# *Spiritual Intelligence*

*with Harris Wiseman and Fraser Watts, "Spiritual Intelligence: Participating with Heart, Mind and Body"; Harris Wiseman, "Knowing Slowly: Unfolding the Depths of Meaning"; Harris Wiseman, "The Japanese Arts and Meditation-in-Action"; Harris Wiseman, "Meaning and Embodiment in Ritual Practice"; and Harris Wiseman, "Theoria to Theory (and Back Again): Integrating Masterman's Writings on Language and Religion."*

## MEANING AND EMBODIMENT IN RITUAL PRACTICE

*by Harris Wiseman*

*Abstract.* The article explores the interaction of verbal and nonverbal semantic levels in the performance of Christian ritual. The article maps the distinction between theoretical and performative knowledge onto Barnard and Teasdale's *Interacting Cognitive Systems* model to give a (partial) account of how meaning emerges in ritual participation. With Christian ritual, both know-how and know-that are needed. Above all, it is their interaction that generate the richness of meaning in ritual performance. Three core claims are made. First, many contemporary concepts of ritual have at least one flaw in that they do not grasp the relationality between verbal and nonverbal, wherein both dimensions have a semantic integrity of their own. Second, there is an ideological valuation of the semantic levels. The experiential level is not only meaningful in its own right, but the fundamental ground of spiritual knowing. Third, combining learning styles and kinds of attention can be valuable for eliciting the full semantic richness of ritual participation.

*Keywords:* 4E; attention; embodied spirituality; interacting cognitive subsystems (ICS); ritual

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### Part 1—on Ritual

#### Ritual and Knowing

> The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing: we know this in countless ways. (Pascal [1670] 1995, 423)

This article seeks to explore how different kinds of meaning can emerge from ritual practice. Too often, one assumes that meaning and

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understanding only come in verbal form. Yet, all forms of knowing are more or less grounded in one's embodied state. The dynamic architecture of the body shapes cognition in a range of significant ways. One's context, one's social interactions, one's activities, all have some influence on the manner in which we perceive. Put differently: what one is doing affects how one knows. Indeed, quite apart from verbal knowing, one's various perceptual data are integrated, knitted together into a meaningful whole. Such meaningful, experiential knowledge is the very ground and basis of verbal, abstract knowing. This insight is crucial for exploring ritual practice as a rich source of religious meaning.

The philosophical grounds for this sort of thinking run deep. Drawing primarily from Martin Heidegger and the phenomenological tradition, the split here is that between abstract, technical knowledge about an activity, on the one hand, contrasted with practical knowing, that is, the know-how required for doing the thing itself.[1] Needless to say, there is a world of difference between reading a book on how to swim, and getting into a swimming pool. The difference between these two kinds of knowing is categorical, and shows itself in significant ways. For example, a person can be a master of a particular craft without ever being able to give a sharp, technical account of how the craft is performed (and vice versa). The sorts of knowledge involved here, know-that and know-how, develop at different rates. Usually, one can pick up a skill much quicker than one learns how to describe to another person how one is performing it (Claxton 1999, 25).

Most Christian rituals can be characterized as requiring both a level of performative mastery and of verbal understanding of what is being performed. This article will explore the implications of the relationship between verbal and the performative kinds of meaning with respect to ritual. Inasmuch many Christian rituals do involve both performative and verbal knowledge, one might then posit that such rituals are spiritually significant in that they traverse the whole spectrum of human sense-making powers. Put another way, performing a ritual will (in its ideal performance) activate both verbal and nonverbal semantic levels of meaning. Ideally (and one must always emphasize this word, *ideally*), the performance of ritual might be said to create some feedback between these various semantic levels.

This article will have something to say about the sorts of ideal conditions which might foster this close interaction between semantic systems, that is, the kinds of attention which might foster (or inhibit) one's ability to draw such richly layered meaning from ritual participation. Of course, there are better and worse performances of a ritual. In its best form, one might say that ritual involves some positive feedback, or reinforcement, between different kinds of meaning (verbal and nonverbal, conceptual and experiential). This would ideally occur when a person's various capacities for apprehending meaningful information (this article will focus on

"propositional" and "implicational" forms of meaning [Barnard and Teasdale 1991, 2], more below) are working closely together in an attentive, well-synchronized, and repetitive pattern.

Insofar as ritual might bring one closer to God and to one's community of worship, God and other can be said to be known, in ritual performance, not just as concepts for abstract understanding, but as a *co-presence in the same world*, as something of which one is viscerally aware. What so many Christian rituals offer, therefore, is the opportunity for knowing God and the worshipping other, with the whole of one's sense-making being—knowing God with both heart and mind, one might say.

In light of this, there are many implications for thinking about religious ritual (a number of provisos regarding the limited sense in which this word *ritual* will be used follows presently). What does it mean—in terms of religious cognition—that ritual involves actions to be performed? Certainly, any attempt to reduce religious life to a set of propositions, doctrines or articles of faith to be merely assented to, grossly mischaracterizes religious life. Part of what it is to know God needs to be understood as an interaction between verbal and nonverbal modes of meaningful appreciation. Put differently, part of the truth of religious life, its meaning, can only be perceived in the very practice of it. One of the problems with abstract or technical descriptions of religious life is that, taken in complete abstraction of experiential knowledge, they are misleading, or worse, such descriptions get lost in clouds of a kind of conceptual dust of their own making. The reality of practice and religious knowing gets lost somewhere along the way. To think that religious truth and the knowledge of God can be had just on the abstract level would be like thinking that one can learn how to swim just by reading a book.

Likewise, without some conceptual framing, overemphasizing the embodiment of religious life can be just as problematic. While it is true that neither religious life nor swimming can be captured in verbal terms, actually religious practice cannot be learned just by mimesis and doing on their own. Christian faith, at least, requires *both* verbal understanding and bodily performance. Mimesis and conceptual understanding are needed. It is this *both/and* that ritual provides, an arena for the feedback between categorically different worlds of meaning. Many rituals offer practices that are rich in verbal and nonverbal semantic possibilities. In Christian terms, there is no question at all of any abandonment of abstraction and theory. The question is one of restoring an appropriate sense of the interplay and mutual enrichment that comes from evoking verbal and nonverbal worlds of meaning together.

## What is Ritual?

> What interests me is not so much Christian ritual and power, but the power of Christian ritual. (Asad 1993, 84)

Amongst the most prominent characteristics of religious phenomena are, and always have been, ritual and ceremonial behaviour (Margolin 2021, 1). The term *ritual* comes from the Latin words *ritus* and *ritualis*, which refer, respectively, "to prescribed ceremonial order for a liturgical service and to the book that lays out this order" (Bell 2009, 399). However, for the purposes of this article, critical emphasis will be put on the predominant modern sense given to the word *ritual*, which represents it as a form of communicative, symbolic behaviour (Asad 1993, 55–57). Herein, ritual is characterized as a socially embedded public code that is legible, whose study (anthropologically and sociologically) is a task of decoding the symbols involved and interpreting their various functions. This is done to gain an understanding of the group performing these rituals (Asad 1993).

As communicative, such rituals are taken as expressing the public face of religion. Spirituality and interior faith are generally excluded in this approach to ritual (Asad 1993). In fact, the private and ineffable are set up as a direct contrast to ritual, the latter of which is taken as the paradigm of what is public and legible. As Asad puts it, in this predominant approach, ritual gets conceived of "as a language by which private things become publicly accessible because they can be represented … as visible behavioural form" (Asad 1993, 73, 77).

Examining what kind of *language* ritual involves is part of the task of this article. Even though rituals generally do use language (i.e., words), one should wonder about the sense in which the symbolic performances do constitute a language, as if verbal meanings can be simply read off from ritual gestures, translated neatly and wholly directly from the ritual gestures into some clear verbal form. The assumption with the construction of ritual as communicative is that there is some 1-2-1 relationship with the symbolic meanings being performed. This article will not dispute that rituals can be communicative, but does dispute that such communication is readily translated into verbal format. Are ritual gestures merely fancy ways of expressing what one could just have said in words? Or, are there some layers of meaning being communicated in ritual that cannot be readily translated directly into words, that are simply not verbal in nature? This article will assume that ritual conveys meanings on many levels, verbal and nonverbal alike. All this must be taken into account when making statements indicating that ritual is a *language*.

Apart from the symbolic communicative approach to ritual, another tendency is to look at ritual as a merely functional activity, asking: what is it that ritual achieves for persons and groups? What is the payoff? As

Stark (2009, 60) writes, rituals are public goods. Participation in ritual performances can be construed as an instrument of social-bonding and faith-building.[2] Intimate bonds are created—on mental, bodily and biochemical levels—that weave communities together, which galvanize their faith. Stark writes:

> As for rituals, social scientists are unanimous that participation in them builds faith. Even Durkheim admitted that the "*apparent* function [of ritual] is to strengthen the bonds attaching the believer to his god" … Of course, he quickly added that what ritual *really* does "is strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to society, since God is only a figurative expression of society." (Stark 2009, 56)

The idea that ritual is a potent means for building habits of comportment, of hard-wiring various traits and affective responses, is certainly the notion of Christian ritual held by Immanuel Kant. For Kant, rituals are "merely preparations for making our dispositions practice … rightful external action of moral inner dispositions … means for the continual stimulation of the disposition within us" (Stroud 2014, 171). Religious rituals are, in practical terms, simply "rhetorical, persuasive ways of performing the moral disposition in communal settings" (Stroud 2014, 140). Again, ritual represents that which is public and shared. As a training in dispositions and affectations, for Kant, ritual performance is a kind of training of oneself for action in the public social world. Traditions and the various mythic narratives involved form a common, shared activity—the individual's conformity to the ethical universal.

Other commentators present ritual as a kind of theatre, a drama, a site of re-enactment. It is argued that such a drama-concept of ritual does more justice to ritual's ancient roots, where religious participants would act out the rebirth of the Sun, or the death of a god, and so on (Bell 2009, 402). Herein, "emphasis on the performative aspects of ritual (script, drama, roles) attempts to discern how these qualities can have both social and individual effects" (Bell 2009, 404, 406). As Asad puts it: "ritual in the sense of a sacred performance [is] the *manner* in which it is (literally) played out" (Asad 1993, 50, italics added). The manner of the performance literally constitutes the ritual as sacred theatre. Here one has ritual "as a structured event" in which groups participate as social activities (Asad 1993, 127).

While it can be helpful to view rituals as ways of cultivating dispositions for action and feeling, or as a dramatic theatre, those perspectives can be limiting too. Reducing ritual in those ways falls foul of the same problem to be raised throughout this article: Christian ritual should not be treated as a religious epiphenomenon, a set of functional tools or dramatic vignettes, merely added onto the doctrinal propositions, a fancy way of communicating pregiven, preformulated religious abstractions in colorful gestural format. That assumes a unidirectional view of ritual, what one

might call an outside-in fallacy, as if the only meaning that could be in ritual is that which has been explicitly put into it from the outside.

Ritual should not be construed as a mere translation from verbal proposition to physical gesture. Ritual is not merely a fancy way of expressing what one has already figured out through intellectual means (though it can be that, too). Instead, ritual practice can also be generative of meaning, and involves attending to levels of meaning which evade being translated too readily in verbal terms. There is something in the practice of ritual itself which is informative, which allows new and deeper meanings to arise. So far from ritual being a set of fancy gestures used to act out some pregiven doctrinal ideas, ritual involves meaning that cannot be easily put into words. The struggle, then, is how to put such experiential meaning into words—that is, assuming one even wishes to give a verbal account of the rich layers of meaning one's finds in the participation of ritual itself.

Finally, to clarify one last sense of the word *ritual* that this article is seeking to set itself apart from, one can point to the recent, wholly secular interest in ritual. In some popular literature, ritual has been reconstituted as a form of meditation. Ritual becomes a way of temporarily shutting down one's chattering and anxious mind by mindfully following a certain routine or set of procedures. A sportsperson prepares his or her equipment, a marksman polishes the rifle, a chef lays out the knives. Ritual becomes a method of relaxation, of grounding oneself, of gaining focus. As Bowie writes: "both primitive rituals and secular rites … serve as focusing mechanisms or mnemonics. Obsessively packing and repacking a suitcase before a holiday will not make the weekend come any sooner but can help the traveler focus" (Bowie 2009, 21).[3] This sense of the word ritual, though significant, is not the sense intended in this article. Here, it is precisely the *interplay* between verbal and nonverbal kinds of meaning that is of interest, rather than the quietening of the verbal so as to rest more fully in the experiential world. It is the interplay of verbal and experiential that many Christian rituals facilitate, if attentively performed.

All of this is to barely touch on the literature of religious ritual. In fact, the literature on ritual is so broad and covers so wide a set of phenomena, one is tempted to agree with Asad in his remarking that he is "skeptical of ritual as the object of a general theory" (Asad 1993, 130). The point in selecting these particular approaches is to separate them from what remains to be discussed. While all the above approaches offer important perspectives on ritual, this article is concerned with *meaning*. Specifically, the concern here is on multiple layers of meaning (verbal and nonverbal) and how they interact in religious ritual. The concern is less to do with dramatic re-enactment, nor social bonding, nor disposition-training, nor ritual as a set of calming, repetitive things-to-do. For all their value, the concern here is with how ritual opens up, and makes possible, an integration between

different semantic levels in nourishing religious understanding. In short: The rest of the article will explore how the human capacity to appreciate meaning on separate levels, verbal and nonverbal, works to deepen religious understanding through ritual practice.

## Part 2—Ritual and Embodiment

### Cognitive Dimensions—Codes and Meaning-Systems

*4E Overview.* The term *4E cognition* represents four interrelated approaches to theorizing cognition: embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended. Agostini and Francesconi write:

> Since the 1990s, EC [embodied cognition] theory emerged within the cognitive sciences by taking the hypothesis of the co-dependence of body, mind and environment seriously, and investigating it through a variety of methods, EC develops fundamental critiques to Cartesian dualistic ontology, internalism, the computationalist approach to cognition, classical cognitivism and mental reductionism. (Agostini and Francesconi 2021, 417)

According to Lawrence Shapiro, 4E represents a complete revolution in the study of cognition (Shapiro 2014, 3). 4E proposes a total reconstituting of the terms of cognitive work, taking them far away from the previous paradigm (centering on metaphors of computation, representation, mentalism, objectivism, homunculism, black boxism, and so on). In their stead, 4E offers a framework that is more active, physical, dynamic, and interactive. Here, every cognitive process, no matter how abstract, is involved with in some bodily enactment and activity (Stewart et al. 2010, viii).[4] The shift might be described as the move away from a third-person perspective on knowing (wherein the body is treated as just a thing amongst things, "out there" in a world of objects [Stewart et al. 2010]), toward a more nuanced attempt to combine third-person perspectives with first-person subjective experience.

4E research is a rapidly expanding area of interest in psychology, cognitive science, and philosophy (Agostini and Francesconi 2021, 417), and certainly represents a considerable improvement over certain previous problematic assumptions in cognitive psychology (more below). Though 4E is still being worked out theoretically (some of its definitional points remain vague, and some of its assumptions are very difficult to subject to rigorous empirical work), nonetheless it offers some helpful ideas for approaching Christian ritual on the semantic level. In fine: 4E treats human cognition as being influenced by a range of dynamic bodily features, including the body's own changing architecture, as well as the relationship between the knowing subject and various features of the context in which the subject is embedded.

Despite this recent explosion of interest in 4E, one area lagging behind in applying the implications of 4E is religious cognition and discourse on spiritual practices (as noted by Fraser Watts 2021). The current article locates itself within that lacuna. In this section, the article will explore two features of embodied cognition that have implications for religious cognition: (a) the multimodal character of memory and representation; and, (b) the multiplicity of meaning-systems used in human knowing.

*Multimodality.* One of the most generative ideas that embodied cognition has yielded is the notion that knowledge—even one's most abstract and high-level concepts—is grounded in the same systems employed by perception and action (Semin Gun, Garrido and Farias 2014, 542). To varying degrees, all our concepts are structured, grasped, coded, and retrieved in concrete, bodily terms. This brings into question the notion of purely abstract knowledge. Semil et al. write:

> The idea that true knowledge is disembodied or "amodal" can be traced back to the origins of Western thought … Plato argues in *Phaedo* that true knowledge is attained by freeing one's self from the body, the source of passions and appetites, and therefore an obstacle to the acquisition of truth. An analogous focus on the disembodied nature of knowledge is the hallmark of the 20th century. The period marks the resurgence of investigations of the mind, driven by the disembodied computer metaphor across the cognitive sciences. (Semin Gun, Garrido and Farias 2014, 542)

Against that (purely) computational view of the mind, a new set of assumptions about the representation of psychological processes has arisen. The mind does compute information—but that is not *all* it does, and it certainly does not perform computation in a circuit-like, mechanical manner, as one's laptop does at home. In fact, current evidence suggests that concrete concepts are coded and activated primarily through *perceptual* processes. Semil et al. continue:

> … thinking is not driven by symbols but rather by multimodal images that activate the sensorimotor systems. For instance, thinking about a "Granny Smith" is assumed to activate the multimodal neural patterns shaped in earlier experiences with "Granny Smiths," namely motor, gustatory, tactile, olfactory, visual, and auditory systems all at the same time, and to different degrees (Semin Gun, Garrido and Farias 2014, 543).

Thinking involves *simulation*—reactivation of perceptual motor and introspective states obtained when experiencing the world. As Agnes Moors writes: "activation of embodied codes leads to partial reenactment or mental simulation of the perceptions and actions that typically occur in the presence of the represented object, which makes them dynamic" (Moors 2014, 24). When one is presented with a certain stimulus, representation

or idea, this generally activates a process of associative retrieval of semantic information that related to the object when it was coded in the person's experience. In this way, even the meaning of abstract concepts is, at their inception at least, bound up with contextual and physical features of the subject having the idea (whether that be associations of the hard chair one is sat upon, or the noisy roadworks going on outside one's window as one engaged in the related process of thought). Many different meanings on various sensory levels are associatively coded into one's ideas. The state of one's body, one's emotions, posture, mood and context are all coded together, and retrieved in the activation of one's associated memories and concepts.

As such, bodily states can contribute directly to the grounding of concepts. However, this is more than just saying that one's judgments and decisions are colored (and sometimes clouded) by one's bodily states and emotions. This point about multimodality goes deeper—it suggests that the very concepts we use when thinking are structured and grounded in contextual bodily features that are associatively linked across all sensory levels. That is, the very process of thinking is one which, in most circumstances, brings to bear concrete features of experience, and gives rise to associative links along many dimensions of sense. To varying degrees, knowing and making decisions are visceral and concrete bodily processes, and the notion of thinking as a purely rational process, a neat activity of linear calculation (if such a thing is possible at all), must be regarded with suspicion. If such purely linear calculation can occur at all, it is the extreme exception when it comes to human knowing and thinking.[5]

This insight about the importance of the context of the knower is crucial for understanding the relationship between ritual performance and the meaning one finds in the performance of one's faith.

Religious knowing, in other words, has a rich semantic ground which emerges through ritual performance. Such performance provides the associative context, the sights, the smells, the symbolic objects, the movements, which evoke semantic fields out of which a more intuitive religious knowing emerges. The exhortation to keep an appropriate degree of proximity between experiential and conceptual accounts of the practice of one's faith provides a salutary warning. Certainly, all ideas, no matter how abstract, have some sensorimotor grounding. Yet, one thing that is fascinating about human semantic mechanisms is the manner in which abstract knowledge can recede further and further from that sensorimotor grounding. Religious practice is not helped by receding too far into technical descriptions. Nor is it, for that matter, helped if one takes an unthinking approach to practice, remaining too close to, and too wrapped up in, the immediacy of religious practice. Depending on one's context, the appropriate distance, or balance, between concreteness and verbal abstraction should be sought.

## Coding and Meaning-Systems

Overlapping with embodied cognition research are dual process theories of cognition (for a comprehensive overview, see Sherman, Bertram and Yaacov 2014). One of the basic premises of dual process (and dual-system) cognitive accounts, which make them fitting for the present discussion, is their construction of how two separate meaning-systems in human beings. In fine: humans are able to apprehend and work with different kinds of meaning which are stored in completely different formats, have different qualities, and operate in completely different ways. Because of this, humans have scope to represent ideas to themselves in a layered manner. Ideas have various semantic dimensions, of which the familiar, verbal, dimension is but one.

There are many dual process models in the cognitive and social psychological discourses. Generally, these models fall into one of two camps, splitting semantic coding either into a dichotomy between "perceptual versus conceptual" codes, or between "associative versus propositional" codes (Moors 2014, 25). Crudely speaking, these dichotomies mark out the difference between verbal and nonverbal information. Regarding the first dichotomy, *perceptual codes* are characterized as being more picture-like in nature, as being grounded in sensory inputs. The related cognitive systems code perceptual features, they are concrete and specific, they are rooted in the context in which the information was perceived, and tend to be rather particular and static (Moors 2014, 24). For example, if one has a memory of one's dog, the memories coded in the perceptual system are tied to that dog specifically, in the specific place where that memory happened, tied together with the particular feelings, sights and smells which arose during that experience. Perceptually coded representations are, again, embodied, and they have motor features, so that when activated (remembered), the code leads to a partial re-enactment or simulation of the coded item. Activation of one feature of a terrifying moment, for example, can trigger a total bodily re-enactment of that situation. This can be seen in debilitating phobias, and, in extreme cases, such re-enactment can signify post-traumatic stress disorder. That such activation is grounded in the perceptual system is one reason why talking treatments—verbally-coded meaning—are usually so ineffective, if used in isolation.

In contrast, conceptual codes are verbally driven. Conceptually coded information is more flexible in the sense that it can be increasingly abstracted from the particular concrete features in which that concept arose. With a concept of a dog, one can step back from one's memory of a particular dog and start applying abstract features of that memory to broader categories of information. Such propositional information is also truth-evaluable in a way that perceptual information is not (propositions can be assigned binary values: *true/false*, whereas perceptual information is

generally just more or less striking, more or less immediate, more or less clear). The more abstracted from the perceptual bases a concept becomes, the more it can be removed from context, separated into portions, and then more generally applied. Obviously, this power of abstraction can be incredibly valuable and incredibly problematic, depending on how and when it is used. Finally, because propositional information can be abstracted into parts and categories, they facilitate a particular kind of creativity. Propositions and concepts, Moors writes, "comprise meaningful parts that can be recombined with other parts to form new representations" (Moors 2014, 25).

These two-system accounts are of tremendous significance for providing a cognitive account of Christian ritual. It should be immediately clear that the practice of many Christian rituals—their participatory quality—activates both verbal and nonverbal semantic powers in very striking ways, providing a wealth of stimulation of both verbal and nonverbal kinds. One cognitive model which is particularly helpful for exploring these cognitive dimensions is Philip Barnard and John Teasdale's *Interacting Cognitive Subsystems* (ICS) model (Barnard and Teasdale 1991). ICS, unlike most dual systems theories, is less concerned with fast and slow types of functioning, and more concerned with this fundamental distinction between the two kinds of meaning-system that humans have available to them. The ICS term for this dichotomy is propositional versus implicational kinds of meaning (Barnard and Teasdale 1991, 2). Propositional meaning has been dealt with above, corresponding broadly with the verbal system. Implicational meaning, like the perceptual coding-system, deals with somatic and bodily information (smells, tastes, emotions, and so on). The work of the implicational system is to integrate the various inputs coming from the various sensory systems into a meaningful whole.[6]

This meaningful whole, implicational meaning, is then capable of interacting with the verbal meaning-system. Though, it is better to say that abstract and verbal meaning is grounded in, and emerges out of, meanings encoded at the bodily and somatic level. According to Barnard, while human and many nonhuman animals alike have this implicational system (Barnard 2019, 43)—the unified meaningful whole of their perceptual experience—only humans have an additional conceptual system that is capable of interacting with that implicational information. This is more than just saying that humans are different from animals because they have a verbal, conceptual system. One of the distinctive differences between animals and humans is not just the presence of a conceptual system, but the potential for *interaction* between these two meaning-systems. It is in the interaction that the richness of human meaning arises. For the most part, these two meaning-systems operate together, in a layered manner, so that implicational meaning and propositional meaning are involved in some constant dynamic engagement. The way one experiences one's world

shapes the way one talks about one's world. Likewise, the way one conceptualizes one's world changes the way one experiences it. Bodily and conceptual knowledge are generally shaping and reshaping each other all the time (or rather, as Teasdale puts it, they are constantly "updating" each other, as new situations provide new information about what the person should be paying attention to [Teasdale 2016]).[7]

As such, the world of experience cannot be treated merely as a set of neutral stimuli, a set of inputs being poured into the brain through the senses, which are then intellectually apprehended in some detached or spectatorial manner by the knowing subject. Rather, with the layering of meaning-systems, one's world of experience is in an integral relationship with one's concepts and ideas. Or, to put it better, the two meaning-systems *should* be working in a closely integrated manner. It is worth noting that one of the most popular practical applications of ICS has been in mindfulness-based therapies (see Segal, Williams and Mark 2012). Though generally interacting quite closely, these two worlds of meaning—verbal and experiential—can go too far apart. A common diagnosis of the contemporary malaise is precisely that one's experience and one's thinking get so radically out of tune. Humans do have this layering of meaning-systems, but if one is not careful, the power of abstraction gets so out of touch with the world of basic experience, that one's life can start to lose touch with concrete reality.

Indeed, that insight can be taken as a cipher for this spiritual intelligence project.

So much of what is presented as spiritual antidote, East and West, in contemporary culture can be understood as a set of tools for realigning one's perceptual and conceptual selves. The best of these approaches seek to combine both conceptual and experiential worlds in some co-operative, well-grounded manner. The worst of these approaches seek to completely do away with one or other kind of meaning, usually the conceptual world, in order to advocate some shallow loss of self to the world of pure immediacy, often under the guise of terms like *flow*. This is not a new solution. Even Theresa of Avila, though a Carmelite contemplative (which ostensibly suggests a practice of silent abiding in the presence of God), was passionate in her distaste for the *no pensar nada* approach to religion (*Don't think anything!*). As Theresa put it: "God gave us faculties for our use; each of them will receive its proper reward; there is no reason, then, for trying to cast a spell over them – they must be allowed to perform their function" ([1588] 2018, 83). Thus, what is needed is some appropriate balance, or synchrony, between the verbal and nonverbal systems, some proper alignment or ordering of the two worlds of meaning, and not some attempt to just subvert one or the other.

Even so, what needs to be highlighted is that, no matter how far apart the two worlds of meaning can diverge from one another, they are still essentially grounded in one another. There is simply no such thing as pure

experience, or pure sensation, without having some conceptual shaping in the background. And likewise, one can never really pursue a purely abstract line of thought without it being driven, in some way, by some line of association (consciously or not), or without it being grounded in the sort of processing that only a bodily creature, spatially and temporally located, could possibly have. There is never any complete separation between propositional and implicational knowing because the weight of one's experience is always pushing in from behind, impinging into one's perception, thickening it—even if one is in a state of inward silence. Likewise, one's body is constantly impressing itself on one's thoughts. Thus, in talking about human meaning, the difference between propositional and implicational meaning-systems will always be a matter of degree—more or less embodied, more or less conceptually shaped—regardless of how divergent, or even oppositional, these worlds of meaning become. This insight might be read as a sign of hope—that it is always possible to restore some kind of rapprochement between one's different meaning-worlds, because fundamentally, they are grounded in one another, whether one like it or not.

Taking account of the body as offering a variety of kinds of meaningful information has crucial implications for thinking about ritual. Above, it was suggested that there is something like an outside-in fallacy with how ritual gets conceptualized. In many of its various discourses, there is some idea that ritual is just a fancy set of gestures which express some preformulated set of religious propositions. Once one starts to think of ritual in terms of two meaning-systems, verbal and perceptual, this notion does not really work. The notion of ritual merely as a set of dramatic gestures communicating preset propositions (that could just as easily have been expressed in words), falls short. It should be understood that the perceptual or experiential aspect of ritual is meaningful in its own right. The performance of ritual is not just a code for verbal meaning, but meaningful in its own experiential manner. It is because experiential meaning is so hard to translate into words that it is easier for theorists to ignore it completely, imagining that the only meaning that can exist in ritual is the verbal sort coded into it from the outset. As Benavides observes: "It might even be suggested that the longevity of the Roman Church stems from its having established and maintained a link between the materiality of its ritual system and its theological speculation" (Benavides 2009, 296). More than that, rituals continue to be performed over the millennia, not because they are just colorful and dramatic ways of acting out a set of words (though it is unsurprising that a verbal-dominated culture should be prone to thinking that). To the contrary, it is because the rituals are so powerful and meaningful in their own right—*even if no one has yet managed to give a rich verbal account of what that meaning is*—that the rituals continue to endure. The verbal is built on top of the experiential meaning in ritual. It is a testament

to the richness of ritual that, after hundreds (and approaching thousands) of years, more and more verbal accounts of the meaningfulness of rituals continue to be spun. No one has come close to wrapping anything up regarding the meaningfulness of Christian ritual.

Such an insight is lacking from much discourse on ritual, and precisely why psychology of embodiment is such a valuable contribution to that literature.

As participatory, such ritual also connects one with others participating (in corporate rituals, at least) in a more direct manner. The mode of bodily knowing and somatic representations, as implicational, includes deep models of the self, world and others (Teasdale 2016). So far from the meaning of ritual already being coded in from the outside in propositional terms, part of the meaningfulness of ritual is in the sense of connectedness, the shared consciousness that it permits. Meaningfulness arises between the persons engaged in the ritual, one another, and God. The meaningfulness of that connectedness is not in the words or actions of the ritual, but in their being performed together at that moment. In that corporate regard, at least, the words and gestures are not codes at all. Rather, they are the means, the shared structure, the order, by which the meaningfulness of performing a ritual together can arise. In corporate ritual, worshipping others are known directly as copresences (rather than just as objects of theoretical knowledge). In addition to having ideas about the world, and the others one knows, one also knows them directly, by being with them and alongside them.

The difference between coding here is, as noted above, like the difference between reading a book on swimming and actually being in a pool. The perceptual information is much richer in experience, of course, because it includes the entire whirlpool of sensation and all the related associations that might be activated in relation to that experience. It is important to dwell a little on the matter of the *dimensionality* of the different kinds of information dealt with by the different worlds of meaning. Barnard asserts that: "propositional extractions are like taking a low-dimensional representation out of a higher-representational system."[8] This is a somewhat mischievous statement—thinking about the respective valuation of propositional and experiential knowing—because it overturns the priority often given to abstract knowing. Rather than thinking of the intellect as the higher-representation system (as most theoreticians are liable to do), Barnard is in the tradition of highlighting how abstraction necessitates a *reduction* of the richness of perceptual information. Intellectual and verbal abstractions offer low-dimensional representations of the richer, higher-dimensional experiential world. As Cally Hammond put it, in her work of Christian ritual, there is a need: "to overcome ingrained assumptions of the superiority of verbal over physical in worship, of semantic content (what the words 'mean' or 'signify') over physical effect and affect …

Posture works as the foundation on which the sounds proper to good liturgy are built" (Hammond 2015, 5).

Hammond could have benefitted from taking Barnard's notion that gesture and physical affect involve a semantically-rich integration of perceptual information in their own right (i.e., are the work of the implicational meaning-system). Hammond recognizes the importance of affect and physicality, but she misses that they offer meaningful information in themselves. For example, she writes on ritual performance: "Every gesture and posture used in worship is potentially meaningful …" (Hammond 2015, 15), but then finishes that sentence with the qualification: "… in that it encodes worshippers' beliefs about what matters, and how they express and communicate their understanding" (Hammond 2015). A better way of approaching gesture here is not to think that one has *meaning* on one side (words) and then has *gesture* on the other, with the latter being the carrier and code for the former. Rather, both words and gesture are expressive of meaning. It is just two different worlds of meaning that they express. Thus, it is not that there is semantic information on one side and physicality on the other. Both are meaningful, *both are semantic*. The difference relates to the dimensionality of the representation—also, the difference relates to the codes in which these different forms of meaning are stored, activated and brought to bear (e.g., verbal codes being amodal and abstract; and perceptual codes being modal, contextual and associative).

The popular Zen Buddhist attitude toward verbal representation puts this purported hierarchy of verbal and experiential knowing at its most forceful: words are necessary, they serve a purpose for communication, but, really, they give nothing but a pitifully narrow representation of the full richness of the basic ground of reality (Suzuki 1972, 26). In that view, words and ideas are just crude stick figures standing in place of the fullness of the thing itself. Abstractions are crucial, of course, just so long as those abstractions are fundamentally grounded in the concrete realities that give rise to them, and never stray too far from their concrete bases. It is worth noting that many Zen writers, however, not least the famed DT Suzuki, have not really followed their own advice. The fact is that Zen Buddhism is the Buddhist tradition by far the most critical regarding abstract representations of reality. At the very same time, it is also by far the most verbally prolific in terms of written and highly abstract outputs. More than any other kind of Buddhism, Zen has produced a truly prodigious output of words, a great many of those being highly abstract treatises about the limitations of verbal representation.

In any case, spiritual disputes here relate to the appropriate balance that is to be found between the concrete and abstract worlds of meaning. Verbal and abstract representations each have their integrity, their own dimensions, their own rich possibilities, and are generative in their own right. The question is about finding the right balance—applying the different

meaning-systems richly and appropriately (as Theresa put it, letting each faculty have its reward). This is always a question of discerning where one's spiritual values reside, veering more toward spirituality as a more intellectual pursuit (with Augustine, and his love of words, being a central case in point), or placing greater emphasis on the concrete ground of reality, wishing to remain serenely at the center of the circle, as Taoists, Zen Buddhists, and yogic philosophies will generally tend to advocate.

## Embodied Spirituality

In his 2021 text, *A Plea for Embodied Spirituality*, Fraser Watts writes:

> The body is strangely neglected in religious practice. We humans are embodied creatures, so the body is inevitably involved in religion in some way or other. However, there seems to be a strange lack of interest in many circles in how people are using their bodies in religious and spiritual practice, with the result that many religious people don't use them as well or as skilfully as they might. When it comes to religion and spirituality, we just don't, for the most part, operate as though mind and body were integrated facets of a single, whole human person. … for various reasons, including philosophical dualism and moral panic about carnal pleasures, the crucial role of the body in religion is often not fully acknowledged. (Watts 2021, 1–2)

Watts' text explores many of the different ways the body can impact religious experience, religious knowing and practice. For example, Watts explores the role of postures and positions in spiritual practice, he observes: "Much embodied practice in religion, such as kneeling, seems designed to express feelings, and to encourage an attitude of devotion. Body language in religion can help to induce particular moods and attitudes" (Watts 2021, 8).[9] Watts presents: "a sweeping and comprehensive set of doctrinal reasons and mainstream practices for regarding the body as having a central place in the purposes of God and the life of Christians" (Watts 2021, 13). As such, proper acknowledgement and use of the body in religion promises to be transformative, even salvatory (Watts 2021, 2–3).

Following this, it is incumbent to explore ritual as a ground of meaning-discovery. Ritual is a meaningful ground, full of potential for both conceptual and experiential meaning to be drawn out of it (again, no amount of commentary on the meaning of ritual comes close to wrapping things up—the dimensionality of information in religious ritual is too high). As implicational meaning is higher-dimensional than conceptual knowledge, every attempt to constrain the meaning found in ritual by putting it into words will necessarily lose a huge amount between the cracks. As the incarnate experience of ritual is translated into verbal code, so much significant information is lost in the verbal representation. However poetic and rich one's verbal articulation of religious ritual is, a vast amount of it has been

sheared off in the very act of putting it into words. This is not a call to resist articulating what is going on in religious ritual. The prayerful statements one makes in many ritual practices layer upon the physicality of the ritual. Some sort of feedback occurs. It is in this feedback that the richness of meaning is found.

If there exists something akin to a genuine spiritual instinct in persons, the bodily level can in no way be neglected. When the Psalmist, for example, cries out: My soul thirsts for the Lord and pants for God (Psalm 42, NIV), how far are these statements really metaphors? If there is a genuine spiritual need in some persons (albeit, more or less pronounced from person to person), such cries as these may be very literal indeed. Once one understands that meaning is not just verbal, then one must open oneself to hearing meaning in that which is not articulate, not readily put into verbal form. One is forced to listen in another way, one is forced to listen for that which speaks without words, to those embodied aspects of spiritual need which cry out, though not even having the words with which to cry out—"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans." (Romans 8:26, NIV).

## Attention and Meaning in Ritual Performance

*Ritual and Attention—Is It Enough To Just* Show Up*?.* It should be noted, of course, that ritual participation often does not bring about the deep richness of meaning that has been implied in this article. Care has been taken to note that ritual practice only has such potential for evoking meaning when *ideally* performed. It is time to look a little closer at this *ideally*—what are the factors that are needed for ritual participation to really unfold the depths of meaning (i.e., the layering and synchrony of these two different worlds of meaning)? A point of contrast will be valuable here. In Article 2, on the *Japanese Arts as Meditation-in-Action*, it was suggested that the very practice of such arts (which are highly ritualized) are considered to be forms of enlightenment itself. That is, as meditations, practicing the Japanese arts are not just preparation for something else (though they do train dispositions and comportment). They also have an immediate value: they are the vehicles in which the *end-state* is manifest in its completeness. This is because *it requires a certain kind of attention to perform the rituals at all*. If one is not attempting to pay a certain kind of attention, then one is not really performing the art. In this sense, it is sufficient, in a way, just to *show up* to the ritual, to just *go through the motions*. This is because showing up, in this sense, explicitly implies the application of a certain kind of attentiveness. Attentiveness is explicitly part of the practice, and that is why they are meditation-in-action. There are numerous Japanese arts which cater to different personal characters and

vocations, but, insofar as they are meditations, they are all vehicles to the same goal—part of which is a kind of attention in which one's big mind overtakes one's small ego. During proper practice of the art, one's ego, or small mind, recedes quietly into the background. The ego's constant grasping, and all the petty conflicts it habitually manufactures for itself, gradually settle down in the practicing of the art itself.

That sort of discourse does not work with Christian ritual at all. With Christian rituals, alas, one can and often does just show up, go through the motions, receive the Eucharist whilst thinking about the grocery list, or sing the hymns whilst recalling what was on TV last night. Put another way: *Paying a specific kind of attention is not an explicit part of the very purpose of most Christian rituals*. The need for paying attention when performing a religious ritual is one of those things that should go without saying. Yet, unfortunately, it very much does need saying. A general careless approach to ritual performance, a lack of presence in ritual—*going through the motions*—explains why too many people regard ritual as a dirty word. Christian ritual is too often regarded as the paradigm case of a meaningless, dead, empty and soulless activity—the sad remnants, once religion has been stripped bare of everything spontaneous and natural.

As such, the presence of the ritual practitioner very much needs to be underscored, at least as much as the potential for meaning in ritual performance itself. The sincerity and the level of commitment of the practitioner involved poses a significant layer of complexity to the exploration of ritual embodiment. If it is true that, as David Ford put it, so many Christians are "tourists" to their own faith (Ford 1992, 15), the power of ritual can easily be overstated. Hammond in her own work on Christian ritual writes as follows:

> Most of what happens in worship happens without precise attention being paid to it. Worshippers do not all attend divine service with the mindset of a critic, looking for weak points; many do not fix much attention to *why* they are going, beyond the fact that it is somehow right or expected, or good for them. Even when they are looking forward to participating in the liturgy, it is unlikely that they are doing the mental groundwork for a complete appreciation of the intellectual content of the words of which the service is composed. (Hammond 2015, 1)

Different people have different levels of sincerity and interest which they bring to their practice. This will always be a difficulty for the empirical investigation of ritual embodiment. So much of this aspect is personal, variable. Everyone brings something different to bear each time they engage in their ritual practices. As Watts writes:

> The Eucharist is sufficiently wide and rich in its psychological resonance that people can find different things in it, according to what they need. In that, it is also like psychotherapy. A therapist may behave in much the

> same way with very different clients, but an essentially common procedure can help different people with different problems. I particularly want to emphasize here that the meaning of the Eucharist is much influenced by exactly *how people do it*. (Watts 2021, 104 [emphasis added])

The question of *how* people perform a particular ritual or practice, the kind of attention that is brought to the practice (as well as the habits, intentions and previous work put into the practices), undermines any attempts to provide a direct or linear connection between ritual and certain religious moods. *Everyone is bringing something different to their participation*. Even the same person brings something different for each performance. The various objects surrounding the ritual carry different weight and significance for different persons and at different times—the gold robes, the altar, the Host. There may be some general patterns that emerge over one's years of practice that link certain postures to certain religious affectations, but such feelings can never be directly reduced to questions of posture. Religious rituals cannot be reduced to mechanical devices for producing religious feelings nor for producing faith, nor for mechanically producing anything.[10] This is heartening. Rituals cannot be understood as tools for producing certain kinds of effects for all people, in all weathers, in all moods. Instead, rituals constitute patterns of practice which, over time (and only with proper attention and attitude), generally encourage richer religious experiences. This is a testament to the potential richness of meaning that ritual participation holds for those that tarry with such practices over the course of their lives. This makes ritual part of a longer-term trajectory. So, understanding the link between ritual participation and embodiment requires a broader account, one making reference to perseverance and practical mastery.

*The 'How' and 'What' of Ritual Practice.* This issue of *how-ness*, that it matters at least as much *how* one performs a ritual as *what* one is doing, shall occupy the remainder of this article. Part of the problem with the 4E paradigm, as was suggested above, is that it does not have the empirical tools commensurate with the richness of the speculations of its best theorists. This problem shows itself particularly starkly when it comes to *attention*. Attention is a very slippery subject to capture in empirical terms, particularly with respect to ritual practices which can be quite lengthy to perform (and thus, throughout which, attention will inevitably oscillate in intensity and kind). Yet, in light of the different worlds of meaning outlined above (verbal and experiential, propositional and implicational), it should be clear that the kind of attention one is paying will certainly affect which particular world of meaning comes to the fore. To *say ritual is meaningful* does not indicate whether it is a world of propositions, or a world of perceptual meaning, that the practitioner is bringing forward, or

what kind of layering of these meaning-worlds is occurring. Concern for attention in practice is crucial, but hard to get a grip on.[11]

At the very least, one needs to say that, in practicing ritual, some kinds of attention are *not* helpful for drawing out the potential richness of meaning. For example, one cannot be just *passing through* the practice, nor can one be taking a position of a detached commentator. Some other kind of attention is needed which synchronizes (for lack of a better term) heart and mind in the participation of the practice. On this point, Guy Claxton's analysis of different learning styles is illuminative, and points one toward a kind of attention that is really valuable in mature ritual practice. Claxton brings to bear the above distinction between semantic coding-systems discussed above. At the very least, one has two ways of learning, one which is predominantly verbal, abstract and categorical. The other kind of learning is contextual, learning through immersion. Claxton refers to these two learning styles as involving "d-mode" (*d* is for deliberation) and *learning by osmosis* respectively (Claxton 1999, 25)

As a bodily engaged practice, it should probably go without saying that ritual should not take the form of a *purely* detached commentary, verbally analyzing and systematically categorizing the various portions of the ritual as one goes through it. In fact, *learning by osmosis* is a much better characterization of how one picks up ritual mastery. Ritual participation is very much about know-how and practical mastery, at least to begin with. As Claxton puts it, learning by osmosis:

> … extracts significant patterns, contingencies and relationships that are distributed across a diversity of situations in both space and time. It works through a relaxed yet precise non-verbal attention to the details of these situations, and to the actual effect of one's interventions, without any explicit commentary or justification or judgement, and without deliberately hunting for a conscious articulate mental grasp. … [it] operates in complicated situations which cannot be clearly analysed or defined, and where the goal is to achieve a measure of practical mastery rather than to pursue explanation. And it takes time, as it gradually extracts the patterns that are latent within a whole diversity of superficially different experiences. … one simply steeped oneself in the material, often in an uncontrolled fashion, and allowed understanding to emerge magically over time. (Claxton 1999, 25, 26–27)

This learning by osmosis model helps characterize the participatory quality of religious ritual, the know-how involved. As Cally Hammond observes: "Learning to pray was not just about knowing the words, there were statues of the worthies, beads in hands, kneeling – we learn prayer as much as anything through imitation" (Hammond 2015, 15). Such learning involves physical teaching, mimesis, information that is much more appropriately taught through an osmosis style, above an abstract, conceptual teaching approach. A model of participatory learning is needed take

one closer to the semantic world in which rituals are grounded. It is the participation that is primary, and the verbal meanings are, at least in part, only distilled out from the practice later.

Even so, the osmosis model is not sufficient to capture what is going on in ritual either, which is more than just the accumulation of know-how. Claxton also considers the inadequacies of learning by osmosis (and therein provides an important antidote against thinkers who reduce ritual to the level of know-how on its own). Ritual practice is not just a physical activity to be learned and mastered like, say, driving a car. Ritual participation is neither just know-how, nor is it just a code for things that could have just been said out loud. Both kinds of reduction are as problematic as each other. Ritual is, as has been suggested, a meeting place for two worlds of meaning, a place for their layering and feeding back to one another. Claxton writes:

> … learning by osmosis has its own limitations … Not only may it be deployed at the wrong time, leading to a protracted process of trial and error which could have been short circuited by a little logical thought; it often cannot be communicated, or only very crudely, and there are many occasions on which this is a definite handicap … The most important limitation of know-how, however, it is relative inflexibility. Practical knowledge that has been learnt without thinking may work smoothly and fluidly within the original domains. But many psychological studies have shown that when the appearance of a task is changed, even if only a little, while the underlying logic remains the same, know-how often fails to transfer. People who have learnt to control the factory process may function no better than a complete beginner if effectively the same problem is not presented … With know-how, perceiving and doing are wrapped up together in one tightly interwoven package. (Claxton 1999, 42–43)

This lack of transfer outside of the context of practice is extremely significant in Christian ritual practice. While ritual cannot be reduced, as Kant did, to a program of habituation, it cannot be doubted that the meaning of ritual should overflow the ritual itself and be worked into the life of the practitioner. Prayer and one's life outside of prayer should inform one another. This contextual inflexibility of osmosis learning can pose problems. It would matter a great deal, therefore, taking compassion meditation as an example, if one could only feel kindness sitting on a cushion with one's eyes closed. Likewise, with the subtleties of the various Christian rituals. If the presence of spiritual goods only really arises whilst one is *in* the practice, and there is no real carryover into real life, as it were, then it matters a great deal about the kind of understanding that is being produced. This experience of the sharp divide between ritual practice and the rest of one's life is quite prevalent. A person may be very holy in ritual participation, or on a spiritual retreat, but then be a truly awful person in all other domains of life. If it takes so little to disrupt the context, then ritual formation,

insofar as it remains just know-how, built up through osmosis, has very little broader applicability to one's life. Rituals then become black boxes of spiritual practice, purely self-enclosed—this is not ideal. Then, the potentially rich sources of meaning accessible through rich practice fail to overflow into the rest of one's life.

So, Claxton's diagnosis is helpful here. If one wants a deeper engagement with ritual practice then, actually, neither knowing that nor knowing how will suffice. Neither the detached commentator with tools of sharp analysis, nor the simple practitioner with the automatic know-how are enough. What is needed is another kind of engagement, another kind of attention, one which can bring to bear both conceptual understanding and practical know-how, but which also has a certain *presence of heart and mind* which carries one through the various repetitions of the ritual, over the years. With learning by osmosis, mastery just amounts to the automatization of the ritual. Once automatized, the person usually ceases to engage closely with what is being performed. This is when ritual becomes an act of going through the motions. Just as many persons, unfortunately, drive a car whilst paying only the most minimal attention to the road, this is what seems to occur for much religious participation. In that case, the synchrony, the possibility for engaging the two worlds of meaning together is substantially diminished. While it is completely understandable that persons are not always fully attentive every time they perform a ritual, there should be at least some effort to attend to what one is doing. The need for attention should be made an explicit part of instruction in the ritual itself. At the very least, what is needed is the kind of attention through which the different worlds of meaning that ritual nourishes can be increasingly unfolded from the practice, and increasingly put to work in one's life.

## Notes

1. See: Martin Heidegger: an object as ready-to-hand (to be used as a practical item in the world) or that same object taken as present-to-hand (to be studied as an object of theory).

2. Asad is very critical of this view, posited for example by Clifford Geertz, who suggests that ritual is a way of literally *making* faith (Geertz and Banton 1966). Asad asks: what then of secular rituals that build no faith? And what of rituals that fail to build faith, that fail to move the participants (Asad 1993, 50)? There must be something missing here, something more going on in ritual than merely socially performing something to literally make faith.

3. Notably, there have been a range of religious rituals transposed more directly into secular contexts. Humanist and secular gatherings have been produced which include the singing of hymns and many features inspired from Christian mass. Secular ritual involves a certain acknowledgement that ritual can provide (amongst other things) some benefits to personal health and wellbeing. Examining the value of Christian ritual in his article: "*Why did the atheist go to mass?*," nonreligious reporter Joe Humphreys put it: "Sin is out of fashion these days, and for exactly that reason the act of contrition that opens Mass is utterly refreshing … Apologising, thinking, shaking a stranger's hand. Good things happen in church." (Humphreys 2017). A cynic might say that secular mass is a way of strip-mining religious ritual to enjoy all the benefits without any of the commitments or related dogma. How effective such benefits would remain if divested from their central setting is another question.

4. Aspects of 4E are quickly coming to form the dominant framework for investigating cognition, and 4E is being applied in a range of practical areas, including education, human-computer interaction, autonomous robotics and consciousness studies (Di Paolo, 2010 33). Shapiro asserts that embodiment has implications for "perception, language, reasoning, social and moral cognition, emotion, awareness, memory and attention and group cognition" (Shapiro 2014, 4). The hope is that a broader understanding of human situatedness, and how the bodily features of our experience shape human knowing, can have some significant positive impact on a range of human capacities.

5. The point is that no concept is completely without reference to the architecture of the human body as an instrument of sensing and thinking. As Moors (2014, 24) suggests, verbal and embodied codes for representing information are sometimes very difficult to distinguish experimentally (sometimes impossible), and it is far better to speak of a mode of representation as being *more or less* embodied, embodied to different degrees, and in different ways, rather than imposing any excessively stark split between embodied knowledge, on the one hand, and amodal abstract concepts, on the other. All concepts are grounded to some degree in the same embodied person thinking them.

6. In ICS, there are a range of subsystems which handle various kinds of sensory inputs. These subsystems are capable of parallel processing (i.e., different kinds of sensory input can be dealt with independently, without the need for some central processor). This means the ears can be attending to things, threats, someone calling one's name, quite independently from and in parallel with one's gaze looking somewhere else and doing some other work. The subsystems work more or less independently, but also feed their inputs into a higher order implicational system which unifies all these inputs into something meaningful (Barnard 2019, 48). That meaningful information is implicational.

7. Teasdale (2016) states: "In the mind, the patterns we are interested in are patterns of information … one of core principles through which the mind operates is to detect links, some form of relationship between similar patterns of information at the bottom, to detect the relatedness between them, the connections, and then reflect that in a higher-order, more complex pattern of information." This represents the passing of information between the implicational and propositional systems. Mindfulness practice is then implicated in a search for semantic coherence, wherein one's mental models of the world, oneself, and of others people, continue to be updated so as to fit with the one's continually changing world. This is posed as the alternative to getting one's life stuck—which happens when on lives according to an ossified set of abstractions which no longer fit with one's lived reality. Mindfulness offers a way of getting unstuck—realigning conceptual and experiential worlds. This is not to suggest that Christian rituals ought to be re-envisaged mindfulness exercises as construed in contemporary popular discourse.

8. Quote from Spiritual Intelligence Project discussion, 2021

9. Additionally, Watts explores ascetic practices involve the body and (so far from denying the body) actually heighten bodily sense; he explores pilgrimages as spiritual practices involving the body, mindfulness as a way of *befriending* the body. Watts looks at how the body is used in prayer and liturgy. Watts also explores how "the meanings of religious words reflect their embodied origins … most of our language, perhaps especially spiritual language, makes use of metaphors that implicitly refer to the body, even if we are sometimes not conscious of the embodied language we use." (Watts 95, 81)

10. Does this exclude more meditative practices, per *zazen*, wherein posture is very important and almost constitutive of the practice itself? With Zen Buddhism in particular, posture is fashioned as a quasi-mechanical tool for creating stability of mind. Proper posture and proper state of mind are often directly equated. To be sitting properly *is* to be enlightened. It is interesting to note that, even there, in such a spartan practice as *zazen*, this mechanical view does not work. In reality, there is absolutely no direct, mechanical link between posture and state of mind—for beginners at least. Posture can encourage a clear mind, but does not imply a clear mind. Here again, it is time, sincerity and attitude that are needed to turn the posture into a rich vehicle for nourishing one's state of mind.

11. Though the rest of this article deals with attention, which is a kind of conscious effort and disciplined work, this should not be taken as undermining the role of grace in ritual practice. It needs to be stated that grace is a crucial part of the meaningfulness found in ritual practice. Nonetheless, one can invite grace precisely by the kind of attention one pays. Adapting a popular

contemplative image, while there is nothing at all a sailor can do to make the wind blow, the experienced sailor does know how to meet the wind when it does come. It is not the intention here to imply that one's own self-power is sufficient to do the spiritual work of finding meaning in ritual practice. Equally, part of sincere practice is the bringing of a sincere attention to one's practice. Indeed, if spiritual intelligence is to be characterized as participatory at all, then both grace and personal perseverance are required—particularly when different kinds of attention work on different levels of semantic information and bring different qualities of meaningfulness to bear.

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