

MARLEEN THALER

Communication Manager

Research Centre

**“Religion and Transformation in
Contemporary Society”**

University of Vienna

E-Mail: marleen.thaler@univie.ac.at

Nationality: Austria



RESEARCH AREAS & INTERESTS

Global religious history, alternative religious currents, the modern history of yoga, the history of ideas, eco-spirituality, religious traditionalism, esoteric studies, occultism, South Asian studies, Islamic studies

SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Languages

German (native language)

English (excellent knowledge)

French, Arabic (good knowledge)

Spanish, Italian (basic knowledge)

Latin (rudimentary knowledge)

Soft skills

project management, acquisition of third-party funding, event coordination, decision-making, teamwork, efficient time management

EDUCATION

- 2019–2024 **Dr. Phil.** in Religious Studies, Univ. of Vienna
- 2019 **Master of Arts** in Religious Studies, Univ. of Vienna: graduation with distinction
- 2017 **Bachelor of Arts**, in Oriental Studies, Univ. of Vienna
- 2013 **Bachelor of Arts**, in Cultural and Social Anthropology, Univ. of Vienna
- 2008 **Matura** (University-Entrance Diploma), Secondary School, Bundesoberstufen Realgymnasium Salzburg: passed with distinction

THESES

- 2024 **Gopi Krishna's Kundalini Research. The Scientification, Globalization, and Nationalisation of a South Asian Concept**
Dissertation, Univ. of Vienna, supervisor: Dr. Karl Baier
- 2018 **John Michell's Sacred Place Theory. Alternative Religion, Traditionalism, and the Notion of Glastonbury as New Jerusalem**
MA Thesis, Univ. of Vienna, supervisor: Dr. Karl Baier

EMPLOYMENT

- 2024–2026 **Project- and Communication Management**, Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society (RaT), Univ. of Vienna
- 2022–2023 **OEAD Fellow**, Department of Religious Studies (IRW), Univ. of Vienna
- 2019–2022 **FWF Fellow**, IRW, Univ. of Vienna
- 2019 **Project Assistant**, IRW, Univ. of Vienna
- 2017–2019 **Student Assistant**, IRW, Univ. of Vienna

GRANTS AND PRIZES

2024	Travel Grant , awarded by EASR
2024	Travel Grant , awarded by VDTR
2022–2023	Marietta Blau Scholarship , awarded in a nation-wide competition by OeAD
2022–2023	Go.Investigatio Grant , awarded in a nation-wide competition by ÖAW (declined by recipient)
2022	Travel Grant , awarded by ÖGRW
2019–2022	FWF Doctoral Scholarship , awarded in a nation-wide competition
2019	Wilhelm Keilbach Thesis Price , awarded in a university-wide competition, Univ. of Vienna
2019	Travel Grant , awarded by ESSWE
2015–2016	Non-EU Student Exchange Scholarship , awarded in a university-wide competition, Univ. of Vienna

PUBLICATIONS

books

202*	2	together with Julian Strube and Dominic Zoehrer (eds.), Subtle Energies in Therapy, Spirituality, Arts, and Politics. 1800–Present Brill: Numen Book Series. Contracted and submitted.
202*	1	Albion’s Sage for the New Age. John Michell, Radical Traditionalism, and the Myth of Sacred England Equinox Publishing. Contracted and submitted.

peer-reviewed journal articles

- 2023 2 **Of Crops, Dragons, and Re-enchanted Landscapes. John Michell's Impact on British Earth Mysteries**
JRaT (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh), Vol. 9 (No. 2)
 Free Contribution | Open Access
- 2022 1 **How Modern is Technology? The Liaison Between Prehistoric UFOs and Modern Traditionalism**
Religio: Revue pro religionistiku, Vol. 30 (No. 1)
 Contribution to conference proceedings | Open Access

peer-reviewed book chapters

- 202* 5 **Technological Serpents. Biofeedback and the Arousal of the Tantric Notion of *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti***
The Tantric World (London: Routledge). Contracted and submitted.
 Contribution to edited volume | Open Access
- 202* 4 **Gaia's Subtle Energies. The Interplay of Eco-Spirituality and Terrestrial Energy Healing**
Subtle Energies in Therapy, Spirituality, Arts, and Politics. 1800–Present (Leiden: Brill). Contracted and submitted.
 Contribution to conference proceedings | Open Access
- 2024 3 **Pathology or Transcendence? Kundalini's Interpretation as Spiritual Emergency and Rebirth Process**
Taking Seriously, Not Taking Sides (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh).
 Contribution to edited volume | Open Access
- 2024 2 **Approaching a Universal Pattern? Gopi Krishna's Initial Kuṇḍalinī Experience within the Frame of Universalism and Religious Scientism**
Intentional Transformative Experiences: Theorizing Self-Cultivation in Religion and Esotericism (Oldenbourg: DeGruyter).
 Contribution to conference proceedings | Open Access
- 2021 1 **Feindbild Islam. Über die Salonfähigkeit von Rassismus**
Religion in Austria (Wien: Praesens), Vol. 6.
 Review Article

other

- 2023 5 **The Rising Serpent at Esalen**
ESALEN Newsletter, Summer 2023
 Newsletter contribution | Open Access
- 2023 4 **Surrender to the Beauty Within and Without — #myEsalen**
MyEsalen Blog, April 26, 2023
 Blog contribution | Open Access
- 2022 3 **PhD Project Feature**
ESSWE Newsletter, Vol. 13 (No. 1)
 Newsletter contribution | Open Access
- 2022 2 **Kampf der modernen Welt**
Y-Nachten
 Blog contribution | Open Access
- 2018 1 **John Michell’s Sacred Place Theory. Alternative Religion,
 Traditionalism, and the Notion of Glastonbury as New Jerusalem**
U:theses
 MA Thesis | Open Access

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures

- 2023 2 **Pathologization or Spiritual Crisis? A Brief Introduction into
 Kuṇḍalinī’s Modern Interpretation as Spiritual Emergency**
 Public lecture, University Leipzig, Department for Religious Studies,
 October 25
- 2022 1 **The Kundalini Research Foundation(s): Gopi Krishna’s
 International Network of Kuṇḍalinī Aficionados**
 Public lecture, ETH Zürich, Chair for Literature and Cultural Studies,
 September 21

at International Conferences

- 2024 16 **Kundalini: A Force of Nature? Kundalini's Role within Terrestrial Energy Healing**
EASR Conference, Gothenburg, August 19–23
- 15 **The Kundalini Research Foundations. Gopi Krishna's Global Network of Kuṇḍalinī Researchers**
YDYS Conference, Hamburg, May 22–25
- 2023 14 **Technological Serpents. Biofeedback and the Arousal of Kuṇḍalinī**
EASR Conference, Vilnius, September 3–7
- 13 **Invoking the Serpent Power. The Entanglement of Scientism and Kuṇḍalinī Practices**
ESSWE Conference, Malmö, June 26–28
- 2022 12 **The Geometry of the New Jerusalem. John Michell's Numerical Interpretation of Glastonbury as Heavenly City**
ESSWE Conference, Cork, July 5–7
- 11 **John Michell's Radical Traditionalism. Geometry's Capacity of Releasing Modernity from its Depravities**
EASR Conference, Cork, June 27–July 1
- 10 **The Magical Serpent: Kuṇḍalinī's Interpretation as Sexual Energy**
Hedonistic Occultism Conference, Brno, June 6–7 (hybrid)
- 9 **Modern Appropriations of Kuṇḍalinī: The Theosophical Society and the Serpent Power**
Yoga darśana, yoga sadhana: methods, migrations, mediations, Kraków, May 18–21 (hybrid)
- 8 **Gaia's Energy Flows: The Interplay of Eco-Spirituality and Terrestrial Energy Healing**
Subtle Energies: Explorations within Holistic Healing and Spirituality, Vienna, April 28–30

- 2021 7 **Energetic resistance? Kuṇḍalinī's Oscillation Between Spiritual
Chance and Emergency**
EASR Conference, Pisa, August 30–September 3 (hybrid)
- 6 **Approaching a Universal Pattern? Gopi Krishna's Initial
Kuṇḍalinī Rising**
Intentional Transformation Conference, Bern, August 28–30 (hybrid)
- 5 **Kuṇḍalinī Rising. The Initial Theosophic Examination of the
Tantric Concept of Kuṇḍalinī**
ESAS Conference, Vienna, July 26–29 (hybrid)
- 4 **The Re-Sanctification of the English Landscape. John Michell's
Influence on Eco-Spiritual Devotees of Earth Mysteries**
Religion and Nature Conference, Munich, April 9–11 (online)
- 3 **How Modern is Technology? The Liaison between Prehistoric
UFOs and Modern Traditionalism**
Deus Ex Machina Conference, Brno, February 5–26
- 2020 2 **Psychedelic Kuṇḍalinī. The Interrelation of Kuṇḍalinī and 5-MeO-
DMT**
Religious Drugs Conference, Brno, February 28–29
- 2019 1 **Timothy Leary's Psychedelic Orientalism**
ESSWE Conference, Amsterdam, July 2–4

At international workshops

- 2024 4 **Die Transformation von Kundalini im 20. Jahrhundert**
RaT Workshop, Noto, September 22–24
- 3 **Kundalini: Die Schlangenkraft, die zur Krise führt?
Globalgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu transpersonalen
Bewältigungsstrategien Spiritueller Krisen**
AK Religion & Medizin, Leipzig, June 12–14
- 2 **Gopi Krishna's Global Network of Kundalini Research
Foundations**
Open Research Day, Vienna, May 6

2021 1 **Kuṇḍalinī Re-Imagined: Appropriations and Re-Interpretations of the Serpent Power**
The Occult in the History of Science, Art, and Religion, ESSWE PhD Workshop, Ascona, April 2–5

other

2022 4 **Tantra – a Sexual Religion?**
MOP Event, Bystřice, CZ, July 4–11

2019 3 **The New Jerusalem Diagram. John Michell’s Staircase to Heaven**
Occulture Conference, Berlin, GER, October 31–November 3

2 **Timothy Leary’s Psychedelic Religion**
Ozora Event, Ozora, HU, July 30–August 4

2018 1 **New Age as a New Religious Movement**
MOP Event, Bystřice, CZ, July 5-7

TEACHING

2022–2023 5 **Alternative Religious Landscapes: A Modern History of Contemporary Spiritualities, South Asian Influences, and Sacred Places**
Esalen Institute, California

2021–2022 4 **Specific Subject Didactics** (together with Florian Mayrhofer)
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Univ. of Vienna

2021 3 **Introduction to the Academic Study of Religious Texts** (together with Dr. Gerald Hödl and Prof. Lukas Pokorny)
IRW, Univ. of Vienna

2020–2021 2 **Specific Subject Didactics** (together with Dr. David Novakovits)
Faculty of Catholic Theology, Univ. of Vienna

2020 1 **Introduction to the Academic Study of Religious Texts** (together with ass. Prof. Gerald Hödl and Prof. Lukas Pokorny)
IRW, Univ. of Vienna

STUDY AND RESEARCH STAYS ABROAD

2023	13	Perspectives on Death Symposium Participant (invited and funded) Axel and Margaret Ax:son Johnson Foundation for Public Benefit, Sweden
	12	Esotericism in Sweden Symposium Participant (invited and funded) Axel and Margaret Ax:son Johnson Foundation for Public Benefit, Sweden
	11	Archives of the Impossible Conference Participant (invited) Rice University, Texas, USA
	10	Teaching Faculty (invited and funded) Esalen Institute, California, USA
	9	Center for Theory and Research (CTR) Conference Participant (invited and funded) Esalen Institute, California, USA
	8	Visiting Scholar (funded) UC Santa Barbara, California, USA
2022–2023	7	Scholar-in-Residence (funded) Esalen Institute, California, USA
2022	6	Visiting Scholar (funded) UC Riverside, California, USA
	5	Visiting Scholar (funded) ETH Zürich, Switzerland
2018	4	Research trip Glastonbury, UK
2015–2016	3	Language Courses Polis Institute for Languages and Humanities, Jerusalem, Israel
	2	Exchange Semester (funded) Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

2015 1 **Internship** (funded)
 Palestinian Peace Organization *Dar Annadwa*, Bethlehem, Palestine

ACADEMIC SERVICE

2023 **Organizational Assistant**
 Collaboration between IRW and the Theosophical Society, Vienna,
 October

2023–present **Steering Committee Member**
 American Association for Religion (AAR), Drugs & Religion Panel

2022 **Administrative and Organizational Assistant**
 ÖGRW conference *Religionen und Sexualität*, Vienna, June 10–11

2020–2022 **Co-Organiser** (together with Dr. Karl Baier and Dominic Zoehrer)
 International conference *Subtle Energies. Explorations within Holistic
 Healing and Spirituality*, Vienna, April 28–30, 2022

2021–2024 **Student Representative**
 Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion
 (VDTR)

2020–2021 **Didactic Reviewer**
 Habilitation committee at the IRW, Univ. of Vienna

2019–2022 **Vice-Treasurer**
 ÖGRW

2019–present **Network Coordinator**
 Occult South Asia Network (OSAN)

2018–2022 **Mentor**
 IRW, Univ. of Vienna

2018 **Administrative and Organizational Assistant**
 International Workshop *Occult South Asia. From the 19th to the 21st
 century*, Vienna, November 23–24

MEDIA COVERAGE & OUTREACH

2024	10	Religion der Welt TV interview by ORF (Austrian TV station), November 16
2024	9	Glauben hören - So klingen Hindu Religionen Interview by Ö1 (Austrian radio station), October 2
	8	Tiere in den Religionen (together with Robert Wurzrainer) Teaching at Kinderuni, Univ. of Vienna, July 17
2023	7	Rausch und Religion - Was tun die Kirchen gegen die Sucht? Interview by Norddeutscher Rundfunk (German radio station), October 29
	6	Research at Krotona <i>Krotonian</i> (Theosophical Periodical), Ojai, California
	5	Neon Shrines Invited guest at Radio Valencia, San Francisco, April 7
2022	4	Ein Himmel voller Götter und Göttinnen – eine Forschungsreise zu den Religionen Indiens Interview by Ö1 (Austrian radio station), July 14
	3	Ein Himmel voller Götter und Göttinnen – eine Forschungsreise zu den Religionen Indiens (together with Dominic Zoehrer) Teaching at Kinderuni, Univ. of Vienna, July 14
2021–2022	2	Religious Studies on the Fast Track I and II Relay team captain at the Vienna City Marathon, Vienna
2021	1	Ein Himmel voller Götter und Göttinnen – eine Forschungsreise in das hinduistische Indien (together with Dominic Zoehrer) Teaching at Kinderuni, Univ. of Vienna, July 19

MEMBERSHIPS

2023–present	EuARe, <i>European Academy of Religion</i>
2023–present	AAR, <i>American Academy of Religion</i>
2021–present	VDTR, <i>Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion</i>
2020–2023	EASAS, <i>European Association for South Asian Studies</i>
2019–present	EASR, <i>European Association for the Study of Religion</i>
2019–present	ESSWE, <i>European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism</i>
2019–present	ÖGRW, <i>Österreichische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft</i>
2018–present	OSAN, <i>Occult South Asia Network</i>

INSTITUTIONS & ADRESSES

IRW		Institut für Religionswissenschaft (Department of Religious Studies) rw-ktf.nivie.ac.at Schenkenstraße 8-10, 1010 Wien
FWF		<i>Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung</i> (Austrian Science Fund) fwf.ac.at Sensengasse 1, 1090 Wien
RaT		<i>Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society</i> religionandtransformation.at Schenkenstraße 8-10, 1010 Wien
OEAD		<i>Agentur für Bildung und Internationalisierung</i> (Austrian Agency for education and Internationalisation) oead.at Ebendorferstraße 7, 1010 Wien
ÖAW		<i>Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> (Austrian Academy of Sciences) oeaw.ac.at Vordere Zollamtsstraße 3, 1030 Wien
Univ. of Vienna		<i>Universität Wien</i> (University of Vienna) univie.ac.at Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien