

BOOKS

Canadian Philosopher Wins \$1 Million Prize

By JENNIFER SCHUESSLER OCT. 4, 2016

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor has been named the winner of the first Berggruen Prize, which is to be awarded annually for “a thinker whose ideas are of broad significance for shaping human self-understanding and the advancement of humanity.”

The prize, which carries a cash award of \$1 million, will be given in a ceremony in New York City on Dec. 1. It is sponsored by the Berggruen Institute, a research organization based in Los Angeles and dedicated to improving governance and mutual understanding across different cultures, with particular emphasis on intellectual exchange between the West and Asia.

Mr. Taylor, 84, is widely regarded as one of the world’s leading philosophers, and a thinker whose ideas have been influential in the humanities, social sciences and public affairs. His many books include “Sources of the Self,” an exploration of how different ideas of selfhood helped define Western civilization, and “A Secular Age,” a study of the coexistence of religious and nonreligious people in an era dominated by secular ideas.

He was chosen for the prize by an independent nine-member jury, headed by the philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah. The jury cited Mr. Taylor’s support for “political unity that respects cultural diversity,” and the influence

of his work in “demonstrating that Western civilization is not simply unitary, but like all civilizations the product of diverse influences.”

Mr. Taylor’s previous honors include the 2015 John W. Kluge Prize for the Achievement in the Study of Humanity (shared with Jürgen Habermas), the 2007 Templeton Prize for achievement in the advancement in spiritual matters and the 2008 Kyoto Prize, regarded as Japan’s highest private honor. Both the Templeton and Kluge prizes also carry cash awards of more than \$1 million.

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