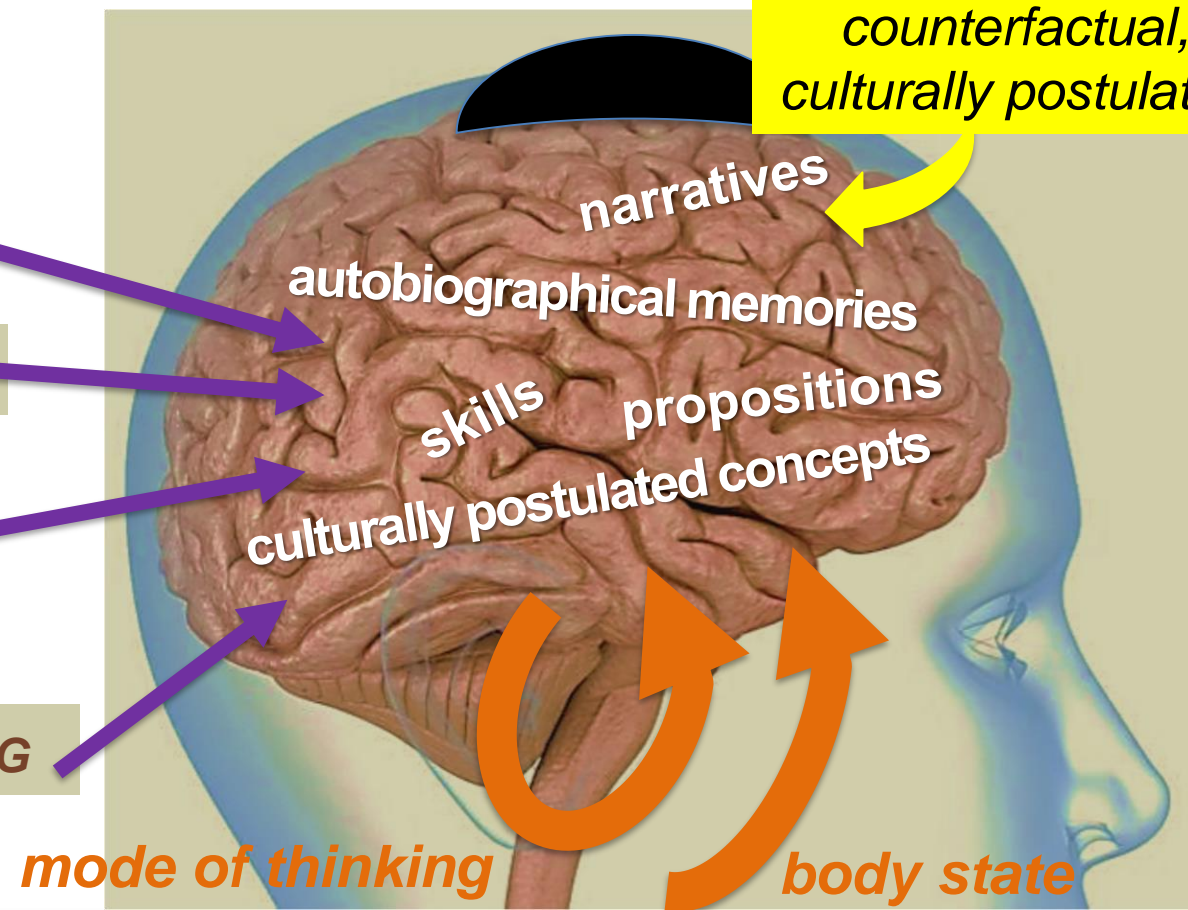
EMOTING PROCESSES:

PERCEPTION

MEMORY RETRIEVAL

ACTION PLANNING

LINGUISTIC PROCESSING





Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (2003)

“Let us now turn to the delicate issue of “locating” the spiritual in the human organism. I do not believe that there is a brain center for spirituality in the good old phrenological tradition. But we can provide an account of how the process of arriving at a spiritual state may be carried out neurobiologically. Since the spiritual is a particular kind of feeling state, I see it as depending, neurally speaking, on the structures and operations (...) especially on the network of somatosensing brain regions. The spiritual is a particular state of the *organism*, a delicate combination of certain body configurations and certain mental configurations. Sustaining such states depends on a wealth of thoughts about the condition of the self and the condition of other selves, about past and future, about both concrete and abstract conceptions of our nature.” (p. 286)

Overview

1. What are emotion? *(Antonio Damasio)*
- 2. Emotions as a dimension for the analysis of rituals** *(CSR)*
3. Emotions as a component of a complex system
4. How to use this perspective to read Jewish texts?
5. Joint discussion *(in lieu of a summary)*

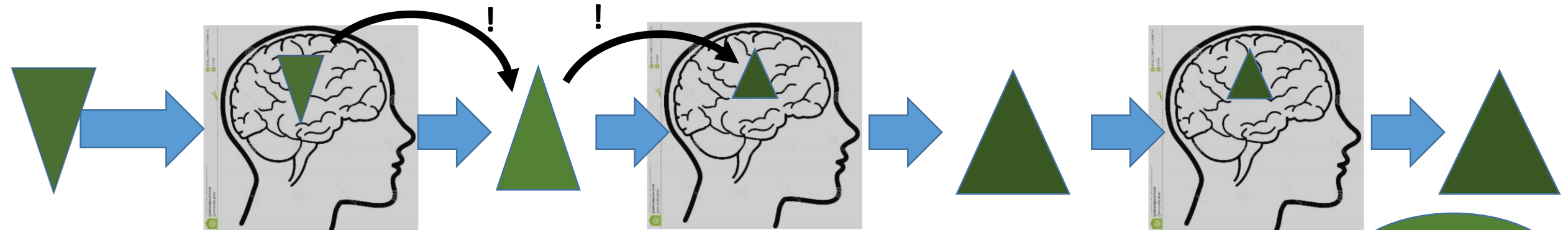
Recall and transmission

- Input representation (proposition, concept, narrative, rite,...)
- Saving to one's brain: **learning**.
- Output representation (proposition, concept, narrative, rite,...)

*external
representation*

*internal
representation*

*external
representation*



- Do we reproduce it? Do we reproduce it faithfully, or alter it?
- Cultural epidemiology (Dan Sperber), memes (Richard Dawkins).

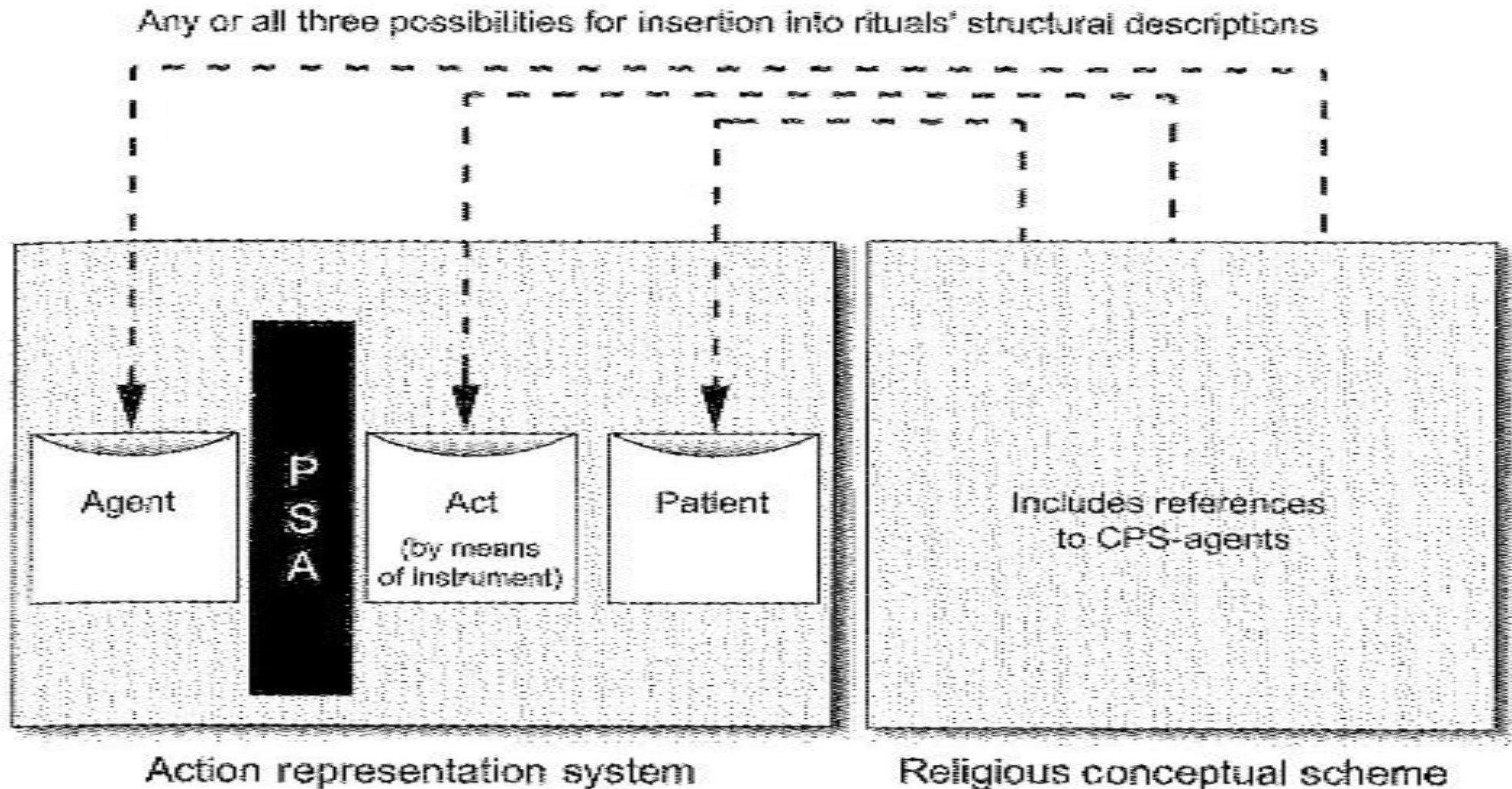
*optimi-
sation?*

Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR):

the “founding fathers” (relevant to our discussion) include

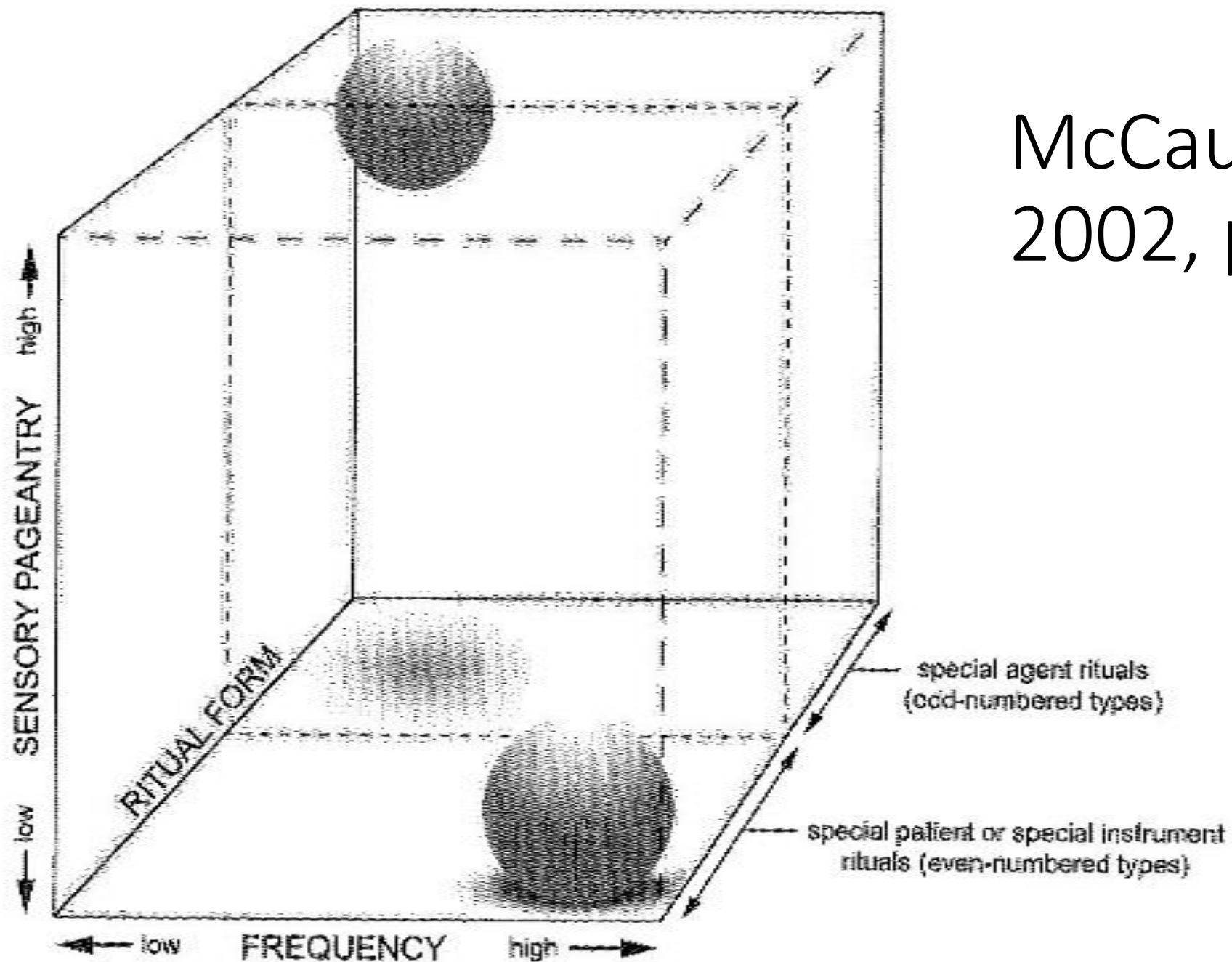


- E. Thomas Lawson (*right*)
- Robert N. McCauley (*left*)
- L&McC 1990: Rethinking Religion
- McC&L 2002: Bringing Ritual to Mind
- Harvey Whitehouse
- HW 1995: Inside the Cult
- HW 2004: Modes of Religiosity



Action role most directly connected with CPS-agent

Number of enabling rituals (structural depth)	Special agent rituals	Special patient and special instrument rituals
Level 1	Type 1	Type 2
Level 2	Type 3	Type 4
Level 3	Type 5	Type 6
Level 4	Type 7	Type 8
Etc.	Further odd-numbered types	Further even-numbered types



McCauley és Lawson
2002, p. 203.

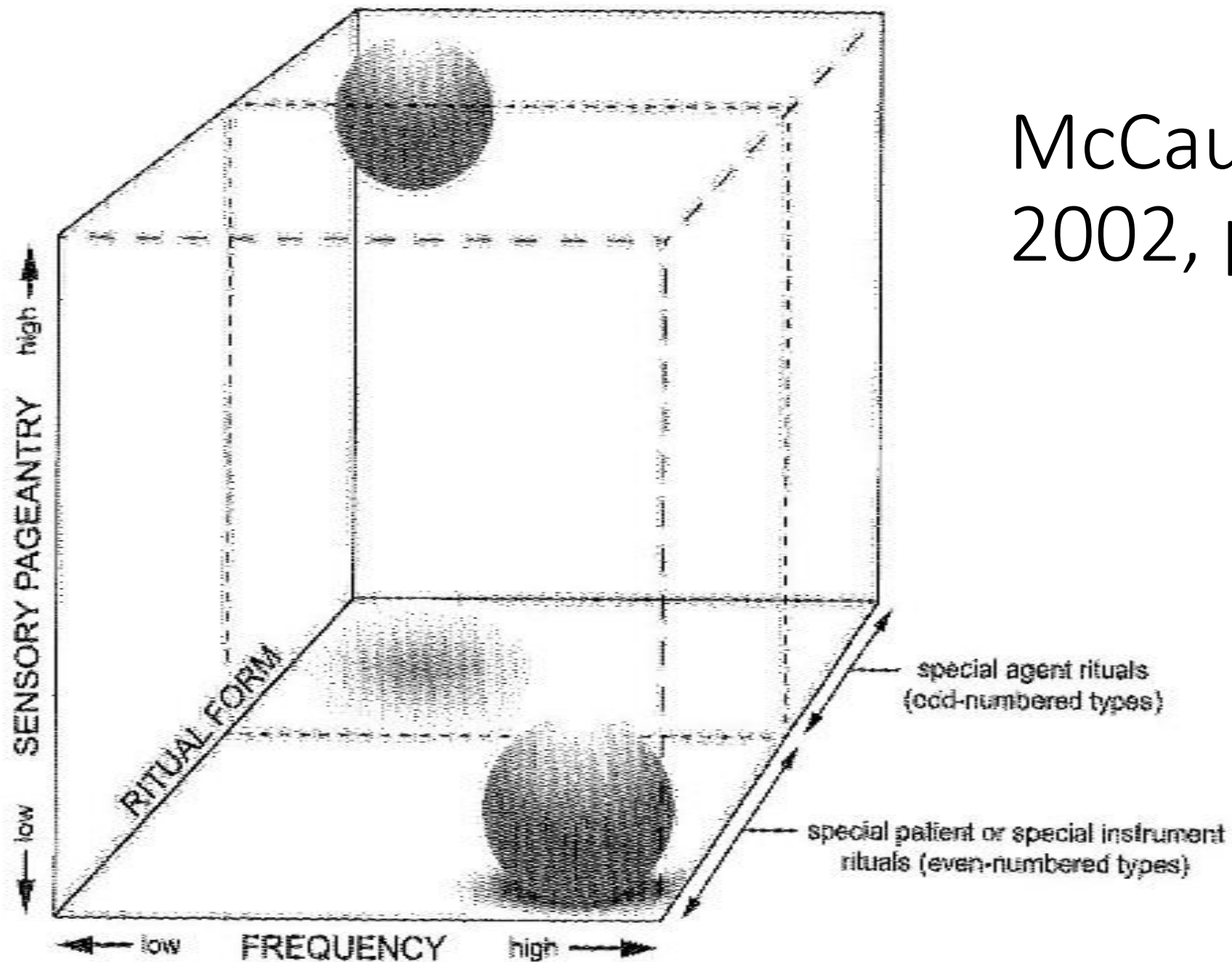
Fieldwork by Dimitris Xygalatas on high arousal rituals



<http://cdn-imgs-mag.aeon.co/images/2014/09/00040246.jpg>

<http://today.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Piercing1.jpg>

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/InstituteofCognitionCulture/Image5,285314,en.jpg>



McCauley és Lawson
2002, p. 203.

Harvey Whitehouse:

Doctrinal and imagistic modes of religiosity

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Doctrinal</i>	<i>Imagistic</i>
Psychological Features		
1. Transmissive frequency	High	Low
2. Level of arousal	Low	High
3. Principal memory system	Semantic schemas and implicit scripts	Episodic/flashbulb memory
4. Ritual meaning	Learned/acquired	Internally generated
5. Techniques of revelation	Rhetoric, logical integration, narrative	Iconicity, multivocality, and multivalence
Sociopolitical Features		
6. Social cohesion	Diffuse	Intense
7. Leadership	Dynamic	Passive/absent
8. Inclusivity/exclusivity	Inclusive	Exclusive
9. Spread	Rapid, efficient	Slow, inefficient
10. Scale	Large scale	Small scale
11. Degree of uniformity	High	Low
12. Structure	Centralized	Noncentralized

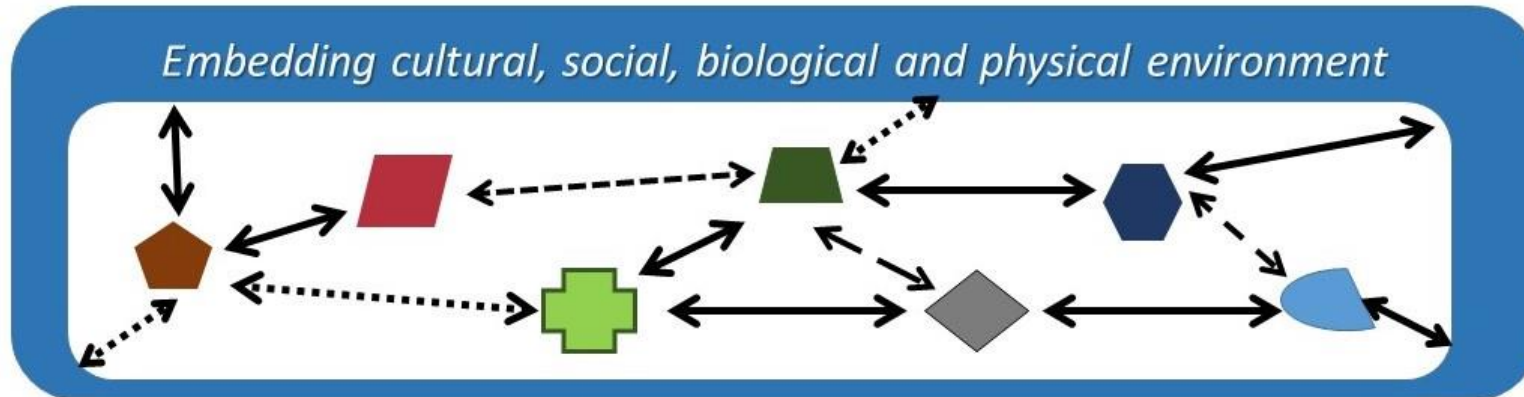
Overview

1. What are emotion? *(Antonio Damasio)*
2. Emotions as a dimension for the analysis of rituals *(CSR)*
- 3. Emotions as a component of a complex system**
4. How to use this perspective to read Jewish texts?
5. Joint discussion *(in lieu of a summary)*

Religion as a dynamic, complex system

3. Religion as a complex system: *mental representations of...*

- Concepts, narratives, rituals, precepts and prohibitions, artefacts, sacred places and times, institutions, texts etc....
- interacting with each other, as well as with the immediate and distant social and physical environment,
- result in a **dynamical system**:



≠

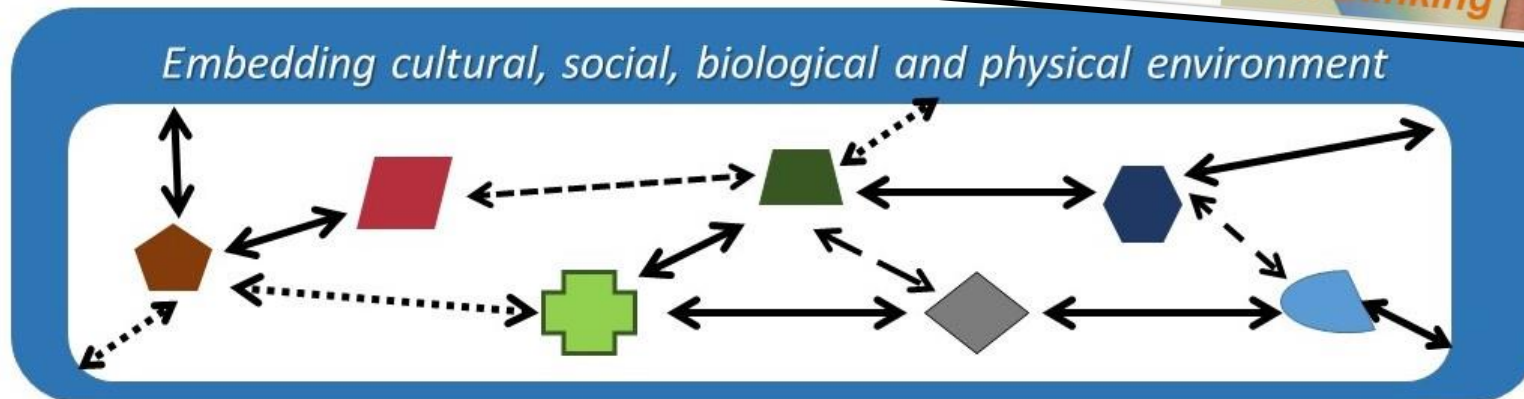
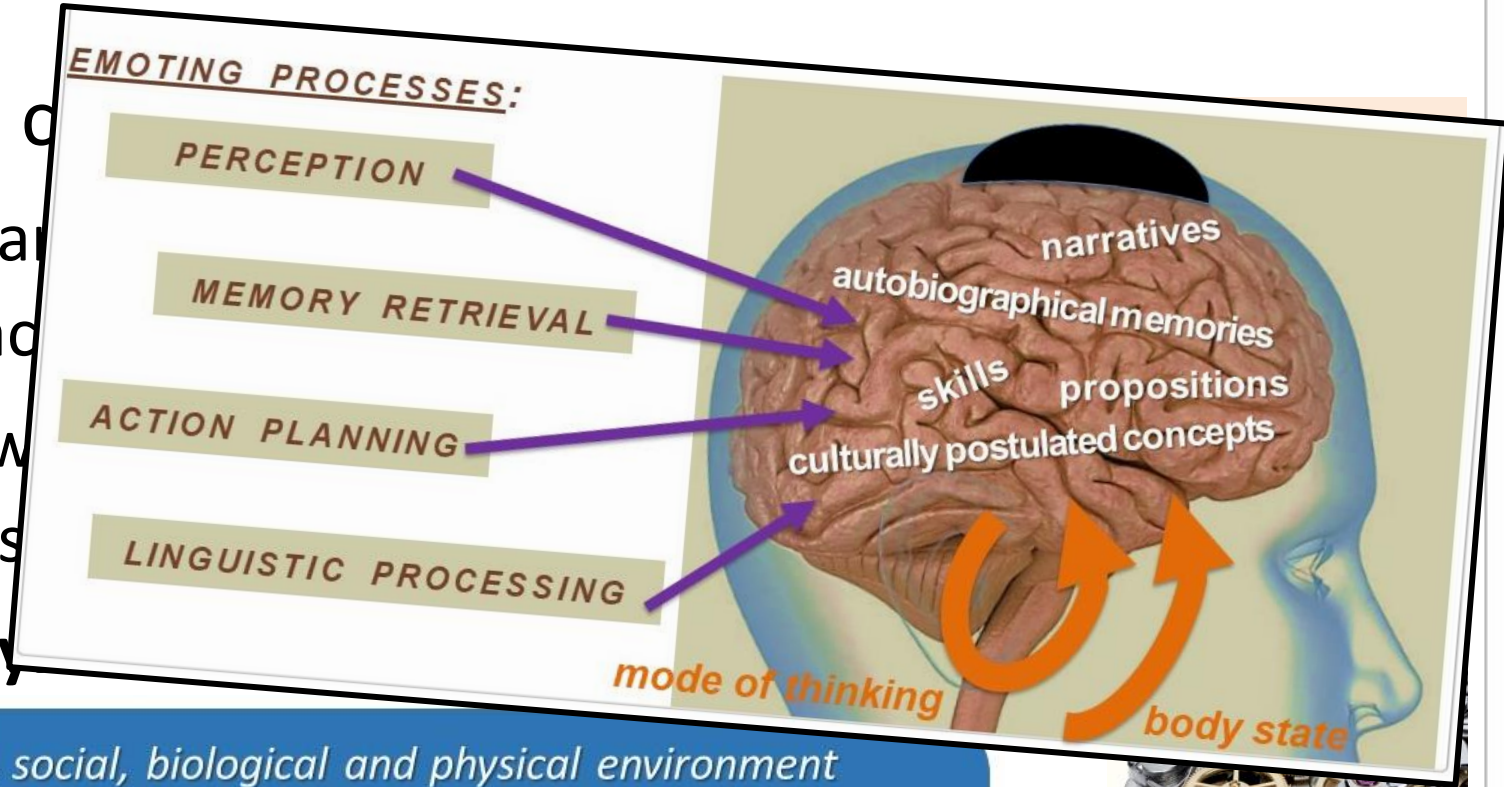
János Kertész



Religion as a dynamic, complex system

3. Religion as a dynamic, complex system

- Concepts, narratives, artefacts, sacred spaces
- interacting with the world and distant societies
- result in a dynamic system



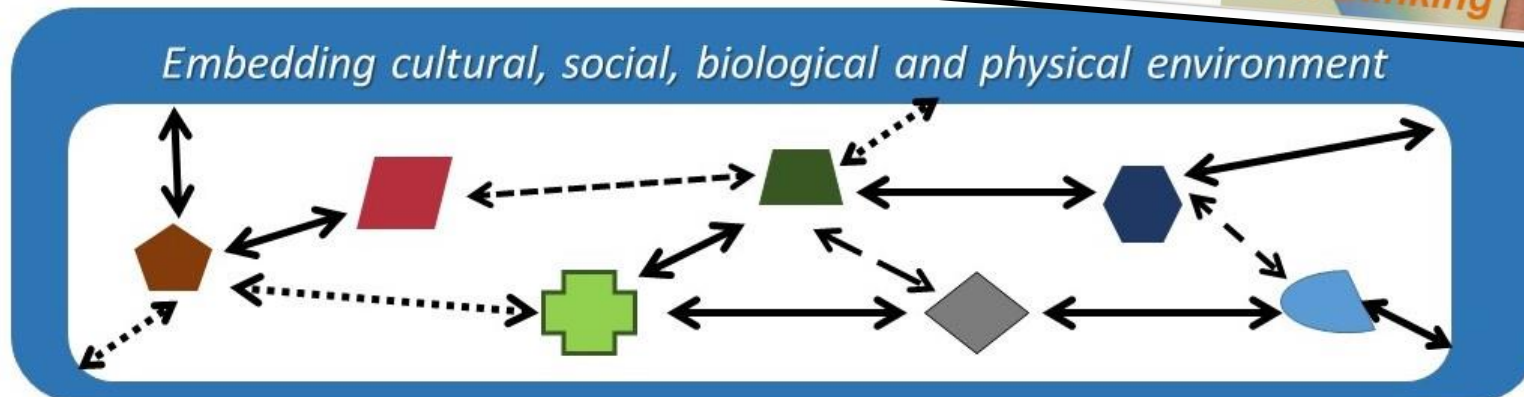
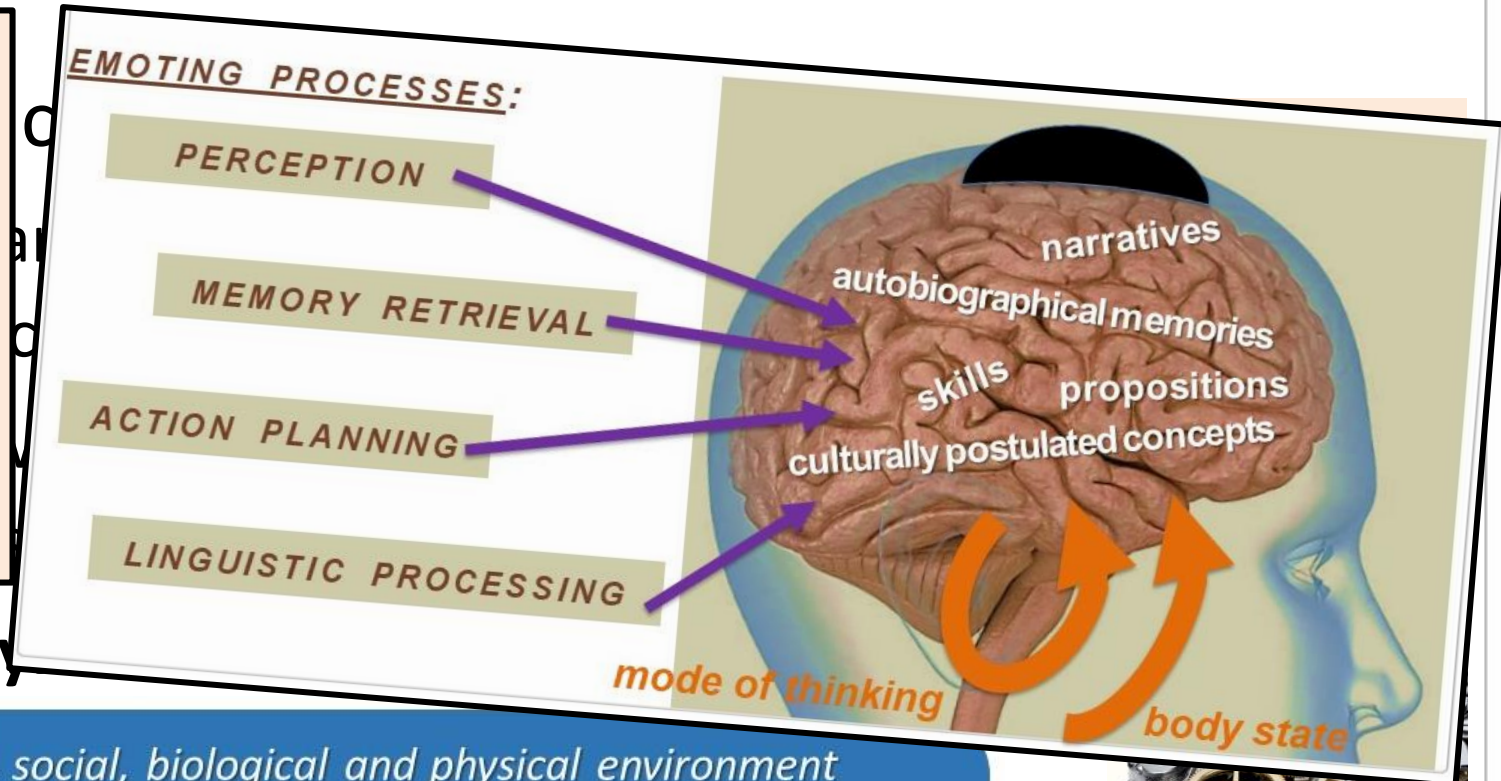
János Kertész

Religion as a dynamic, complex system

Question:

how can Judaism be a stable system if it lacks special-agent rituals?

- result in a dynamic



≠



János Kertész



Overview

1. What are emotion? *(Antonio Damasio)*
2. Emotions as a dimension for the analysis of rituals *(CSR)*
3. Emotions as a component of a complex system
- 4. How to use this perspective to read Jewish texts?**
5. Joint discussion *(in lieu of a summary)*

Mishnah Sukkah 5:1

הַחֲלִיל תִּמְנָשָׁה וְנִשָּׂא. זֶהוּ הַחֲלִיל שֶׁל בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה, וְשִׁינָּה
דְּוִחָה לֹא אֶת הַשָּׁבָת וְלֹא אֶת יוֹם טוֹב. אָמְרוּ, כָּל מִי שֶׁלֹּא
רָאָה שְׂמִחַת בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה, לֹא רָאָה שְׂמִחָה מִיָּמָיו:

The flute [was played sometimes on] five [days], and [sometimes on] six. This was the flute of the place of [water] drawing, which does overrides neither Shabbat nor holidays. They [the Sages] said: **Anyone who has never seen the rejoicing at the place of [water] drawing, has never seen rejoicing in all his days.**

(Sefaria.org)

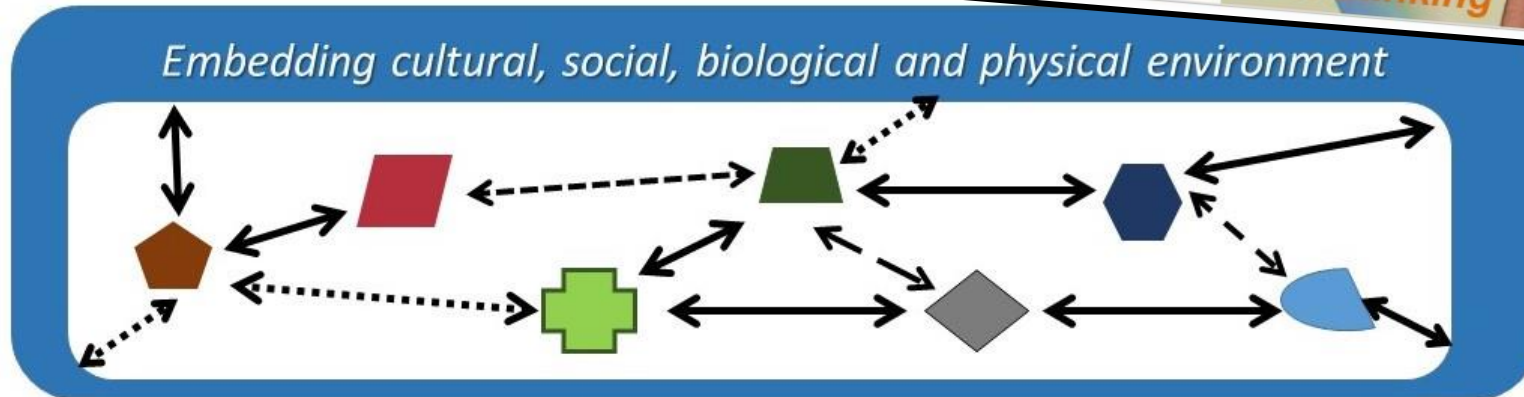
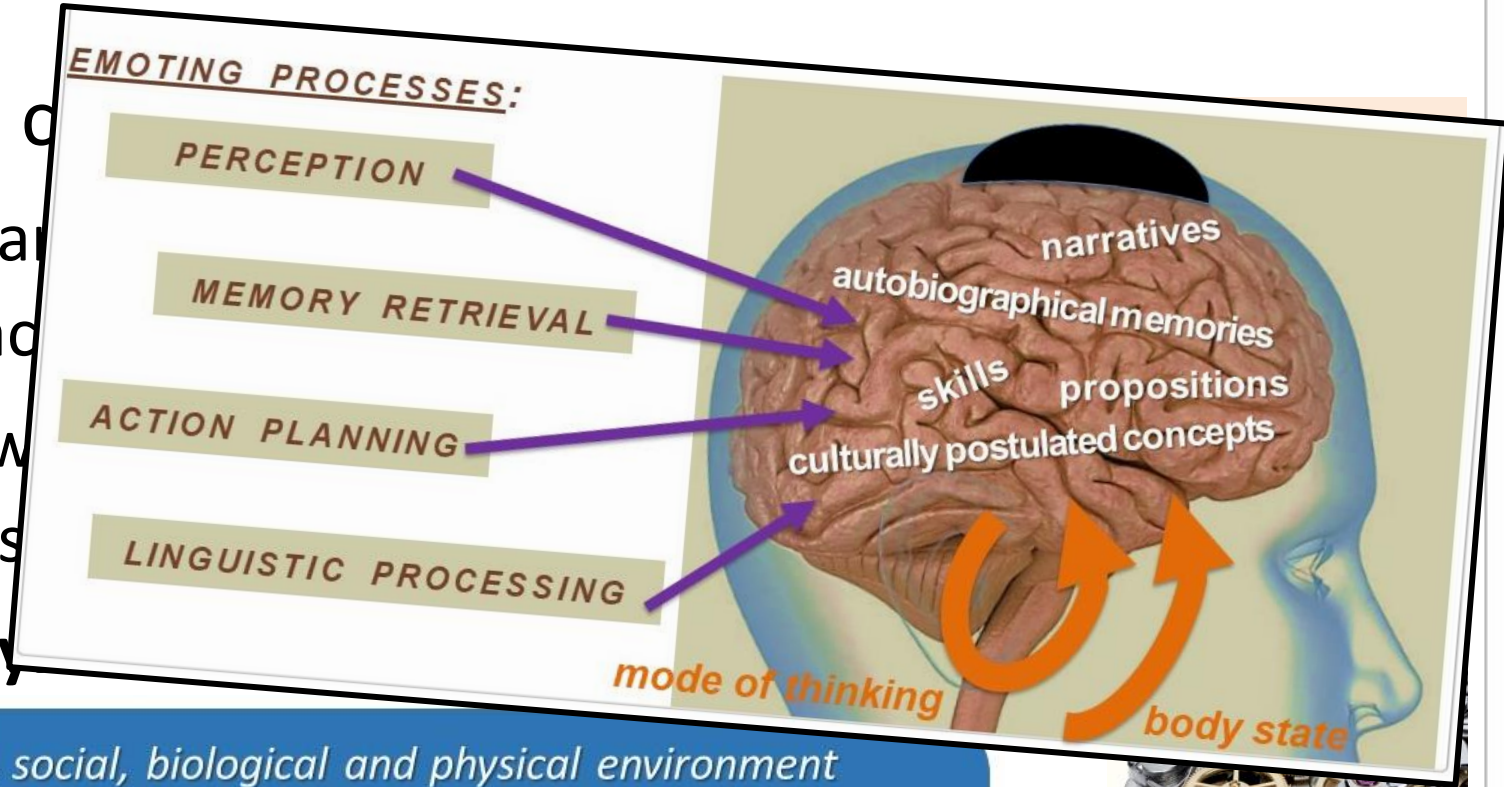




Religion as a dynamic, complex system

3. Religion as a dynamic, complex system

- Concepts, narratives, artefacts, sacred spaces
- interacting with the environment and distant societies
- result in a dynamic system



János Kertész

Sukkot and emotions

1. וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם בְּחַגֵּי... וְהָיְתָ אֶרֶץ שְׂמֵחַ (Deut. 16:14-15)

2. בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־הָאֶזְרַח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בַּסֻּכּוֹת:

לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי

אוֹתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם מִצְרָיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: (Lev. 23:42-43)



Mishnah Sukkah 5:1

הַחֲלִיל תִּמְנָשָׁה וְנִשָּׂא. זֶהוּ הַחֲלִיל שֶׁל בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה, וְשִׁינָה
דְּוִחָה לֹא אֶת הַשָּׁבָת וְלֹא אֶת יוֹם טוֹב. אָמְרוּ, כָּל מִי שֶׁלֹּא
רָאָה שְׂמִחַת בֵּית הַשּׁוֹאֵבָה, לֹא רָאָה שְׂמִחָה מִיָּמָיו:

The flute [was played sometimes on] five [days], and [sometimes on] six. This was the flute of the place of [water] drawing, which does overrides neither Shabbat nor holidays. They [the Sages] said: **Anyone who has never seen the rejoicing at the place of [water] drawing, has never seen rejoicing in all his days.**

(Sefaria.org)





How to increase the emotional load of some ritual?

- Suggested working hypotheses:
 - The human mind requires a given amount of impulses / emotions.
 - Balanced ritual systems require a give amount of arousal.
- What can add emotions to a ritual (and so to the entire system)?
 - Special-agent rituals
 - Personal memories
 - Culturally learnt techniques
 - ... *what else?*

Overview

1. What are emotion? *(Antonio Damasio)*
2. Emotions as a dimension for the analysis of rituals *(CSR)*
3. Emotions as a component of a complex system
4. How to use this perspective to read Jewish texts?
- 5. Joint discussion** *(in lieu of a summary)*



Thank you for your attention!

Tamás Biró

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

tamas.biro@btk.elte.hu,

<http://birot.web.elte.hu/>, <http://www.birot.hu/>

*Supported by a **Marie Curie FP7 Integration Grant** (PCIG13-GA-2013 631599).*