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Dear Members and Friends of RaT,

It is our pleasure to present you the current issue of our Newsletter! It has been a busy year for us and we are proud to inform you that the former Research Platform *Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* has been transferred to a Research Centre, which offers the perspective of a permanent institutionalisation at the University of Vienna.

In this Newsletter, we will introduce new employees of our Centre, newly associated researchers and our Scientific Advisory Board. We also want to present the latest issues of our Interdisciplinary Online Journal and a small selection of the many publications by our members. As they seem to be working inexhaustibly, it became a considerably long list nevertheless.

Furthermore, we want to point to some upcoming events, especially to our Open Day that will take place on March 20 2019. The widest section of our Newsletter is dedicated to the events that took place since March 2018. We want to give insight into the many conferences, workshops and lectures that were organised in the previous months and are also happy to share lots of beautiful photographs.

In a special feature, we want to present two very notable research projects and if you take a look into the press review, you might be astonished how engaged our members are concerning third mission activities.

In this Newsletter, you will also find lots of inspiring pictures that have been provided by the photograph artist Silke Lapina. You can find her pictures also on our website which might be very interesting for you if you want to stay up to date concerning our activities and publications.

Please take your time, page through and linger on what’s interesting for you. We wholeheartedly thank all contributors and wish you an enjoyable reading time!

Lisa Achathaler
Kurt Appel
Marlene Deibl
Martin Eleven
Anna Maria Kontriner
Daniel Kuran
Katharina Limacher
Sara-Maria Walker

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1. PERSONALIA

STAFF

Katharina Limacher

Since December 2018, Katharina Limacher supports the team of the Research Centre as a post-doc-assistant. She splits her time between the Research Centre and the Department for Political Science and thus contributes to the interdisciplinary work of the Research Centre. Katharina Limacher holds a PhD in the study of religions from the university of Lucerne, where she also completed her Master’s degree in sociology. Previous to her appointment at the Research Centre, she conducted research at the universities of Berne and Lucerne in Switzerland and the Istituto Svizzero di Roma in Italy. Her research foci are religions in migration societies, sociology of religion and intersectionality.

We are glad that Katharina Limacher will contribute to RaT with her expertise in sociology of religion!

Martin Eleven

Since the beginning of November, Martin Eleven has supported the team of the Research Center RaT as an organization assistant for the publication of the Online Journal J-RaT and in the field of public relations. Martin Eleven studied philosophy in Vienna and is currently working on his Master's degree in Advanced Theological Studies. Of particular interest to him are religious-philosophical questions in the light of postmodern theories. In this context, he has organised and lead a workshop in autumn 2017 in cooperation with the Research Center entitled "Zwischenraum: Psychoanalyse und Mystik bei Michel de Certeau". A publication is already in planning.

Anna Maria Kontriner

Anna Maria Kontriner has started her work as administrative assistant at the Research Centre in October. She studies philosophy and catholic theology at the University of Vienna and takes great interest in German Idealism and questions concerning the philosophy of religion, aesthetics and language.
CURRENT VACANCY

Tenure-Track Professorship

At the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Vienna, a **Tenure-Track Professorship** connected to the Research Centre Religion and Transformation is to be filled. The focus of this full-time position lies on the field of Religion and Aesthetics. You can find further information here:

https://univis.univie.ac.at/auenschreibungstellensuche/flow/bew_ausschreibung-flow;jsessionid=2B7C7D98CCACB36A3C1AE54F0A9C1FBB?flowExecutionKey=0E4B831F-A281-666F-149D-3403C640FE61_kB5B1EBF4-173D-83CD-5B00-B5F295611CE9&tid=70584.28&_language=en

FAREWELL

**Abdullah Takim**, Professor for Classical and Modern Qur’an Exegesis, is leaving the University of Vienna and will be appointed at the University of Innsbruck with the beginning of the next semester. We want to express our most cordial thankfulness for the cooperation and wish Abdullah Takim all the best for the future!
NEW MEMBERS

Sabine Grenz

We are pleased to welcome Univ.-Prof. Dr. **Sabine Grenz** as a member of our Research Centre! Sabine Grenz holds the Interdisciplinary Professorship for Gender Studies at the University of Vienna. Additionally, she is vice-president of the Institute for Education, deputy member of the Faculty’s conference and was project leader of the 10th European Feminist Research Conference in 2018. Sabine Grenz is a member of the editorial board of “Gender. Journal for Gender, Culture and Society” and contributes to the “Open Gender Journal”.

Her research interests comprise qualitative-empirical methodology, epistemology and methodology of gender, diversity and intersectionality, the relation of gender, secularity and religion, the intersection of gender, sexuality and commercialization, historic aspects of gender issues and the history and institutionalization of Gender Studies.

Monographs:


Recent Articles:


Esther Ramharter

Another new member of RaT that we would like to introduce is Assoz.-Prof. Mag. Mag. Dr. Dr. Esther Ramharter, Associated Professor at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Vienna. Furthermore, the mathematician and philosopher is head of the Vienna Circle Institute at the University of Vienna and reviewer for several scientific journals, among them the “Journal for the History of Analytic Philosophy”, “Synthese”, “The Journal of Analytic Theology” and the “Nordic Wittgenstein Review”.

Her research areas are logic and philosophy of religion. Furthermore, she is an outstanding expert in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the intersection of mathematics and philosophy.

**Monographs:**


**Recent Articles:**


Michael Staudigl

We are also pleased to welcome PD Mag. Dr.habil. Michael Staudigl as a new member. He is also one of Vienna University’s outstanding scholars and teaches at the Department of Philosophy.

In the course of research fellowships, he worked in Freiburg, Prague, Louvain-la-Neuve and New York. From 2000 to 2002 he worked at the psycho-traumatological ambulance ESRA, Vienna; from 2003 to 2010 as a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna; from 2003 to 2006 he held an APART-fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Since 2007 he directed several research grants funded by the FWF (Austrian Science Funds), most recently the bilateral project “The Return of Religion as a Challenge for Thought” (with Branko Klun, Slovenia) and the stand-alone project "Secularism and its Discontents: Toward a Phenomenology of Religious Violence."

His major research areas are (religious) violence, fundamentalism, war, and the intersections of religion, ethics and politics. His methodological approach is inspired by the phenomenological tradition.

**Recent Books:**


**Recent Articles:**


**Research Projects:**

*Secularism and its Discontents: Toward A Phenomenology of Religious Violence*, directed by Michael Staudigl, financed by the FWF.

*The Return of Religion as a Challenge for Thinking*, organised by Michael Staudigl and Branko Klun (University of Ljubljana)
Handan Aksünger-Kızil

Univ.-Prof. Dr. phil. Mag. Handan Aksünger-Kızil is Professor for “Alevi Theological Studies” at the University of Vienna since September 2018.

From 2014 to 2018, she was Junior Professor for Alevism at the Academy for World Religions at Hamburg University, between 2014 and 2017 she was the associate director of the Academy. From fall 2015 to summer 2018, she was responsible for the “Alevi” part within the BA program for elementary teachers and subsequently developed a respective part for a MA program.

In 2011, she completed her dissertation project entitled “Jenseits des Schweigegebots. Alevitische Migrantenselbstorganisationen und zivilgesellschaftliche Integration in Deutschland und den Niederlanden” as a fellow of a DFG-founded German-Dutch research-training group at the University of Münster. Since 2009, she has been a visiting scholar at the Universities of Münster, Duisburg-Essen, Innsbruck and Weingarten. She studied Social Anthropolgy, Sociology and Geography at the University of Münster.

Since 2015, she is in charge for Alevi Studies for the “Handbuch der Religionen” and since 2009, she is a member of the sections migration and ethnic minorities of the German Sociological Association. Moreover, since 2005 she works voluntarily for different dialogue platforms, for example as a consultant for Alevism at the German Evangelical Church Assembly.

Monograph:


Recent Articles:


Main research focus:

Alevism and and Alevitic Theology
Religious and liturgic practice in Alevi communities
Studying and teaching in Alevism

Alevitic pastoral care
Intra- and interreligious dialogue form an Alevi perspective
Migration, integration and civil society
Scientific Advisory Board

We are also pleased to introduce the Scientific Advisory Board that supports our Research Centre with excellent expertise concerning issues of religion and society since April 2018. Our board consists of six internationally highly regarded scholars from different disciplines.

Jocelyne Cesari
University of Birmingham / Georgetown University
Department of Theology and Religion

Religion and Politics

Mechthild Dreyer
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz
Philosophical seminar

Philosophy

Heiner Bielefeldt
Friedrich-Alexander Universität Nürnberg-Erlangen
Department of Political Studies

Politics and Human Rights
Cornelia Richter
Friedrich-Wilhelms-University Bonn / University of Cologne
Faculty of Lutheran Theology

Systematic Theology

Bettina Schmidt
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts

Study of Religions

Roberto Tottoli
University of Napoli l'Orientale
Faculty for Arabo-Islamic and Mediterranean Studies

Historical Studies

The term “Crisis of Representation” rose to fame through Michel Foucault. The crisis, in the context of this issue, does not only have a political and economic dimension, but a cultural, aesthetic and religious one as well. Thus, a serious inquiry into this complex and multidimensional phenomenon requires an interdisciplinary approach. The issue targets the phenomena at hand through 15 contributions – all with unique and innovative approaches to the topic.

One common aim that holds the issue together is the analysis of the nature of the crisis, which helps to find suitable theoretical frameworks. On the other hand, the term itself functions as a tool that enables the analysis of specific societal developments. Contributing authors brought with them expertise from their respective fields including philosophy, political sciences, theology, Islamic studies and religious studies. This allowed for a cross-disciplinary approach to the phenomenon with special foci on politics, religions, societies and finance, as well as theoretical developments on current philosophical and post-colonial discourses. This issue was edited by Kurt Appel and Carl Raschke. Lisa Achathaler lead the editorial office.


Jakob Deibl / Lisa Achathaler
Introductory Remarks on the Issue “The Crisis of Representation”
Kurt Appel (translated by Patrick Elridge, revised by Daniel Minch Jr. and Kurt Appel)
Critiques of Master-Representations: The Political Dimension of the Canon between the Bible and the Quran

Carl Raschke
The Kingdom, the Power, the Glory, and the Tawdry: Neoliberal Hegemony and the “Undoing” of the Demos

Daniel Minch
What Kind of God is Money Anyway? An Investigation into the Theological Structures of Capitalism and Gnosticism

Philip Goodchild
Limits to Globalisation and the Loss of Faith

Olivier Roy
Transcription of the Lecture “Globalization and the Crisis of Culture and Religion”

Rüdiger Lohlker
Representation with/out Representation: Saudia Arabia as a Hidden Face of Globalization

Hans Schelkshorn
The Ideology of the New Right and Religious Conservativism. Towards an Ethical Critique of the New Politics of Authoritarianism

Astrid Mattes
Liberal Democratic Representation and the Politicization of Religion

Thomas M. Schmidt
Symbolische Praxis und normative Struktur. Die Krise der politischen Repräsentation in der Perspektive einer „Soziologie des Sakralen”

Andreas Gelhard
Bewährung der Gleichheit. Dialektik und radikale Demokratietheorie

Peter Zeillinger

Gerald Posselt
The Task of Becoming Minor: On the Politics of Representation

Isabella Guanzini
Rethinking Parrhesia. Theological-Political Considerations on the Present Crisis of Religious Representation

The articles of the sixth issue of the *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* debate war morals and religion from a longterm historical perspective. The issue brings together researchers from various sciences – history, theology, literary studies, philosophy, and sociology – in order to present recent insights into theories and experiences of war with special emphasis on religion.

By focusing on the commitment of combatants and commitments to enhance peace, the contributors provide new insights from a fresh and still unusual perspective. They will spur further discussion of moral commitment in war ethics, the role of religion in war, and of the prospect of peace ethics. Religion played a major role in the life of combatants and non-combatants in WWI, the “seminal catastrophe” (George Kennan) of the 20th century. Religion remains a multi-faceted and steady aspect of warfare that, in some respects, serves as a peace-enhancing worldview. Special editors of this issue are Thomas Schulte-Umberg and Angela Kahlhoff, the editorial office was directed by Daniel Kuran.

Link: [https://www.vr-elibrary.de/toc/jrat/4/1](https://www.vr-elibrary.de/toc/jrat/4/1) DOI: [https://doi.org/10.14220/jrat.2018.4.1](https://doi.org/10.14220/jrat.2018.4.1)
Angela Kallhoff
Justifiable Killing in War? For Taking the Soldier’s Stance Seriously in War Ethics

Andreas Holzem
Theological War Theories

Franziska Quabeck
"That's more than we know!". The Principle of Responsibility and the Common Soldier in William Shakespeare's Plays

Sabine A. Haring
Wir-Gefühle, Feindbilder und Feindseligkeit bei deutschsprachigen k.u.k. Soldaten im Ersten Weltkrieg. Eine emotionssoziologische Perspektive

Andrea Hofmann
„Kämpfet recht!“ Themen einer evangelischen „Soldatenethik“ im Deutschen Reich während des Ersten Weltkriegs

Thomas Schulte-Umberg
Kriegsmoral und Konfession. Perspektiven auf die katholische Feldpastoral Österreich-Ungarns im Ersten Weltkrieg im internationalen Kontext

Michael Snape

Daniel Gerster
How to Bring About “Peace on Earth”? Catholic "Moralities of Warfare” and Their Shifts after 1945

Raphael Döhn
Krieg, Frieden und Religion(en) – Hans Jonas' Reflections on Religious Aspects of Warlessness

Birgit Rath
Bellum Iustum – Eine moraltheologische Auseinandersetzung bei Karl Hörmann

Maria Neumann
Der Nächste ist ein Anderer. Grenzübergreifende Gemeindepartnerschaften in Berlin und Brandenburg während des Kalten Kriegs

Free contribution: Sara Kuehn
Wild Social Transcendence and the Antinomian Dervish
PRINT-SERIES RELIGION AND TRANSFORMATION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY


The contributions of this volume aim at a new, evidence based approach to Jihadism studies. Jihadi communication is understood as multilingual communication stressing the Arabic language aspect and discussing the errors made by conventional Jihadism research from several angles. Operational aspects and the dissemination of military knowledge among Jihadis are discussed, including the swarm-like communication, the importance of knowledge of Arabic to really understand Jihadi communication, and an understanding of the theological context.


*Prayer, Pop and Politics – Researching Religious Youth in Migration Society* presents research at the intersection of religion, age and race and tackles the question what it is like to be young and religious in a migration society. In their edited volume, Katharina Limacher, Astrid Mattes and Christoph Novak compile empirical studies from Austria, France, Germany and Switzerland as well as methodological and conceptual contributions.

The chapters’ foci range from digital and offline activism of religious youth to participatory action research projects on radicalisation prevention. The authors present research on various religious traditions, and apply an array of different theoretical angles including feminist, post- and de-colonial perspectives. In going one step further, the volume engages in the debate over new conceptual frameworks attuned to investigate contemporary manifestations of youth religiosity, for example in digital spaces. The methodological chapters strongly advocate for reflexivity in the context of empirical research on religion in migration society. In discussing the implications of insider and outsider positions in research, as well as researchers’ privileges and

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the challenges in concept operationalisation, it promotes a self-evaluative assessment of researchers’ positionalities.

The interdisciplinary team of 15 contributing authors works across Europe and includes scholars of religion and migration, political scientists, sociologists, and ethnologists. In bringing together expert knowledge from these different research traditions, Prayer, Pop and Politics not only appeals to a broad scientific audience but also manages to introduce an interdisciplinary state of the art. In doing so, the present volume also opens up new perspectives to facilitate further inter- and transdisciplinary research on youth and religion in migration society.


Walter Benjamin remains one of the most influential thinkers for contemporary discourses on philosophy and theology of history. In Benjamin’s oeuvre history is grasped in a triangular relation to myth and messianism. The vulnerability of the dead is the key idea which opens up a passage between myth and messianism and allows for thinking history in its humane dimension. History in this sense denominates a critical approach to time beyond mythic narratives. Starting from Benjamin’s early essay *Critique of Violence (Zur Kritik der Gewalt)* and considering its enormous influence on current thought in Derrida, Agamben, and Weigel this book unfolds Benjamin’s concept of history. The potential of a “weak messianism” (*schwacher Messianismus*), which points to the nucleus of Benjamin’s thought, consists in allowing for the recognition of the dead as subjects of history as well as it provides a critique of sovereign power, images and society.


The European Society for Catholic Theology (ET) took up the INSeCT Global Research Project "A question of gender justice: the role of women in decision-making in different areas of church and society" (2014-2017) by organising two conferences – both are documented here, providing special insights into processes of intercultural dialogue – the first one between Asia and Europe, the second one within Europe, especially between the Western and the Eastern Central European societies.

The first conference was a joint venture by ET and the Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines (DaKaTeo), a symposium held in Tagaytay in July 2016. The second conference was hosted by the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna (Austria) and the Viennese "Forum Zeit und Glaube" of the Society of Catholic Academics in September 2016. The volume and the documentation of the two conferences is completed by a half a dozen of the fifteen papers that have been presented at the conference. Topics span over the globe and focus on Pope Francis’ call who, in Evangelii Gaudium (ns. 103-104), urged theologians to contribute to an up-to-date theology of women.

The edition of our print-series is lead by Marlene Deibl. You can find further volumes here: [https://religionandtransformation.at/en/publications/rat-series/](https://religionandtransformation.at/en/publications/rat-series/)
MONOGRAPHS AND EDITED VOLUMES (SELECTION)


Pope Francis persists to refer to the category of “New Gnosis” critically. In that course, neognosticism is often connected to another widespread tendency, which is neopelagianism. Pope Francis sees this as a problematic drift in contemporary religious life. Its characteristics are cold and merciless logics that aim for absolute control and a spirituality that refuses incarnation and tries to burnish the mystery of god and his grace.

The analysis of this category and its unavoidable consequences for anthropology and pastoral care can contribute to an understanding of the pope’s theological vision. This edited volume shows how he answers to the possible return of this ancient heresy: He invites the church to be incarnated in its own time, to support a “revolution of tenderness”, to resist the ensnarement of mercilessly calculating logics and to embrace, as its “doctrine” in a deeper sense, the gospel of Jesus.


“Time and God. A Philosophical Eschatology Departing from Hegel and Schelling” is an attempt at presenting a theological theory of time as well as a theory of history that focuses on history’s eschatological dimension. The book shows that the concept of time is crucial for the conception of God in Hegel’s speculative philosophy and Schelling’s late philosophy. The concept of time can become a key to understanding both of these complex systems of thought. By interpreting Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit, the book gives a completely new meaning to the thought of the so-called annulment of time (Tilgung der Zeit). The book shows that Hegel’s speculative proposition is a radical temporalisation of being which can no longer be conceived through direct representations. In contrast, it demonstrates that the speculative implies the disruption of all denotative representations.
Furthermore, the book wants to show that the contemporary secular concept of progressive and chronological time as well as the classical theological concept of time, in which time is merely a prelude to the timeless eternity of God, remain insufficient. Against these conceptions of time and by considering the implications of the seventh day in the genesis and the Gospel of John, eternity is understood as a moment of a time that is liturgically constituted to the core. The name of God, whose dignity lies in the vulnerability, inaccessibility and openness of being, approaches us in time’s open past, a past ought to be rewritten. Find further information here: http://kurt-appel.at/site/en/home/article/154.html

Zeynep Arslan: *Demokratisierung durch Selbstermächtigung. Zum Empowerment alevitischer Frauen* in der Türkei und in der Diaspora, Baden 2018 (Ulrike Bechmann, Wolfram Reiss (Eds.): Anwendungsorientierte Religionswissenschaft, Volume 12.)

The Alevi faith is propagating the principle of gender equality. While Alevi women are visible in the community they do not have much decision making power to shape policy. This contribution makes the suggestion of the development of difference feminism to break with the socio-historically construction of equality of sex within the Alevi societies. Six expert interviews show the inexistence of any particular consciousness about the demand of equality up to now.

Through content and discourse analyses of literature, current social and geo-political developments in Turkey, Middle East and Europe and participatory observation within the Alevi associations, the strategic essentialism is discussed as a possible option to enable a development for real gender equality within the Alevi societies. After the establishment of difference feminism to force consciousness about the real situation of Alevi women, the strategic essentialism is suggested as an instrument to enable gender equality within the Alevi societies in three levels.

Accompanied with different Gender Theories, the main argument of the book is the empowerment of the Alevi women as the most disadvantaged ones with a perspective from
the bottom-up to the complex power and hierarchy structures to enable democratization processes within the Alevi society. In that way an organized Alevi societies that manages to re-discover its principals of humanism, pluralism and pacifism, could be able to (co-)initiate democratization establishment or stabilization processes within the societies they live.

The book closes with the discussion that in the European Diaspora the Alevis do have better conditions to facilitate an Alevi re-construction process to develop consciousness about its main principals and its political role about dialogue maker in the societies they are part of. The minimum of a common denominator for pluralistic societies of the modern times today is to develop a pluralistic and empowered democracy, while this needs to be realized within the own rows first. Find further information here: https://www.zeynemarslan.com/demokratisierung-durch-selbstermaechtigung/


The Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus Christ. Based on this main theme, Christian Danz has developed a new understanding of pneumatology against the backdrop of the history of the doctrine and of a modern approach. In the Holy Spirit, the Christian religion exemplifies in itself
its dependence on a specific religious tradition as well as the necessity of its transformative adoption of religious tradition. Christian religious communication takes place in the spirit, which is bound to mediation and is at the same time a medium of the Christian religion. Its identity and continuity originate in the continuous reinterpretation of the remembrance of Jesus Christ. Find further information here: [https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/buch/gottes-geist-9783161566974](https://www.mohrsiebeck.com/buch/gottes-geist-9783161566974)

**Christian Danz, Michael Murrmann-Kahl (Eds.): Verlust des Ichs in der Moderne? Erkundungen aus literarischer und theologischer Perspektive, Tübingen 2019.**

Notions of the self and its identity are subject to constant change. This volume looks at how self-image and religion is depicted in nineteenth century novels, tracing how concepts of the ego and religious self-images changed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and continue to do so today. Substantialist ideas of the self (soul) or the unit or core of the individual (personality) are replaced by reflective conceptions and descriptions. Different I-concepts vie with one another in the reflective modern age where the ego has often already been declared dead and is subject to diverse metamorphoses.


**Sebastian Pittl: Geschichte Realität und Kreuz, Regensburg 2018.**

The question of the relation of salvific history and world history is the most fundamental question for Liberation theologies. The theology of Ignacio Ellacuría is one of the most challenging and differenciated attempts of an answer that have been developed in this tradition. His work reconstructs the most important thoughts of his work “Filosofía de la Realidad Histórica” and develops the perspectives that his historical soteriology opens concerning the relation of christianity, politics and civil society. Pittls book analyses chances and borders of this attempt and the relevance it can have for the foundation of a political theology in global modernity. Find further information here: [https://www.verlag-pustet.de/shop/item/9783791730066/geschichtliche-realitat-und-kreuz-von-sebastian-pittl-kartoniertes-buch](https://www.verlag-pustet.de/shop/item/9783791730066/geschichtliche-realitat-und-kreuz-von-sebastian-pittl-kartoniertes-buch)

A vibrant cauldron of new religious developments, East Asia (China/Taiwan, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam) presents a fascinating arena of related research for scholars across disciplines. Edited by Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter, the “Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements” provides the first comprehensive and reliable guide to explore the vast East Asian new religious panorama. Penned by leading scholars in the field, the assembled contributions render the Handbook an invaluable resource for those interested in the crucial new religious actors and trajectories of the region.


Link: [https://brill.com/view/title/36047](https://brill.com/view/title/36047) DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004362970](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004362970)


During the last two years, the Department of Practical Theology worked within a transdisciplinary process to publish a handbook which serves for reflection and further education for living and learning from and with refugees as well as migrants in a migration society. It therefore accomplishes an important contribution to processes of inclusive integration. The topics and contents of the book were elaborated based on research on migration and refuge at the Department in cooperation with experts on refuge and integration.
in society, church and school, experts from research on local, national and EU-politics, economy, law and education and with people who experienced refuge and migration.

The handbook offers basic knowledge impulses for learning and suggestions for praxis that are applicable in manifold ways in processes of education and encourage reflection on personal experiences with refuge, migration and integration. 50 alphabetically sorted key terms (from “anxiety” to “foreign”, “dominant culture”, “value” to “confidence”), 10 visions of an inclusive society (literary texts by writer Ilja Trojanow) and further links and bibliographies allow for a rethinking of and continuing education in these controversial topics. The “Migrationskompass” (Migration-Compass) addresses everyone who wants to deal with these challenges, especially volunteering refugee companions and teachers. The “Migrationskompass” (Migration-Compass) was financed by the ERSTE-foundation and the Caritas.

The publication was presented on 10th of December 2018 on occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the ERSTE-campus in Vienna to 70 persons from all fields of integration work. The presentation was accompanied by a keynote talk by SORA-Director Günther Ogris and by a panel discussion with Rainald Tippow (Caritas), Andrea Lehner-Hartmann (Department of Practical Theology), Ruth Schöffl (UNHCR Austria), Franz Karl Prüller (ERSTE-Foundation), Kenan Güngör (Sociologist, Think.Difference), chaired by project leader Regina Polak (Department of Practical Theology).

“Migrationskompass” is available at the Department of Practical Theology for a price of 10 € respectively sent postal for 12 € (contact: monika.mannsbarth@univie.ac.at). Find further information here: http://www.migrationskompass.eu/


Are we living in a ‘post-secular age’, and can phenomenology help us better understand the discontents of secularism? From Habermas’ claim that the secular hypothesis has failed for democratic reasons to the fact that religion, far from its predicted dwindling, is as strong as ever (or even stronger than before), some have concluded that secularism as we know it is over. Others have questioned whether we have ever truly been secular, if the concept applies only
to European societies, or whether the very notion of religiosity is merely a weapon of pacification in the hands of Western universalism. The post-secular notion thus lingers between sociological fact and philosophical theory, and it is the latter that we need to investigate if we want to confront the challenges that any ‘return of religion’ entails.

Although phenomenology has furnished manifold devices to rethink religious experience in a post-metaphysical way, its investigations often remain individualistic and beholden to unproductive dichotomies. This volume assembles investigations into secularism’s discontents by addressing religion’s role in forming the fabric of contemporary societies and unveiling new constellations of faith and reason beyond many beloved modernist dichotomies (e.g. theism/atheism, myth/Enlightenment, fundamentalism/tolerance) that often go under-investigated. This book was originally published as a special issue of the International Journal of Philosophical Studies. Find further information here: https://www.routledge.com/Phenomenology-and-the-Post-Secular-Turn-Contemporary-Debates-on-the-Return/Staudigl-Alvis/p/book/9781138543164

RECENT ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY RaT-MEMBERS IN EDITED VOLUMES AND JOURNALS (SELECTION)


The Yearbook of Muslims in Europe is an essential resource for analysis of Europe’s dynamic Muslim populations. Featuring up-to-date research from forty-three European countries, this comprehensive reference work summarises significant activities, trends, and developments. Each new volume reports on the most current information available from surveyed countries, offering an annual overview of statistical and demographic data, topical issues of public debate,
shifting transnational networks, change to domestic and legal policies, and major activities in Muslim organisations and institutions.

Supplementary data is gathered from a variety of sources and evaluated according to its reliability. In addition to offering a relevant framework for original research, the Yearbook of Muslims in Europe provides an invaluable source of reference for government and NGO officials, journalists, policy-makers, and related research institutions. Astrid Mattes and Dominique Bauer authored the country chapter on Austria. Find further information here: https://brill.com/abstract/title/39427


‘Muslim’ has become a frequently applied category in immigrant integration policy. While there is extensive research on the construction of this religious category to identify the target groups of these policies, there are few empirical studies on the category use. Many scholars argue that populations of immigrants were increasingly labelled as ‘Muslim’ following the 9/11 terror
attacks. Also, the increased application of ‘Muslim’ is debated as the result of the anti-Islam mobilisation by populist right-wing parties or in relation to the institutional accommodation of Islam.

This article asks when, through which actors and in which contexts the category ‘Muslim’ entered and evolved in the policy field. The study focuses on parliamentary immigrant integration debates in Austria, Germany and Switzerland (1993–2013). The analysis shows that right-wing parties make use of the category ‘Muslim’ in relation to security and common values. Left-wing actors take up the category to criticise this usage, while mainstream parties do so when discussing the accommodation of Islam. Instances of religious violence were not found to generate a sustained increase in category use, while the agenda setting of populist parties on the right and the extent to which the accommodation of Islam is debated proved to be decisive.

Link: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09637494.2018.1474031
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2018.1474031


Starting from a catholic theological concept of interreligious dialogue, this contribution names contemporary challenges for interreligious dialogue that transcend classical dogmatic questions. Interreligious dialogue is located in four spheres: ordinary cohabitation, social and political cooperation, theological discourse and spiritual community. The range of questions reaches from antisemitism to the reconciliation of political enemies. Find further information here: https://www.kohlhammer.de/wms/instances/KOB/appDE/Theologie/Religionspaedagogik-Ethik/Migration-Flucht-und-Vertreibung-978-3-17-033365-9/
Overview

(Also published in German and Italian)


OPEN DAY

At the Research Centre RaT – March 20 2019

On March 20 2019, the first official Open Day of our Research Centre will take place! In course of the constituent meeting of our Scientific Advisory Board, we want to present the work of our Research Centre to a broader public. The focus of this day will be on the presentation of research activities of prae- and postdoc-scholars. Furthermore, we want to offer room for the presentation of recent publications in the context of our activities. The event will begin at 9 am. Please feel welcome!
UPCOMING EVENTS

2019

**January 27-28 2019**

**Conference** *The future of Islamic theology and religious education within the European region between the priorities of science, politics and society*, initiated by Abdullah Takim, Department of Islamic-Theological Studies

Islamic theology and religious education degree programs, in which Islam can be researched and taught, have until recently been a desideratum in the European university landscape.

In the meantime, centers and institutes for Islamic theology and religious education have emerged in several locations across Europe, which nobody could have dreamt of only fifteen years ago. The rapid development during the foundation phase and the considerable number of professors, young scientists, graduates, students, study regulations and degree programs give rise to an initiative to invite the representatives of Islamic theology and exchange experiences in order to discuss and reflect about the future establishment process.

For this purpose the Department of Islamic-Theological Studies of the University of Vienna is holding an international conference on 27th and 28th January 2019 with the title “The future of Islamic theology and religious education within the European region between the priorities of science, politics and society”

The intention of the conference is to analyse and determine the current status of Islamic theology and religious education. Building on this, the aim is to give an insight into future developments and to discuss its location within science, politics and society as well as to strengthen and expand the existing cooperative relationships in teaching and research.
Scientists from sixteen locations of Islamic theology and religious education across Europe will participate in the conference. The representatives have the opportunity to present the actual situation of their fields or departments with respect to research, teaching, third missions and future prospects in the above-mentioned scope of research. The aim of the conference is to exchange one's experiences and ideas, to address the remaining problems and challenges and, last but not least, give an insight into possible concerns and solutions.

The exchange of knowledge and experiences is essential for the establishment process of Islamic Theology. The analysis of the expectations of society, science and politics will play a decisive role in the course of this conference.

The sustainability and future of Islamic theology and religious education finally depends on the extent Islamic theology and religious education will originate from and develop out of the midst of the academic disciplines and circles as well as society, thereby lending the subject its own unique voice.

**Summersemester 2019 – Wednesday, 16:45-18:15**

Lecture series *Philosophy of Religion today: topics, problems, perspectives*, organised by Esther Ramharter and Michael Staudigl in cooperation with RaT

**September 23 and 24 2019**

Conference on the topic *State-Control of Islamic Theology and Law in the West*, organised by Ebrahim Afsah

We are pleased to announce that the Faculty of Law of the University of Vienna will host the two days conference "State-Control of Islamic Theology and Law in the West" on September
23 and 24 2019. We would like to welcome you to one of the oldest universities in Europe and value your contribution in particular in one of the following fields:

- Competing approaches to state control over religious instruction
- Potential of academic teaching to counter religious extremism
- Disciplinary locus of Islamic studies (law, theology, area studies)
- Balancing of historical dogma vs. contemporary practice
- Private law, tolerance and ordre public
- Public law, social stability and constitutional stability

For further information, please contact: viktor.forian-szabo@univie.ac.at

September 27 2019

Workshop of the study group Rezeption des Alten Testaments, organised by Marianne Grohmann

October 17-19 2019

Conference Practices of Interreligious Dialogue in their Cultural Context. A European Comparison, organised by Karsten Lehmann

The workshop project intends to bring together an international group of European experts on interreligious dialogue (IRD) to close one of the major gaps in present-day research on IRD. For the first time, the workshop wants to focus on a systematic comparison of different ‘national cultures’ of IRD in Europe. Participants will be invited to explore different practices of IRD in Europe and to discuss to what an extent their approaches are shaped by cultural contexts. The outcomes of these discussions will provide a basis for systematic considerations as well as a more concrete evaluation of the role IRD might play in education. The workshop is organised by the Research Centre RaT in cooperation with the KPH (Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien / Krems).
4. REVIEW

RECENT EVENTS

From March 2018 up to now

January 18 2019

Workshop *Die doppelte Sendung*, with Mouhanad Khorchide and Dina El Omari

On January 18, a small meeting was held with RaTs cooperation partners from the renowned Centre for Islamic Theology Münster (Germany), Prof. Mouhanad Khorchide and Dr. Dina El Omari. Following up on a previous meeting in 2016, a shared book project on revelation in Judaism, Islam and Christianity was outlined. Prof. Wolfgang Treitler (Institute for Fundamental Theology, Vienna) and Prof. Isabella Guanzini (Institute for Fundamental Theology, Graz) also took part in the engaging discussion on central outlooks and categories shared by the three Abrahamitic religions. The discussion was guided by a selection of texts both from the Qu’ran and the Judeo-Christian scripture, to be extended in the future. The next meeting will take place in June, providing a stepping-stone in the ongoing cooperation between RaT and the Centre for Islamic Theology and in preparation of a shared book project on these topics.

December 17 2018

Talk *Religionen im Dialog* at KAICIID Dialogue Centre

December 12 2018

Workshop *Conflict and Interpretation. Ricoeur and the Return of Religion*, organised by Jason W. Alvis, Branko Klun and Michael Staudigl
December 11 2018


December 7 2018

Symposion *Menschenrechte in interkultureller Perspektive* - *Symposion zu 70 Jahre UN-Deklaration der Menschenrechte*, organised by Hans Schelkshorn, with: Andreas Müller, Heiner Roetz, Hans Schelkshorn, Anke Graneß, Sarhan Dhouib

November 23 and 24 2018

Workshop *Occult South Asia*, organised by Karl Baier (Department of Religious Studies, University of Vienna) and Mriganka Mukhopadhyay MA, (Center for History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents, University of Amsterdam)

The workshop was held at the Campus of the University of Vienna and brought together a variety of researchers from all over the field of religious studies on South Asia. In the academic study of esoteric currents and occultism, the theme “India” has remained a strong undercurrent since the early days. There have been discussions around the concept of the “Mystic East” or the “Magic East” and its influence towards Western esotericism and according Christian narratives from the very beginning. In recent times, approaches that emphasise the interaction of South Asian and foreign occult cultures in colonial and postcolonial times are of increased
importance, as discussions widen to include global currents and the complex interplay between emerging religious currents. The workshop also understood itself as a part of integrating Occult South Asia studies as a research field in South Asian research. The lively discussion at the workshop has left the participants optimistic about this.

**November 23 2018**

**Guest lecture Frauen im Sikhismus by Areshpreet Wedech, organised by the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Cooperation with RaT**

Following a block seminar concerning Sikhism that she had held in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Wolfram Reiss, Areshpreet Wedech, MA, gave a public lecture on women in Sikhism on November 23 2018. As a first step, she approached the role of women in this religion from a historic point of view. Starting with the beginnings of the religion in the 15th century in India and following its development to the emergence of the Sikh’s holy text, the Guru Granth Sahib, Aresphreet Wedech reconstructed single episodes and named essential sources that confirm the equality of women.

In a second part, she connected this with the situation nowadays as it manifests in the administrative institution “Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee” (SGPC), in several institutions for education and in hospitals in Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Harvana, districts of India. But in opposition to that, Areshpreet Wedech emphasised, there are also conflicts and contradictions concerning the status of women in Sikhism.

The well-founded information on this religion allowed the auditorium an enriching insight into a religious tradition that is exercised by a few thousand people in Austria, but barely known to a broader public.
**November 16 to 20 2018**

**Participation at the American Academy of Religion, Denver**

From November 16th-20th 2018 Kurt Appel, Daniel Kuran, Marlene Deibl and Lisa Achathaler visited Denver, Colorado, in order to attend the American Academy of Religion, as well as a pre-conference entitled Re-Envisioning Religious Studies As A Global Discipline – A Pre-AAR Symposium that was held from November 15.-16. 2018 at the University of Denver and which was organized by Professor Carl Raschke.

At the pre-AAR symposium Thomas A. Carlson (University of California, Santa Barbara) gave the keynote talk. Friday the 16th of November was placed under the title “Religious Studies in a Non-American Context – Perspectives of European Universities Programs and Research”. The sessions started with Yvonne Sherwood and Ward Blanton from the University of Kent (UK), who were followed by Alexander Maurits and Johanna Gustafsson Lundberg form the Lund University (Sweden). The concluding panel was designed by Kurt Appel, Daniel Kuran, Marlene Deibl and Lisa Achathaler, in which the Research Centre RaT was introduced to the participants, followed by short flashlights on how each of the presenters pictures the future of the Research Centre within the manifold challenges our future might hold from the perspectives of their respective research foci.

The following days up to November 20th were marked by having to make a choice between more than 1,200 events on where to participate – academic sessions, additional meetings, receptions, tours, and workshops that were offered mainly in the Colorado Convention Center, but also in many other locations widespread through the city.
On the occasion of the state Israel's 70th anniversary, a symposium took place on Monday, November 12 2018. It was organised by Regina Polak, Department for Practical Theology, in cooperation with the Research Centre RaT and the Jewish Community of Vienna. Exemplary insights from interdisciplinary perspectives enable a differentiated and critical appreciation of this complex and multidimensional state. Some of these aspects are the innerisraelitic debates concerning the interplay of religion and politics, the religious plurality of Israel, the representation of religious identities in contemporary film and the transformation of the Hebrew language. The rector of the University of Vienna, Heinz Engl, and the ambassador of Israel, Talya Lador-Fresher, the chief rabbi, Arie Folger, and the general secretary of the Jewish Community, Raimund Fastenbauer, gave welcoming speeches, Wolfgang Treitler and Gerhard Langer introduced into the topics.

**Lecturers:**

Prof. Yedidia Z. Stern, The Israel Democracy Institute, Vice President of the Center for Religion, Nation and State

Prof. emer. Rachel Elior, John and Golda Cohen Chair in Jewish Philosophy, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Faculty of Humanities

Prof. Eli Salzberger, Faculty of Law at the University of Haifa, Director of the Centre for German and European Studies, University of Haifa, Director of the Minerva Centre

Hana Bendcowsky, Director of the Jerusalem Center for Jewish-Christian Dialogue

Prof. Klaus Davidowicz, Professor of the Department of Jewish Studies, University of Vienna
October 24 2018

Guest lecture with Dominik Finkelde: Anamorphose und Subjektivität im Raum der Gründe, organised by the Department for Fundamental Theology in cooperation with RaT

On October 24 2018, Dominik Finkelde SJ, Professor for Epistemology and Contemporary Philosophy in Munich (Hochschule für Philosophie München) gave a lecture entitled “Anamorphose und Subjektivität im Raum der Gründe” (“Anamorphosis and subjectivity in the sphere of reasonings”) on invitation of the Department for Fundamental Theology. Starting point of his lecture were epistemological reflections concerning human perception that he related to Jacques Lacan’s theory of subjectivity. Finkelde referred to Lacan’s theory of the eye and the gaze and his considerations concerning the theory of painting of anamorphosis that Holbein the younger used in his paintings, paradigmatically in “The Ambassadors”. In the light of that, the lecture’s issue was to outline the subject’s precarious positioning of itself within the world.

Following Finkelde, Lacan’s thoughts show that human perception and the subject itself have a rupture within themselves due to the gaze of the other. Holbein’s painting shows this in a paradigmatic way, referring not only to the borders of human cognition – the experience of cognition itself is not an object of cognition –, but also to the self-awareness of the beholder. Because the painting has to be perceived from two perspectives that exclude each other, the beholder senses that his own sight is subverted by a different gaze from the beginning on (at the bottom of the painting, a motive of vanity, the skull, can be identified – but only in course of averting one’s glance from the ambassadors). The painting’s dehegemonialised image screen symbolically shows the failure of the subject’s almighty gaze. Therefore, the painting’s image screen itself shows, how, following Lacan, the subject is already inscribed into another’s view, subverting it’s own. In other words: The subject finds itself in an infinite correlation of references that it cannot found within itself and that it can never entirely overview.

Starting from this parallactic gap (Žižek), Finkelde developed a critique of substantial concepts, referring to German Idealism (Kant, Hegel). When the moment of in- and exclusion of someone
other’s gaze that is expressed in the painting is applied to the relation between subject and world, it becomes clear, that the world is never to be understood as a sheer object.

Rather, it is an expression of our ways of understanding, and this means, that the correlation of references in which we find ourselves is always founded in an absent perspective. This blind spot, that is deprivation as well as excess, remarks us, starting from somewhere else. This reminds of Lacan’s concept of the big Other and Master-Signifier. At the end of his lecture, Finkelde tried to outline this connection, taking into account contemporary political theories.

![Hans Holbein the Younter, The Ambassadors (1533). © The National Gallery, London](image)

**September 24 2018**

**Guest lecture Wittgenstein and the Divine: Can Nonsense Make Sense? by Brian Klug, organised by RaT**

Wittgenstein and the Divine: Can nonsense make sense? – This is how Brian Klug, Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy at the University of Oxford, entitled the workshop that took place at the Research Centre RaT on September 24 2018. Being an expert on philosophy of religion, Jewish philosophy and anti-Semitic movements, Brian Klug offered an interpretation of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s well-known writings “Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus” (1918) and “Philosophical Investigations” (“Philosophische Untersuchungen”), 1953), that accentuates the religious moment in Wittgenstein which distinguishes his approach from other readings of these texts.

Taking into account the famous dictum that ‘God’ was a term devoid of sense, it is astonishing that Wittgenstein showed growing interest in the Absolute. He expresses that in a more or less subtle way. Brian Klug developed his interpretation not directly based on the question of God, but on the question of the meaning of speaking about God – or, in short: Can nonsense be expressed in a way that does make sense?
Following Klug, it is the religious perspective that the approach both of the Tractatus and of the Investigations rely on. However, this perspective does not consist in a regression to prephilosophical concepts, but it manifests itself three experiences which emphasise the distinction between the creator and the created. The attempt to articulate them tangents the limits of language. These experiences, that is, to wonder about the existence of the world, to feel absolutely safe and to experience oneself as guilty, cannot be uttered in the form of propositions or judgements and therefore they belong to the sphere that the Tractatus does explicitly not talk about. It is a different form of speaking that allows for the expression of religious experiences. They do not make sense if they are forced into the form of a judgement.

The Tractatus as well as the Investigations indicate that – the Tractatus, written in the form of propositions, by explicitly remaining silent about the metaphysical sphere, and the Investigations by accentuating that even though something does not contain sense as a given fact, speaking about it, expressing it as subjectively experienced, may nevertheless make sense. Following this thought, language is not to be reduced to the form of a proposition that can be measured by the facticity of its sense, but it can consist in the utterance of subjective experience that indeed make sense – despite a lack of reference to an objective fact which would guarantee a certain ‘sense’.

September 24 2018

Lecture _Geschlecht als Anerkennungsverhältnis. Rechtsphilosophische und menschliche Dimensionen_, by Elisabeth Holzleithner

The legal category of sex/gender has experienced an astonishing transformation within the last years. Some years ago, the required registration had the purpose to assert a biological fact normatively, nowadays, the registration of someone’s sex/gender has to do with personal identification. Given certain premises, this personal identification is legally acknowledged. The effort is to offer room for more than two sexes. The lecture was dedicated to this normative turn in the legal concept of sex/gender, reconstructed philosophical dimensions and explicated the justification of the poststructuralist approach to concepts of sex and gender in human
rights. As a result, the individual identification can be acknowledged and the importance of concepts of given facticity and social expectations may decrease.

**June 4 2018**

**Workshop Resilience in Religion and Society with Cornelia Richter, organised by RaT**

Cornelia Richter is Professor for Systematic Theology and Hermeneutics at the Faculty for Protestant Theology, University of Bonn. On June 4 2018, she gave a guest lecture in course of the Workshop “Resilience in Religion and Society” at the Research Centre RaT. Richter summarised outlines of the current research on resilience, and also discussed in a theological context. Moreover, she provided insight into the work done in a research group that she founded at the University of Bonn and which concerns itself with resilience in religion and spirituality. The interdisciplinary group, comprising theologians, philosophers, medical scientists and others, does pioneer work in this field, tightly linking hermeneutical and empirical methods.

Richter emphasised the important role that theology can play for a critical understanding of resilience. Contrary to a naïve opposition of crisis and resilience that tends to interpret resilience merely positively as an overreaching neoliberal potential for steady enhancement, Richter argued for the thesis that resilience ought to be seen as a phenomenon of crisis. Resilience can only be registered in a critical situation, and cannot be understood independent of crisis. Choosing a hermeneutical approach to the concept of resilience allows for perceiving the ambiguity and negativity that shapes this phenomenon of crisis.

With lamentation and prayer, two biblical categories were taken as concrete examples. In this context, resilience presents itself in a form of a process of permanent shifting between activity and passivity, creation and endurement not apart from, but within crisis.

In her answer to Richter’s talk, Lisa Achathaler, whose dissertation project is also related to the topic of resilience, outlined further connections between theology and research into resilience. Due to her contribution, the issue of trust and the potential for creativity and opening for the future was brought into focus of discussion.
May 23 2018

International Workshop *Religion, Community, Borders (II). Social Imaginaries and the Crisis of Neoliberal Democracy*, organised by RaT in cooperation with the Consortium sIMAGINE

RaT is part of the international consortium sIMAGINE, which is based in Utrecht/Brussels. sIMAGINE connects members of several institutions from the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, Great Britain and Austria. The shared research project is entitled “Social Imaginaries between Secularity and Religion in a Globalizing World”. It aims at making the notion of social imaginaries (Charles Taylor and others) productive for current social and political questions at the intersection of religion and secularity. Social imaginaries are images in a broad sense that shape our perception and attitude towards the world both individually and collectively. They are more fluid than for example fixed coherent worldviews. Several social imaginaries can co-exist, even though they might compete.

The second meeting of the consortium took place from May 22 to May 24 2018 in Vienna and was co-organised and hosted by RaT. Internally, the three areas of Religion, Community, Borders (1), Social Imaginaries of Inclusion and Decoloniality (2) and The Transformative Power of Artful Articulations of Social Imaginaries (3) were discussed. On the first topic, an open workshop took place on May 23. Stewart Hoover and Nabil Echchaibi (University of Colorado Boulder), members of sIMAGINE, as well as Hans Schelkshorn, Michael Staudigl and Rüdiger Lohlker from the University of Vienna und Christina Gwschandtnert from Fordham University (New York) gave talks and sparked an animated, productive discussion.

May 16 2018

Symposion *70 Jahre Staat Israel: History – Conflicts – Theology*, organised by *Theologische Kurse* and *Koordinationsausschuss für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit* (Vienna)
May 16-18 2018

International Conference *The End(s) of Religious Community*, organised by Michael Staudigl in Cooperation with IWM, FWF and RaT

In course of the International Conference “The End(s) of Religious Community”, Charles Taylor visited Vienna and gave a lecture. The lecture was entitled: “The Polysemy of Religion”. Referring to Jaspers and the revolution of Axial Age, Taylor emphasised the separation of religion and other spheres (e.g. religious – secular, religious – magical et cetera) as a result of this revolution. But at the same time, non-European perspectives contrast these oppositions. Taking that into account, the distinction turns out to be more complex. The polysemy of religion was also considered concerning present age. The fact that different political movements use religion as a marker of identity also influences religious life itself, and this ought to be taken into account. The self-perception of religious communities should reflect this shift in their role within societies.

April 25 2018

Guest lecture *Catherine Malabou. The Future of Hegel* by Ian James and Martin Crowley (Cambridge), organised by RaT

Ian James and Martin Crowley, both internationally recognised experts in the field of modern French philosophy, gave elucidating insights into the book “The future of Hegel” by Catherine Malabou, a well-known French philosopher and student of Jacques Derrida. Invited by the Department for Fundamental Theology and the Research Centre RaT, they gave a workshop entitled “Postmodern Lecture of Hegel”, which took place in the inspiring and hospitable atmosphere of the convent of Melk on April 24, and a lecture for participants of seminars concerning Hegel, Deleuze and De Certeau at the University of Vienna on the following day. Both events were dedicated to the afore mentioned book by Malabou.
Her challenging and highly complex oeuvre discusses the topic of time and temporality in Hegel. The workshop in Melk followed the method of close reading, enriched by short talks concerning certain passages. This allowed for a discussion of Hegel’s understanding of time in detail. Questions that were also asked in the lecture the following day could be reflected thoroughly, such as: What does ‘becoming’ mean in Hegel? How can we understand the concept of ‘redemption of time’? To what degree are time and subjectivity related with each other? A further challenge was to contextualise Malabou’s concept within the field of philosophical reflections on time by Heidegger and Derrida. An emphasis lay on the concept of plasticity in Malabou. To think a radical openness of time that is not understood in categories of chronological linearity is an important feature in this context.

As wholehearted experts for French philosophy, Ian James and Martin Crowley spontaneously declared their willingness to participate in the seminar on Deleuze and De Certeau that took place subsequently. Their expertise, especially concerning Deleuze, which is due to many years of research work as well as personal engagement with his philosophy was an enriching contribution to the seminar.
March 19 and 20 2018

Workshop *Phenomenologies of Religious Violence*, organised by Michael Staudigl in Cooperation with FWF and RaT

March 14 2018

Guest Lecture *Secularisation* by Ugo Perone, organised by the Department of Fundamental Theology in Cooperation with RaT

On March 14 2018, Ugo Perone, holder of the Guardini-professorship for philosophy of religion and catholic worldview at Humboldt university, Berlin and student of the Italian philosopher Luigi Pareyson, gave a guest lecture on invitation of the Department for Fundamental Theology. Topic of his lecture was the question of secularisation, and his aim was to show that there is a productive interdependency between secularisation and religion. Methodologically, he started with analyzing the issue and emphasizing the essential aspects, which were interpreted afterwards.

In that course, Perone distinguished four aspects of secularisation. Secularization can be understood as a category of hermeneutics in order to regard phenomena in their cultural context. Especially the Christian claim to a system of all-encompassing values and meaning within a culture is reflected critically. A second aspect of secularisation is the question of continuity and discontinuity concerning its relation to religion. Inhowfar can religious aspects be found within the secular sphere? Are there ruptures, not necessarily concerning the contents of a culture, but instead concerning their interpretation? Furthermore, secularisation is tightly linked to modernity and the development of our modern European societies. Following Perone, modernity is marked by a structural unease that has to do with the constant demand to distance oneself from traditions and to renew and reinterpret the present. And a fourth and last aspect concerns the role of politics in modern society. Politics replaced religions as a fundament for values and meaning, and at present, a critical point is reached, for politics fails to fulfill this demand.
Perone came to the conclusion that secularisation can be seen as a formal category that reinterprets and renews cultural phenomena. That makes it necessary to find an answer to the unease that comes with this processes: Religion and Secularisation must not be seen as opposites. The potential for religiosity and belief are not lost, however, the claim to provide all-encompassing meaning cannot be fulfilled any longer. When religion gives up this claim, it can find a new form and a new self-perception. Questions that may come into focus in that course concern intersubjectivity, awareness and respect concerning differences and ruptures. That can be found paradigmatically in the paradoxon of the Christian concept of incarnated truth. Every society, Perone concluded, needs differences and bridges, and answers to these needs are intrinsically religious.

March 12 2018

Interdisciplinary Workshop The Crisis of Representation II, organised by RaT

Initiated by an US-American expert on philosophy of religion, Carl Raschke, the Research Platform RaT organised an international conference entitled „The Crisis of Represtation“ in June 2017. Its issue was to ask whether phenomena of crisis in politics, science, religion and culture can also be seen as symptoms of a crisis concerning structures of representation. As the contributors agreed that this disclosed interesting perspectives, the conference was succeeded by a workshop, “The Crisis of Representation II”.

On March 12 2018, Thomas M. Schmidt (Goethe Universität Frankfurt), Astrid Mattes (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften), Michael Staudigl (Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen) Elisabeth Holzleithner, Sandra Lehmann, Andreas Gelhard and Gerald Posselt (all of them University of Vienna) met members of the Research Platform and interested students in order to discuss the topic profoundly.
Thomas Schmidt gave the inaugural lecture at the workshop and compared two attempts to regard social and political practices as processes of representation, namely those of Paula Diehl and George Batailles.

Michael Staudigl emphasised that crisis is a necessary moment of rational discourse and therefore intrinsically important for modernity.

Sandra Lehmann developed her thoughts on language and temporality in the context of phenomena of crisis starting from postmodern theories on significance and pursuing them critically.

Referring to the US-American political scientist Hana F. Pitkin, Astrid Mattes discussed the role of representation within political discourses and the problems emerging from a disjunction of the instances of representation from those who should be represented.

Gerald Posselt discussed the question of a language for those who do not have access to forms of representation. In that course, he referred to Franz Kafka, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze und Félix Guattari.

The debate around official habits and facial disguise in public sphere provided the starting point for the lecture of Elisabeth Holzleithner. She analysed this discourse in the context of fundamental jurisprudential discourses.

The workshop was concluded by a lecture by Andreas Gelhard. His philosophical approach to the question of representation was inspired by G.W.F. Hegel, Axel Honneth and Jacques Rancière. The lectures came along with inspired discussions and are published in issue 7 of the Journal J-RaT (2/2018) together with the results of the congress “The Crisis of Representation that took place in June 2017.
Panel *The Future of the Grand European Narratives. Political, Theological and Philosophical Considerations* at the conference of the European Academy of Religion, Bologna

The employees of the Research Platform participated in the first official conference of the European Academy of Religion that took place from March 5 to 8 2018 in Bologna. The platform’s speaker Kurt Appel and the vice-speaker Sieglinde Rosenberger had contributed to the foundation of this institution. At the conference in March, the Platform organised a panel entitled “The Future of the Grand European Narratives. Political, Theological and Philosophical Considerations”. Representing RaT, Lisa Achathaler, Kurt Appel, Jakob Deibl, Marlene Deibl and Daniel Kurian cooperated with Ernst van den Hemel, member of the Consortium sIMAGINE (Utrecht).

RaT’s activities began with the presentation of the book “Tempo e Dio. Aperture contemporanee a partire da Hegel e Schelling” by Kurt Appel, published in the series “Bibliotheca di Teologia Contemporanea (Queriniana)”. Marcello Neri (Flensburg), Paolo Costa (Trient), Maurizio Pagano (Vercelli), Lucia Vantini (Verona), Massimo Epis (Mailand) and Jakob Deibl chose significant aspects of the book and presented it briefly. The author answered to each contribution. The discussion was chaired by Maurzio Rossi (Bologna).

Afterwards, a panel took place that was organised RaT and sIMAGINE took place. The participants questioned the potential of religions for developing new narratives of a non-hegemonial project of Europe, taking into account the end of traditional narratives. Another question in that context was how these narratives can create a public space for discourse between secularity and religion. The horizon of topics discussed at the panel comprised biblical narratives, literature by Franz Kafka, Robert Musil and Karl Kraus, ecological issues concerning finitude, political issues concerning mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion and philosophical aspects connected to G.W.F. Hegel, Walter Benjamin and Giorgio Agamben.
Section I


Jakob Deibl: Between Letter and Manifest: Ways of shaping Future-Narratives of Europe

Ernst van den Hemel: “Judeo-Christianity” and the New Right: Studying (post)secularization narratives in online nationalist discourse in Germany and the Netherlands

Section II

Marlene Deibl: “as if the shame of it should outlive him”. Possibilities of language after the end of Grand narratives – an adventure with Kafka and Agamben

Daniel Kuran: Aesthetics of the Dead. The Narrative of Terror and religious Contributions to the Public Space

Kurt Appel: The Apocalyptic Dimension of Europe – from the Bible to Musil

March 3 2018

Guest lecture The concept of rûh (spirit) in Koran by Abdullah Takim, organised by the Department for Fundamental Theology at Melk abbey

On March 3 2018, Abdullah Takim, professor for Islamic Theology at the University of Vienna and member of RaT gave a lecture on the meaning of the concepts of rûh (Hebraic: ruach; spirit) and nafs (Hebraic: nefesh; soul) in Koran. Rûh is normally translated as ‘wind’ or ‘good smell’ and is considered as most important principle of creation. By contrast, nafs concerns the sphere of the created. Originally, nafs had to do with breath and was also used to denote the soul or the appetite. This concept was transformed due to the influence of Neoplatonism, and Islamic philosophers understood it as ‘universal intellect’, as the highest authority. In a reflexive sense, nafs means the human self, the specific person with its inner abilities. Some suras that
use nafs in that sense proof a concept of humanity that is founded in the freedom of the individual (see sura 17:14-15; 18:29; 17:84; 19:95).

Especially sura 17:14-15 emphasises the importance of the relationship between God and the individual in its singularity: There is no one who could step between human and God, every individual has its own, original relationship with God. Therefore, the only duty is to strive for righteousness: “Read your record. Sufficient is yourself against you this Day as accountant. Whoever is guided is only guided for [the benefit of] his soul. And whoever errs only errs against it. And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And never would We punish until we sent a messenger.” (sura 17:14-15, source: Quran.com, 27.11.18)

The concept of person in Koran is not to be regarded in the manners of systematic theology or ethics, but as configuration of an ethos, an attitude. Disciplines of Islamic theology assumed and developed that. Self-knowledge becomes the condition for the knowledge of God, especially in mysticism, because man himself is a manifestation of God’s names. As a result, self-reflection is an important part of man’s way to God. The knowledge of God and therefore also the knowledge of oneself is a condition for the love for God. In sura 3:30 and sura 5:116, nafs refers to God and emphasises his singularity. These and similar verses were essential for the development of a philosophy of subjectivity in Islamic thinking. Besides this self-reflexive meaning, nafs also bears the sense of ‘human soul’. In that context, nafs carries seven functions. Three of them shall be mentioned here: as human ego, it commands malignity (sura 12:53;
50:16; 79:40), as conscience, it can criticise and calm down itself (sura 75:2; 9:118; 89:27) and in its perfect form, as an-nafs al-kâmila, it is saturated by love to God.

As in Old Testament, rûh is blown into the first human being by God. God took mud, formed man and inspired him with rûh: “Then He proportioned him and breathed into him from His [created] soul and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful.” (sura 32:9 source: Quran.com, 27.11.18) Rûh is also mentioned in the context of Maria’s conception and can be understood as life-giving principle. (sura 4:171) In Koran, there cannot be found a plural form of rûh, but in the sayings of Mohammed, the hadiths, such forms are used.

Four verses connect rûh to Allahs commandments (amr allahs), but these text passages bear hermeneutical difficulties. Concerning Gods commandments, rûh can be interpreted as directed downwards to the level of the created, from where it can rise again as rûh of the individual. Following Koran, the heart (qalb) of the believer is essential for Gods manifestation. In this sense, Koran is also inscribed into Mohammeds heart: “And indeed, the Qur’an is the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit has brought it down Upon your heart, [O Muhammad]”. (sura 26:192-194, source: Quran.com, 27.11.18) The question of the spirit is also connected to the problem of human’s likeness of God in Islamic theology. In verses that connect it to God’s commandments, rûh can be understood as ‘belief’, ‘light’ and ‘guidance’ that can even revive dead hearts.

March 2 2018

Guest lecture Gott als Gärtner by Angelika Berlejung (University of Leipzig)
Feature

Uni-docs financed dissertation project *Trust in God. Ethics of hope in the face of ecological devastation*, by Lisa Achathaler

Against the backdrop of ecological crisis, uncertainty and fear, this interdisciplinary project investigates on the notion of “trust in God” which links together the fields of resilience, vulnerability, and creative processes, all of which are characterized by a dichotomical relation between openness and safety.

The aim of the thesis is to investigate on the contribution achieved by trust in God in order to help to constructively alter the view of unforeseeable future events. This does not mean that fear (e.g. of the future or the ecological crisis) is eradicated, but what this thesis aims to demonstrate is that trust in God, by a radical openness and embracing of one’s own vulnerability and finiteness, helps to build a resilient way of dealing with fear of the unknown, thus changing the inwardness of a human being and creating a space where creativity and innovation may prosper despite an increasingly inhospitable external and continuously changing environment. This further releases innovative potential to help overcome upcoming challenges, as well as strengthens the individual and creates an open, free, and caring space to encounter ‘the other’.

Third party funded project

**The Iconic Heritage of Judaism: Documentation and Mediation**

The project “The Iconic Heritage of Judaism: Documentation and Mediation” ("Das bildliche Erbe des Judentums: Dokumentation und Vermittlung") aims at indexing images of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts from the Schubert Archives at the Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in order to increase the importance of the Schubert Archives for the academic research of Hebrew manuscripts in particular and Medieval Jewish culture in general.

The researchers of the Center for Jewish Art completed their work on 80 manuscripts. Each manuscript was checked for its content and the interconnections between the content and each
illumination was established. Afterwards, each illustration was indexed with one or several subjects from the thesaurus of iconographical subjects developed by the Center for Jewish Art during 40 years of its research activities.

The Project is a cooperation of Dr. Vladimir Levin, director of the Center for Jewish Art and co-head of the Project, the Municipal of Vienna, MA7-Department for Culture, and the Research Centre Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society, University of Vienna. You can find further information here: http://cja.huji.ac.il/sch/browser.php?mode=alone&id=226430
6. PRESS REVIEW

Contributions by RaT-members

January 23 2019: Commentary by Irene Klissenbauer in Der Standard: #CareAboutHumanRights: Notwendigkeit eines Aufschrei

January 17 2019: contribution by Stephan Hammer in Die Presse: Kopftuchverbot an Unis is zu großer Zwang

January 11 2019: Andrea Lehner-Hartmann on orf.at: Kopftuchverbot: Theologin warnt vor Zwang

January 5 2019: Angelika Walser, Mouhanad Khorchide and Carola Roloff in Salzburger Nachrichten: Jesus, Mohammed und Buddha

December 20 2018: Statement by Rüdiger Lohlker in Article by Gudrun Harrer in Der Standard: Orientalistik war nie ein Orchideenfach

December 19 2018: Interview with Kurt Appel: Die Welt ist nicht religiöser geworden

December 18 2018: Article by Wolfram Reiss: Sikhismus in Wien

December 13 2018: Debate with Andrea Lehner-Hartmann on ORF: Kopftuchverbot für Pädagogen

December 10 2018: Interview with Elisabeth Holzleithner und Kerstin Susanne Jobst on uniview.at : Verbriefte Rechte, gefährdete Freiheiten

November 14 2018: Interview with Elisabeth Holzleithner on orf: at concerning Das Rechenspiel mit dem Frauenwahlrecht - 100 Jahre Republik
October 10 2018: Article by Jan-Heiner Tück in Neue Zürcher Zeitung: 
Paul VI. wird heiliggesprochen – der Papst, der vor dem Rauch des 
Satans warnte

October 1 2018: Article by Irene Klissenbauer in Der Standard: 
Feminismus als "wütende Bitch"?

September 28 2018: Commentary by Jan-Heiner Tück in Neue Zürcher 
Zeitung: Darf ein Rechtsstaat töten? Nein, sagt der Papst und 
korrighiert eine verfehlte Wahrheit

August 28 2018: Article by Irene Klissenbauer in Der Standard: 
#MenAreTrash: Darf man Männer hassen?

August 12 2018: Column by Ingeborg Gerda Gabriel in Die Tagespost: 
Libertäre Tea Party statt katholischer Soziallehre?

August 1 2018: Commentary by Jan-Heiner Tück in Neue Zürcher 
Zeitung: Benedikt XVI. – ein Wegbereiter des Antisemitismus?

July 23 2018: Article by Hans Gerald Hödl on feinschwarz.net: Kopftuch, 
Kreuz und Menora: Der Beitrag der Symboltheorie zu aktuellen 
Debatten

July 5 2018: Commentary by Sieglinde Rosenberger in Der Standard: 
Dominospiel mit Grenzkontrollen

June 14 2018: Interview with Regina Polak in Furche: "Derzeitige 
Stimmung hilft niemandem"

June 5 2018: Interview with Jan-Heiner Tück in Sonntag: Befreiender 
Eingottsglaube

June 4 2018: Commentary by Irene Klissenbauer in Der Standard: 
Debatte um Binnen-I: Nein zu Angstmache und Fehlinformation
May 27 2018: Interview with Charles Taylor on the occasion of his stay in Vienna, coorganised by RaT, in Der Standard: Jede Form von Leitkultur ist der falsche Weg

May 27 2018: Commentary by Irene Klissenbauer in Der Standard: Mohammed-Karikaturen-Wettbewerb: Provokation hilft der Freiheit nicht

May 6 2018: Interview with Ingeborg Gerda Gabriel on kathpress: Vergrößerte Wirtschaftsfehlentwicklungen

May 2 2018: Contribution by Irene Klissenbauer in CNA Deutsch: Kein bayerischer Konstantin?

April 24 2018: Article by Jan-Heiner Tück in Neue Zürcher Zeitung: Nicht nur Heilige können heilig sein, sagt der Papst

April 8 2018: Contribution by Regina Polak on Ö1: Bibelessay zu Apostelgeschichte 4, 32-35

April 4 2018: Commentary by Ednan Aslan in Der Standard: Krise des Islam darf nicht Krise Europas werden

March 31 2018: Contribution by Gerhard Langer on Ö1: Ostern und Pessach


March 30 2018: Interview von Gabriele Palasciano mit Kurt Appel in the Easter-issue of Il Foglio: Pasqua e la resurrezione per postmoderni

March 22 2018: Contribution by Astrid Mattes in the CPD Policy Blog: Vom Wert der Wertedebatte
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We thank Silke Lapina for providing her excellent photographs for this Newsletter and for our homepage. Silke Lapina dedicates her work primarily to documentation and potrait photography. She studies Cultural and Social Anthropology in Vienna and works at the intersection of cultural theory and aesthetics. You can find more about her work here:
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