Religion in the Text and on the Ground

CERC Plenary 2015
McGill University, Montréal, QC
Religion in the Text and on the Ground

CERC Plenary 2015
Montréal
Religion in the Text and on the Ground
The Convergence of Historiography and Ethnography in Religious Studies

The Second Plenary Meeting of the Cultural Evolution of Religion Research Consortium
McGill University
8–10 May 2015

The 2015 CERC Plenary Meeting, titled Religion in the Text and on the Ground, brings together an international collection of historians, philosophers, literary scholars, anthropologists, archaeologists, ethnographers, cognitive scientists, and psychologists to engage in targeted and substantive interdisciplinary discussion. As the midterm plenary of the Cultural Evolution of Religion Research Consortium, this meeting constitutes a timely and crucial opportunity to bring CERC researchers together into a single location to coordinate scholarly efforts, to take stock of where we have been, and to solidify research trajectories for the years to come. Building upon the success of the 2013 Plenary in Vancouver, we expect the Montreal meeting will continue to foster genuine and sustained conversation between the Humanities and the Sciences. In addition to the formal program of scholarly papers and posters, we are also excited for our two public outreach events: a keynote lecture by Charles Taylor (McGill University) and an educational, peer-reviewed concert by the Canadian rap artist Baba Brinkman, entitled “The Rap Guide to Religion.”

CERC Managing Committee
Edward Slingerland
Joseph Henrich
Ara Norenzayan
Mark Collard

McGill Co-Organisers
Frederick S. Tappenden
Torrance Kirby
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Sponsors

The 2015 CERC Plenary Meeting and related events is made possible by the generous support of the following organisations:

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
McGill Centre for Research on Religion
Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University
Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia
John Templeton Foundation
Institute for the Advanced Study of Religion
Beatty Memorial Fund Talk Series, McGill University
T-Pulse: Tomlinson Project in University-Level Science Education, McGill University
Office for Science and Society, McGill University
McGill Biology Student Union
Mr. Baba Brinkman
Schedule at a Glance

Unless otherwise stated, all sessions will be in the Birks Building, 3520 Rue University

Friday, 8 May 2015
4.45 PM Opening Remarks
5.00 PM Keynote and Reception: Charles Taylor
7.30 PM Dinner (McGill Faculty Club)

Saturday, 9 May 2015
9.30 AM Presentation Session I
12.00 PM Lunch
1.30 PM Presentation Session II
4.00 PM Poster Session I and Refreshments
8.30 PM Concert: Baba Brinkman, *The Rap Guide to Religion*

Sunday, 10 May 2015
9.00 AM Presentation Session III
11.45 PM Lunch
1.15 PM Presentation Session IV
3.00 PM Poster Session II and Refreshments
4.30 PM Presentation Session V
6.30 PM Concluding Remarks
Program

Friday, 8 May 2015
All sessions in the Birks Building, 3520 Rue University

4.45 PM  **Opening Remarks**
Birks Chapel

Edward Slingerland (UBC) and
Frederick S. Tappenden (McGill)

5.00 PM  **Keynote Address and Reception**
Birks Chapel; Reception in the Birks Foyer

Charles Taylor (McGill)
*Religious Mutations in our Time?*

Wine and Cheese Reception

7.30 PM  **Dinner**
McGill Faculty Club, 3450 Rue McTavish

Saturday, 9 May 2015
All sessions in the Birks Building, 3520 Rue University

9.30 AM  **Historical Team: The Database of Religious History (DRH)**
Birks 111

Michael Muthukrishna (UBC)
*Video: Cultural History Database Initiative*

Edward Slingerland (UBC)
*Overview and Strategy of the DRH*

Team Member Reports:
Brenton Sullivan (UBC) — *The DRH, Religious Studies, and other Humanities Databases*
Michael Muthukrishna (UBC) — *Technical Update*
Frederick S. Tappenden (McGill) — *Group Definition*
Jessica McCutcheon (UBC) — *Usability and Recruitment*
Edward Slingerland (UBC) — *Prospects Moving Forward*

Carol Ember (Yale)
*HRAF Response*

Discussion, Q&A, Feedback

**12.00 PM**  
**Lunch**  
Birks Sr. Common Room

**1.30 PM**  
**Sub-Grants and other CERC-Funded Projects**  
Birks 111

Mark Collard (SFU)  
*Opening Remarks*

Taylor Davis (Purdue)  
*Religion and the Moral Domain*

Anne Murphy (UBC) and Kamal Arora (UBC)  
*Sevā: Forms of Pro-Social Behaviour Among Sikhs*

Aiyana Willard (UBC) and Jon Lanman (Queen’s, Belfast)  
*Do what I do, not what I say: Experimental and Ethnographic Evidence for the Impact of Credibility Enhancing Displays on Belief*

Ryan Nichols (CSU Fullerton), Kristoffer Nielbo (Aarhus), and Uffe Bergeton (UNC)  
*Topic Modeling the Ancient Chinese Corpus: The Textual Contexts of High and Low Gods in Chinese Thought*

Discussion, Q&A, Feedback
4.00 PM **Poster Session I, Refreshments, and General Discussion**
Birks Foyer

*Dinner on the Town*
Restaurant suggestions available at the information table

8.30 PM **Public Concert**
Birks Chapel, attendance optional

Baba Brinkman
*The Rap Guide to Religion*

**Sunday, 10 May 2015**
All sessions in the Birks Building, 3520 Rue University

9.00 AM **Ethnographic-Experimental Team: The Cross-Cultural Project**
Birks 111

Joseph Henrich (UBC) and Ara Norenzayan (UBC)
*Opening Remarks*

Ben Purzycki (UBC)
*Overview of E-E Team Cross-Cultural Project*

Field Reports:
Coren Apicella (Pennsylvania) — Hadza
Quentin Atkinson (Auckland) — Vanuatu
Rita McNamara (UBC) — Fiji

Andre Costopoulos (McGill)
*Response*

Discussion, Q&A, Feedback
11.45 PM  **Lunch**
Birks Sr. Common Room

1.15 PM  **Other CERC Projects**
Birks 111

Edward Slingerland (UBC)

*Opening Remarks*

Dimitris Xygalatas (Connecticut)

*What are Rituals For? Individual and Social Functions of Rituals*

Mark Collard (SFU), Neil Price (Uppsala), Ben Raffield (SFU), and Claire Greenlow (SFU)

*Viking Men, Viking Women and the Biocultural Impacts of Religious Change*

Thomas Shultz (McGill), Artem Kaznatcheev (McGill), and Marcel Montrey (McGill)

*Evolutionary Models with Possible Relevance to Religion*

Discussion, Q&A, Feedback

3.00 PM  **Poster Session II, Refreshments, and General Discussion**
Birks Foyer

4.30 PM  **CERC Affiliated Projects**
Birks 111

Torrance Kirby (McGill)

*Opening Remarks*

Paul Yachnin (McGill, Early Modern Conversions: Religions, Cultures, Cognitive Ecologies)

*The Character of Conversion: Shakespeare’s Conversional Ecologies*
Wesley J. Wildman (Boston, Institute for the Bio-Cultural Study of Religion)  
Simulating Cultural Evolution with Massive Datasets

Juan Luis Suárez (Western, The CulturePlex Lab)  
Two Dimensions of the Baroque: Local Order and Global Expansion

Discussion, Q&A, Feedback

6.30 PM  **Concluding Remarks**  
Birks 111

Edward Slingerland (UBC)
Keynote Address

RELIGIOUS MUTATIONS IN OUR TIME?

Charles Taylor
Professor Emeritus, McGill University

Friday, 8 May 2015 • 5.00 PM, Birks Chapel

Keynote Abstract
Religion has never been a stable category. The term covers an immense variety of phenomena, from ritual sacrifice through to meditation. Continuing transformations in social and cultural spheres further aggravates the polysemy of this category. In this address I explore some crucial transformations that occurred in the West in the 20th century, and which have had resonance on a global scale and into our century. I bring this examination to bear particularly on the study of religion in the modern academy, with specific aim at contemporary theories of the prosocial function of religion and the work currently being conducted by the Cultural Evolution of Religion Research Consortium.

About the Speaker
Charles Taylor (D.Phil., Oxford) is a Canadian philosopher and Professor Emeritus at McGill University. A native of Montreal, his distinguished career has placed him at the fore of contemporary discussions on religion, secularity, and modern society. Professor Taylor has published widely on Hegel, modernity, intellectual history, political thought, multiculturalism, the social sciences and philosophy, religion, and secularity. He is perhaps best known for his Sources of the Self (HUP 1989) and A Secular Age (HUP 2007), two works that trace the multiple, overlapping stories of ethics and religion in the Western tradition. Commonly regarded as one of the most important thinkers Canada has ever produced, Professor Taylor is a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1986), a Companion of the Order of Canada (1995), and the recipient of notable awards such as the SSHRC Gold Medal (2003), the Templeton Prize (2007), and the Kyoto Prize (2008).
Public Concert

THE RAP GUIDE TO RELIGION
A Peer-Reviewed Rap Performance on the Science of the Sacred

Baba Brinkman
Saturday, 9 May 2015 • 8.30 PM, Birks Chapel

About the Concert
This educational concert presents Baba Brinkman’s latest album, “The Rap Guide to Religion.” This event will be part hip-hop concert, part stand-up comedy, and part TED Talk, exploring one of the most heated questions of our age: what’s the point of religion? Taking a scientific approach to the question, Brinkman performs faith-illuminating songs inspired by the best cognitive science, evolutionary theory, and comparative anthropology. Audiences will discover the various ways and means by which religion evolves in our species, and will leave the show with a new appreciation of religion, and its critics.

About the Artist
Baba Brinkman (M.A., Victoria) is a Canadian musician, poet, and playwright who has garnered international recognition for his intellectually substantive and creative musical outputs. He is best known for his critically acclaimed “Rap Guides” on topics as diverse as the Canterbury Tales (2004), Evolution (2009), Human Nature and Evolutionary Psychology (2012), and most recently, Religion (2014). His material has been showcased in educational contexts by the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and Harvard, and through the popular TED Talks network. Brinkman’s “Rap Guide to Evolution”—originally commissioned for the 2009 bicentennial celebration of Charles Darwin’s birth—was awarded the Scotsman Fringe First Award (Edinburgh, 2009) and the Friend of Darwin Award (National Center for Science Education, 2013). When he is not in his hometown of Vancouver, Brinkman performs his “Rap Guides” as off-Broadway shows in New York City.
General Information

A. **Hotel:**
   La Citadelle
   410 Rue Sherbrooke O.
   Front desk: (514) 398-8650
   🚉 Metro: McGill

B. **Meeting Venue:**
   Birks Building
   3520 Rue University
   🚉 Metro: McGill

C. **Banquet Venue:**
   McGill Faculty Club
   3450 Rue McTavish
   🚉 Metro: Peel