

CALL FOR PAPERS

Department for the Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University
Czech Society for the Study of Religions
Czech Society for the Cognitive Study of Culture

INVITE YOU TO THE SCIENTIFIC WORKSHOP

LOOSE ENDS IN THE COGNITIVE STUDY OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

BRNO (CZECH REPUBLIC)

6 – 7 November 2009

The purpose of the workshop is to explore various „loose ends“ in the application of cognitive approaches to the study of culture generally, and religion specifically, and to search for their prospective solutions. Although we understand that specific problems in the use of cognitive approaches has wider implications (i.e. philosophy of science, philosophy of mind etc.), we prefer papers more closely related to topics currently under discussion in the Cognitive Science of Religion. We invite participants to pay special attention to the topics and questions such as:

- Embodied cognition. Is this reality always sufficiently reflected in the Cognitive Science of Religion? And what is the influence of human emotions on cognitive processes underlying religious activity?
- The relationship between mind and brain. How to connect cognition with neural processes which are usually discussed separately and often seem to provide mutually incompatible views? Even if we are able to observe and study neural processes, the content of religious ideas and shared meanings of ritual actions still remain inaccessible at empirical neural levels.
- Modularity of mind. Can we still cling to the “massive modularity” theory, or is the idea of “frozen” evolution of human mental capacities rather isolated from cultural input better to be replaced by other scenarios? And what are the implications of this change of perspective for the scientific study of religions? How can the theory of domain-specific modularity be reconciled with the wide variety of human behaviour and the creativeness of human mind?
- Superhuman agent/agency. Should we speak about agents in our attempts to delineate the field of our interest or rather about agency as a concept more suitable to deal with wider variety of religious phenomena?
- The so-called Mickey Mouse problem. Where we can find the most promising answers in our search for an explanation of what really differentiates religious counterintuitive concepts from non-religious ones?

- Problem of ritualized actions. Is the proclaimed effectiveness of religious rituals somehow connected with human cognition? Does the culturally constructed difference between magic and religion reflect deeper cognitively grounded structures in human conceptualization of ritual activity?

Nevertheless, participants are encouraged to raise and pursue their own topics, provided that they are in accordance with the announced idea of the workshop.

Keynote speakers:

Professor, Dr.Phil. Armin W. Geertz (Aarhus University)

“Too much mind and not enough brain, body and culture: on what needs to be done in the cognitive science of religion”

Associate Professor Jesper Sørensen, Ph.D. (Aarhus University)

“Cognition, evolution and historiography: how evolutionary and cognitive theory can help historical studies of religion”

Length of a short paper is 20 minutes + 10 minutes for discussion.

Workshop language: English

Participation fee: 900 CZK (35 €); students 600 CZK (25 €), paid in cash at the registration desk. The fee covers the expenses connected with the organization of the workshop.

Deadline for the submission of paper abstracts (max. 200 words): 30 September 2009.

Prospective participants can register at:

<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=cjh2b2hEVHVNUUnJkQU1meTk0VGRTTmc6MA..>

All further inquiries may be addressed either to the secretary of the organizing committee or the conference email cogni2009brno@gmail.com.

David Vaclavík, Ph.D.

President of the Czech Society for the Study of Religions

Head of the organizing committee

Aleš Chalupa, Ph.D.

President of the Czech Society for the Cognitive Study of Culture

Secretary of the organizing committee

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Practical information

We made a group reservation at the Continental hotel close to the city center and Faculty of Arts premises (30 rooms used either as single or double). Prospective participants may book their rooms individually, payment after arrival at the reception desk, either in cash or by card. The group reservation is valid until 10th October 2009. In your booking order use the code COGNI 09, you are entitled for a special conference price 1050 CZK SR/1500 CZK DR per night (breakfast included).

Hotel web pages: <http://www.continentalbrno.cz>

We also made a group reservation at the GARNI hotel (only 6 rooms used either as single or double). This hotel is more distant from the city center and Faculty of Arts premises and is recommended especially for the student participants. Prospective participants can make their booking via email cogni2009brno@gmail.com, payment after arrival at the reception desk (in cash only). The group reservation is valid until 31st October 2009. The price is 790 CZK SR/980 CZK DR (breakfast included).

Hotel web pages: <http://www.skm.muni.cz/ubytovani.php?akce=39&lang=cz>

You can also find a lot of practical information about traveling to and in Brno on the EASR 2008 conference web pages <http://www.phil.muni.cz/relig/easr2008/practical-info.php> (however, keep in mind that especially information about transport in Brno can be outdated). All further inquiries may be addressed to the conference email cogni2009brno@gmail.com.