



The 2008 Kyoto Prize Workshop in Arts and Philosophy

Symposium

“*A Secular Age* and After —Secularization and Modernity—”

Laureate: Dr. Charles Margrave Taylor
[Professor Emeritus, McGill University]

13:00 - 17:00, November 12, 2008 (Wed.)
Kyoto International Conference Center

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Program

Coordinator and Supervisor

Heita Kawakatsu

(Chairman, Kyoto Prize Committee in Arts and Philosophy; President, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture)

13:00 **Opening Address**

Heita Kawakatsu

Introduction of Laureate

Heita Kawakatsu

Laureate Lecture

Charles Margrave Taylor (the Laureate in Arts and Philosophy)
“Master Narratives of Secularity”

Intermission

Panel Discussion

Moderator Heita Kawakatsu

Panelists Charles Margrave Taylor

Shozo Iijima (Professor, Senior Dean, Faculty of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University)

Tatsuo Inoue (Professor, Graduate Schools for Law and Politics, The University of Tokyo)

Tomohiko Tanaka (Associate Professor, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Tokyo Medical and Dental University)

Yasuo Tsuji (Professor, School of Law, Hokkaido University)

Takamitsu Nakano (Research Lecturer, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Chiba University)

17:00 **Closing**

Abstract of the Laureate Lecture

Dr. Charles Margrave Taylor
Professor Emeritus, McGill University

Master Narratives of Secularity

There is a widely shared perception of the modern age in the West as “secular”. Underlying this is a story of how secularism arose, and a causal hypothesis about why it did so. This causal hypothesis is what I will call “Mainstream Secularization theory”. The basic thesis, in a nutshell, is that Modernity brings secularization.

The former term covers a host of developments we consider constitutive of modernity: Mobility, economic growth, industrialization, higher education levels, science and technology, social and geographical mobility, urbanization, globalization, means of mass communication.

The latter term covers mainly two things: a) religion ceases to dominate public sphere, and so becomes “privatized”; b) religious belief and practice falls off.

What I want to do is to focus on the stories involved in this mainstream theory. It draws on a family of Master Narratives.

I want to look into the following facets the Master Narratives of secularization, and the problems which arise from them:

1. The deep background in the self-narrations of Western modernity: stadial theories; ratchet effects.
2. What is religion?
3. Confusing religion and “enchantment”
4. “Subtraction” theories. The view from Dover Beach.

Then I want to look at some features of the history we have lived through which have been occluded or distorted by the mainstream theory:

1. One story or many?
2. A story not of subtraction, but of destabilization and recomposition.
3. The “Durkheimian” dimension: paleo-, neo- and post-Durkheim.
4. The future of the religious past.