



**Research Platform
Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society**

www.religionandtransformation.at



RaT Newsletter

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Overview

1. PERSONNEL MATTERS

- Staff
- New Members

2. PUBLICATIONS

- Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society
- Recent monographs and edited volumes published by RaT members (selection)
- Recent articles published by RaT members in edited volumes and journals (selection)

3. PREVIEW

4. REVIEW

5. THIRD-PARTY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Newly approved projects
- Current projects
- Completed projects

6. PRESS REVIEW



1. PERSONNEL MATTERS

Staff



On behalf of the organizational team of RaT we would like to cordially thank **Isabella Bruckner** for the years she worked for the research platform. We are very happy to congratulate her on her degree in the diploma program Theology and also on her current position as University Assistant at the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz (Fundamental Theology). With her in all respects enriching work as well as her cooperative and interested spirit, she was a great benefit to the platform for a long time. We wish her all the best for her future academic career!

On behalf of the RaT Team we also congratulate **Astrid Mattes**, who supports the Management of the research platform since spring 2017, on finalizing her dissertation (program degree Political Sciences). For her work *Integrating religion. The roles of religion in Austrian, German and Swiss immigrant integration policies* she received the „Dissertationspreis für Migrationsforschung 2016“, awarded by the Austrian Academy of Sciences.



We further congratulate **Daniel Kuran**, who supports the research platform since June in the year 2016 as Administrative Assistant, on his completion of the study program Philosophy. With an excellent thesis on Walter Benjamin he defended his master thesis in June 2017.

Furthermore, we welcome **Lisa Achathaler** who supports the team since May 2017 as Administrative Assistant. After studying International Development at the University of Vienna and Applied Plant Sciences at BOKU she now writes a PhD thesis on Bernhard Welte, supervised by Kurt Appel.



New Members - Ass. Prof. Ioan Moga



As new member at the research platform we are happy to welcome Ioan Moga, Ass.-Prof. at the Faculty of Theology and History of the Christian East. Ioan Moga holds the Tenure Track position „Orthodox Theology“ at the Department of Historic Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna. Steps in his career included the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, the University of Hamburg, the University of Vienna and the Kirchlich-Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems. His research areas include the theological history of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue and Orthodox theology with emphasis on systematic theology (especially on ecclesiology, teachings of the trinity and soteriology). Furthermore, he researches ecumenism and

anti-ecumenism, with special interest in the anti-ecumenism-movement in Orthodox churches. Within these core areas he focusses on the relationship between theological traditionalism and anti-West radicalization tendencies. Moreover, Ioan Moga engages in innovative approaches of the current Orthodox theology as well as in the premodernity in the postmodern times respectively the Orthodox spirituality in a secular context.

Currently he works on his habilitation entitled „Hermeneutik des Anderen. Kirchliche Identitätsprofile und kulturelle Kontexte im orthodox-katholischen Dialog des 20. Jahrhunderts, am Beispiel der rumänischsprachigen Theologie“.

Articles (selection):

Die „kosmische Liturgie“ in Zeiten der Umweltkrise. Momente ökologischen Bewusstseins in der orthodoxen Religiosität heute, in: Heiliger Dienst (2/2017), pp. 106-116.

Die Ausbildung orthodoxer Religionslehrer in Österreich. Eine Bestandsaufnahme, in: RGOW (Juni/2017)

Senior Research Fellow - Paolo Costa

Paolo Costa – Senior Researcher (tenured) at the Fondazione Bruno Kessler in Trient – was a Senior Research Fellow at the research platform RaT as well as at the IWM (Institut für die Wissenschaft vom Menschen) during the summer semester in the year 2017. Costa studied Philosophy in Milan, Parma and Toronto, worked on Arendt and Habermas and wrote a dissertation on Charles Taylor. Costa works in the threshold region between Philosophy, Politics and Religious Studies. He translated and published works of Charles Darwin as well as Charles Taylor (i.e. *A Secular Age*) into Italian. His latest works are *La ragione e i suoi eccessi* (2014) and *In una stanza buia. Filosofia e teologia in dialogo* (2014).

As of now, he co-writes a book together with Matteo Bortolini on the topic of the new secularism-debate (shortly available under the title *La città post-secolare. Il nuovo dibattito sulla secolarizzazione*). Additionally, Paolo Costa held two study days at the research platform RaT on the topics of the new secularism-debate and on the notion of „religious unmusicality“.



2. PUBLICATIONS

RaT Print series

Hans Schelkshorn/Herman Westerink (Hg.): Reformation(en) und Moderne. Philosophisch-theologische Erkundungen. Vienna University Press bei V&R unipress, Göttingen 2017



With contributions from:

- Hans Schelkshorn/Herman Westerink

Introduction

- Hans Schelkshorn

Aufbruch einer Zweiten Achsenzeit. Renaissance-Humanismus und „christliche Reform“ im Diskurs über die Moderne

- Christian Danz

Die Realisierung des religiösen Heils in der Geschichte. Anmerkungen zur Transformation des Gottesgeistes zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung

- Gerrit Steunebrink

Hegel's Cultural-Protestantism as a Remedy against Schizophrenia and Hypocrisy

- Herman Westerink

Modernity as the Variety of Hermeneutics of the Self: Faith and Despair in the Tragic History of Francesco Spira

- Ronald K. Rittgers

Suffering and Consolation in the Age of Reform: Reflections on the Origins of Modernity

- Inigo Bocken

The Idea of Reform in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola

- Juan Antonio Senent de Frutos

Ignatian Modernity as another Kind of Modernity

Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society

5. (Preview) Religion, Transformation and Gender (special editor: Birgit Heller, release date: October 2nd 2017)

With contributions from:

- Herta Nagl-Docekal

Die Spannung zwischen Religion und Moderne am Denkort von „Geschlecht“. Ein philosophischer Klärungsversuch

- Angelika Walser

Die religiöse Identität von Frauen im Spannungsfeld von Zugehörigkeit, Autorität und Autonomie

- Andrea Lehner-Hartmann

Zur Transformation und einem transformativen Verständnis von religiösen Bildungsprozessen in einer pluralen Gesellschaft. Eine genderorientierte Analyse

- Stefanie Knauss

Let's Talk about Celibacy! The Construction of Sex, Body and Gender in Popular and Scholarly Christian Discourses

- Anna-Katharina Höpflinger

Schwarz, verhüllend, weiblich. Die Inszenierung von Trauer in Relation zum Wandel von Gendervorstellungen

- Verena Maske

IMAN-cipation – Identity politics of young Muslim Women within the „Muslim Youth in Germany e.V. (MJD)“ between agency, submission and repression. An analysis of the transformation of Gender-Roles

- Marianne Grohmann/ Agnethe Siquans

Transformation von Konzepten sexueller Gewalt in der Hebräischen Bibel

- Gerhard Langer

Der geteilte Mensch. Einige Gedanken zu Schöpfung, Transformation und Geschlecht in der rabbinischen Tradition

- Lukas Pokorny

A Feminising Revolution: The Unification Movement and the ‘Age of Women’

- Birgit Heller

Images of God/dess, Devotees and Trans-sex/gender in Hindu Traditions

RaT-Blog



At the end of the term we would also like to introduce a novelty in the field of public relations of the research platform, the **RaT- Blog (www.rat-blog.at)**. Since June 2017 the members of the platform blog about their research and comment on current issues.

The RaT-Blog serves primarily as an instrument to make research more visible and accessible.

We (the members and guests of the platform) will publish short contributions, which will also be accessible to a broad general public, on our research activity and research questions, as well as methodological and practical reflections.

Recent monographs and edited volumes published by RaT members (selection)

Aslan, Ednan, Kolb, Jonas and Yildiz, Erol (Hg): „Muslimische Diversität. Ein Kompass zur religiösen Alltagspraxis in Österreich“, Wiesbaden, 2017.

The study at hand represents the range of variation and the complexity of religious daily routine and allows for profound insights into Muslim identity realities. Due to this qualitative and quantitative analysis, for the first time, a special focus is placed upon Muslims who are not actively engaging as members of Islamic organizations but who constitute the majority of the population.

In order to react appropriately to challenges of a plural society, the authors offer a scientifically sound basis for a factual debate on the presence of Muslims in Europe and for the recommendation of practical actions. The decision to take the Muslim diversity as a starting point for the study offers multifaceted opportunities and potentials for a differentiated assessment of integration processes and for further improvements of measures in migration policies, as well as of the improvement of religious-pedagogical offers and efforts to rethink Islamic Theology in the current Western European context.



Christian Danz (Hg): „Paul Tillichs „Systematische Theologie“. Ein werk- und problemgeschichtlicher Kommentar“, Berlin/Boston 2017.



Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology (1951–1963) is without doubt one of the most important and most influential theological works of the 20th century. Within the three volumes of his dogmatic theology he sums up the essence of his theological thinking. The volume offers comments placed in a thematic context and a critical embedment in reference to the main work of Protestant theology.

The annotation aims at making Tillich's achievements accessible to the reader in the realm of the development of his thinking in order to give an impulse to a self-contained acquirement of the text.

Christian Danz and Jan-Heiner Tück (Hg): „Martin Luther im Widerstreit der Konfessionen. Historische und systematische Perspektiven“, Freiburg i. Br./Basel/Wien 2017.

The importance of Luther for theology today:

What relevance do Martin Luther's understandings of the doctrine of justification, anthropology, the understanding of revelation and the term of church have for the self-conception of theology today?

What impulses of his thinking are detectable today? The volume has its origin in a symposium held by the two theological faculties of the University of Vienna. This symposium traced the lasting importance of Luther and the reformation for Catholicism and Protestantism. In addition to a contribution of the writer Sibylle Lewitscharoff on „Luther als Sprachereignis“, renowned theologians discuss controversial aspects of Luther's theories. Cardinal Kurt Koch and Bishop Michael Bünker introduce the perspectives of the churches.

With contributions from: Ulrich Barth, Michael Bünker, Christian Danz, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, Helmut Hoping, Kurt Koch, Ulrich H.-J. Körtner, Karl-Josef Kuschel, Hartmut Lehmann, Volker Leppin, Sibylle Lewitscharoff, Thomas Prügl, Johanna Rahner, Eberhard Schockenhoff, Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, Notker Slenczka, Bertram Stubenrauch, Jan-Heiner Tück, Klaus Unterburger, Jens Wolff and Markus Wriedt.





Paul Tillich, who had to emigrate to the USA in the year 1933, was one of the most prominent German intellectuals living in exile in the USA. He did not only engage in the influential organization „Selfhelp for Emigreees from Central Europe“, which was founded in the year 1936 and which he chaired for 15 years, but also took over - after a rejection from Thomas Mann - the chair of the „Council for a Democratic Germany“, which was founded on the 17th of June in the year 1944. This Council intended to gather the different political groups of German emigrants in order to develop a program for a democratic post-war Germany. The Volume „Paul Tillich im Exil“ broaches the issue of Tillich as a person living in exile for the first time against the backdrop of new sources and by including

exile-research. In this manner, a manifold image of the scientific milieu in the USA originates, which was new to Tillich and in which he elaborated his theology and philosophy.

In the series of application oriented Religious Studies, edited by **Wolfram Reiss and Ulrike Bechmann**, new volumes were published in the year 2017:

After the Egyptian Revolution set in, Wolfram Reiss recommended to documenting the developments in Egypt in detail. In cooperation with the Center for Arab West Understanding and their published Arab West Report this undertaking included research in various directions between the years 2011 and 2013. These inquiries were made by Cornelis Hulsman, head of the center, whereas the publications were supervised by Wolfram Reiss. As a result a publication arose which contributed to the discussion on Article II of the Egyptian constitution in the year 2012, in which different opinions were included as well as research by Copts and Muslims from various movements. Furthermore, these efforts led to a series of publications in the years 2016/17, which all documented and analysed current developments in Egypt.



Volume 8 described the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood since the 1970s and their fall in the year 2013. Moreover, it contained an analysis of the portrayal of Islamists in Egyptian media. Volume 9, which was recently published, described the social and political conceptions of Islamists on the basis of 65 interviews, which were conducted in the year 2013. This material is unique due to the fact that many of the interviewpartners were later arrested, went into hiding or emigrated. However, their opinions and views are still present in Egypt.

Volume 10, which is currently in preparation, deals with the debate within Egypt about the constitution from the year 2014. Volume 11 is dedicated to Patriarch Pope Shenoude III, who undertook extensive reforms in the Coptic-Orthodox Church. Volume 11 was published in spring 2017.

A specific feature of this book is, that it does not merely provide insights from Western „experts“, but mostly from representatives of different groups as well as Coptic and Muslim researchers from Egypt. In this respect one may learn about the state of the discussion within the country itself and not only from an external perspective.

Wolfram Reiss and Ulrike Bechmann (Hg): Antisemitismus in den Medien. Beschneidungsdebatte und Israelkritik in österreichischen Printmedien, Marburg: Tectum 2017

In the year 2012 a poem by Günther Grass caused quite a stir, by critically and openly standing against Israel's Middle East Policy. At about the same time a discussion was ignited in German and Austrian media about the legitimacy of the religiously motivated circumcision of boys. Voices from press and reader comments in both countries were not restricted to the political or the medical-legal spheres, but gave eligible reason to the question of a latent or even open antisemitism in German speaking areas.

This volume unites two different studies on the research question, if and to what extent antisemitism is locatable in the Austrian press. Bernadette Pensch dealt in detail with the medial discourse analysis of circumcision of boys. She addresses the topic via a religious historical approach by shedding light on the background of circumcision in Judaism and Islam. The study of Petra Andorfer-Leithgöb focusses on the question, whether both medial discourses from 2012 truly register open or a secondary antisemitism. Together, these studies offer a religious historical and contextual background for both debates and converge, despite their stand-alone subjects, within the realm of their meta-reflection on antisemitism.



Both studies were edited by Ulrike Bechmann (University of Graz) and Wolfram Reiss (University of Vienna) and were published as Volume 7 in their concerted series „Anwendungsorientierte Religionswissenschaft“.

Eva Synek, Herbert Kalb, Richard Potz and Brigitte Schinkele (Hg): Das „Heilige und Große Konzil“ von Kreta (Kirche und Recht 29). Freistadt: Plöchl 2017



Eva Synek (Department for Philosophy of Law, University of Vienna) traced the complex historic path from the beginning of the 20th century to the announcing of a panorthodox synod in the year 2014 and the council held in Kreta in June 2016.

Additionally to the historic survey, the specific schemes of the council are examined as well as its critique which was expressed in the pre-council phase. The nucleus of the book is constituted by the legal content of the passed documents of the council. Furthermore Eva Synek responds to the council participants as well as to aspects of the codes of the organization and the code of conduct.

The controversial question, whether the council of 2016 is to be qualified as „panorthodox council“, is discussed in the concluding chapter of the book. The book further provides a first update on the second edition of the standard work entitled „Orthodoxes Kirchenrecht. Eine Einführung“ by Richard Potz and Eva Synek.

Kut Appel: Tempo e Dio a partire da Hegel e Schelling (biblioteca della teologia contemporanea / BTC), Brescia: Queriniana (release date: Autumn 2017).



The book develops a theory of history based on the thoughts of Leibniz, Kant, Heidegger, Schelling and Hegel. The leading hypothesis is that the currently predominant chronological notion of time is not sufficient to understand history. Based on that assumption a theory of time is conceived, in which the past and the future are insomuch entangled that the past becomes alterable and transparent to the hope which lies inherent in it. Further, it is demonstrated that the concept of time based in the philosophy of German Idealism can contribute to a more adequate interpretation of the biblical theology of history, in which expressions like god are strictly tied to historical and societal events, in order to allow its interpretation.

Recent articles published by RaT members in edited volumes and journals (selection)

Appel, Kurt: „Religion und Zivilgesellschaft – Plädoyer für einen neuen Narrativ“, in: Newsletter der Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement (BBE), 2017.

Appel, Kurt: „Gott in Hegels spekulativer Philosophie“, in: Danz, Christian / Stolzenberg, Jürgen (eds.): „Systeme der Vernunft. Kant und der deutsche Idealismus: Systemkonzeptionen im Horizont des Theismusstreites (1811-1821), Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 2017 (im Erscheinen).

Berghammer, Caroline, U. Zartler und D. Krivanek: “Looking beyond the church tax: families and the disaffiliation of Austrian Roman Catholics”, in: Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 2017 (im Erscheinen).

Deibl, Helmut Jakob: „Die kenosis des Absoluten als Ausgangspunkt für eine Re-Narration Europas bei Gianni Vattimo“, in: Klein, Rebekka A. / Rass, Friederike (eds.): Gottes schwache Macht: Alternativen zur Rede von Gottes Allmacht und Ohnmacht. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2017. p. 35-54.

Grohmann, Marianne: „Zur Bedeutung der Hebräischen Bibel für die christliche Theologie“, in: Verebics, Petra / Móricz, Nikolett / Köszeghy, Miklós (eds.): Ein pralles Leben: Alttestamentliche Studien. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2017, p. 175-191.

Holzleithner, Elisabeth: „Recht und Gerechtigkeit: Rechtsphilosophische Überlegungen zu Aspekten eines herausfordernden Themas“, in: Alles was Recht ist - Niederösterreichische Landesausstellung 2017.

Holzleithner, Elisabeth: ”Sexuelle Selbstbestimmung als Individualrecht und als Rechtsgut. Überlegungen zu Regulierungen des Intimen als Einschränkung sexueller Autonomie“, in: Lembke, U. (ed.): Regulierungen des Intimen. Sexualität und Recht im modernen Staat. Springer Fachmedien, Wiesbaden 2017.

Lohlker, Rüdiger: „Dschihadistischer Terror als Kompensation von Inferioritätsgefühlen?“, in: Benz, Wolfgang (ed.): Vom Alltagskonflikt zur Massengewalt. Wochenschauverlag Wissenschaft, Wien 2017, p. 105-115.

Mattes, Astrid : “How religion came into play: ‚Muslim‘ as a category of practice in Austrian, German and Swiss parliamentary immigrant integration debates” , Religion, State and Society (forthcoming), 2017.

Mattes, Astrid: “Who We Are Is What We Believe? Religion and Collective Identity in Austrian and German Immigrant Integration Policies”, in: *Social Inclusion*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2017, p. 93–104.

Mattes, Astrid/ Goetsch, Katharina and Rosenberger, Sieglinde: „Restoring routine by debating tolerance? Discursive responses to jihadist terrorist attacks“ in: *Politics, Religion & Ideology* (forthcoming), 2017.

Pokorny, Lukas. „‘Nusiel Unbound’: The Archangel and the Fall in Unification Thought.“ In: Zohar Hadromi-Allouche und Áine Larkin, Hg. *Fall Narratives: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, London und New York: Routledge, 90–104.

Schelkshorn, Johann: „Eine Gigantomachia über Europa : Enrique Dussels Interpellationen des europäischen Monologs über die Moderne“, in: Völkel, Bärbel / Pacyna, Tony (eds.): *Neorassismus in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft: Eine Herausforderung für die Bildung*. Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2017. p. 167-194.

3. PREVIEW

Congress of the European Society of Women in Theological Research (ESWTR) “Translation - Transgression - Transformation“, August 23th-26th, 2017

Women in Europe have been and continue to be border crossers concerning religion. Voluntarily or involuntarily they leave their familiar environment and dare to venture into the unknown. These border crossings by female migrants constitute an impulse for movement and change of the traditional thinking patterns and habits within European societies and among its religions. To “translate” something from one time and culture to another means to widen horizons and that contains undreamt potential for hope. But “translation” is also risky: Borderlands can become a place for the experience of God as well as of God’s remoteness.

The ESWTR’s (“European Society of Women in Theological Research”) congress questions the inclusions and exclusions connected to the transformation processes in a religiously pluralist Europe. With its deliberately theological perspective it wants to make a contribution to the public debate on migration in Europe.

Within the process it marks three borderlands, which are to be sounded out and explored through border crossings:

- 1.) Biblical border crossings: Translation as building a bridge between the familiar and the foreign.
- 2.) Ethical border crossings: Migration as a borderline experience.
- 3.) Interreligious/interdenominational border crossings: Dialogue between religions and denominations as impulse for change.

Location: Vienna, Kardinal-König-Haus ,

Contact person: Agnethe Siquans, Department of Biblical Studies, University of Vienna, agnethe.siquans@univie.ac.at

TRIALOG “Hopeless Europe? Future Perspectives from a Jewish, Christian and Muslim View“ (Orig.: „Hoffnungsloses Europa? Zukunftsperspektiven aus jüdischer, christlicher und muslimischer Sicht.“) on September 7th, 2017

Europe is facing enormous challenges but at the same time appears to be exhausted and without prospects. Has it lost its hope for a better future? What could such a future look like? Are there good reasons for an “academic hope“ (“gelehrte Hoffnung”, Ernst Bloch) at all?

In Judaism, Christianity and Islam hope plays an important role. The TRIALOG will discuss the contributions of these three religions in the contemporary societal and political situation to the question of a good future for Europe. What can be hoped for the future from their point of view? The Catholic theologian Regina Polak leads a discussion with Rabbi Jonathan Magonet (London), the Evangelic bishop Michael Bünker and Amena Shakir (head of the Department of Islamic Religion at Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems).

The TRIALOG is a cooperation between ORF (Abteilung Religion Hörfunk) and the Faculty for Catholic Theology at University of Vienna.

Time: 7 September 2017, 19:00

Location: RadioKulturhaus (Argentinierstrasse 30a, 1040 Vienna).

Transdisciplinary Conference “Living and Learning from and with Refugees” (Orig.: „Leben und Lernen von und mit Flüchtlingen“) September 19th-20th, 2017

The conference will take place on September 19th and 20th, 2017, at the Kardinal-König-Haus (Kardinal König Platz 3, 1130, Vienna). Sixty participants from the fields of science, church, religious communities, local politicians as well as representatives of the European Union will be expected. All lectures on Wednesday afternoon (September 20th) are publicly accessible: The audience is welcome!

- 2.30 pm: Niraj Nathwani, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- 3.00 pm: Antoine Savary, Deputy Head “Legal Migration and Integration” of the European Commission, DG Migration and Home affairs
- 3.30 pm: Joe Weidenholzer, EU-Deputy (Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament)

The conference is part of a corresponding research project led by the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna. The project aims at supporting positive national and European political framings and narratives about “refugee integration” in Europe through transdisciplinary dialogues. The foundation is an empirical research project in which a survey about the experiences in refugee support by Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities respectively the experiences of teachers in public and private schools were surveyed and analyzed in cooperation with scholars from different disciplines.

The conference will bring up the results of this research in order to facilitate the discussion on migration and integration research, political expertise on a national and EU-level and the migration, fundamental rights and human rights policy of the European Union. The outcome of the project will be an interdisciplinary developed guideline which provides inspiration, motivation and support for a strengthened commitment of civil society to the integration of refugees.

Registration (compulsory): regina.polak@univie.ac.at

The project is a cooperation of the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna, the research platform Religion and Transformation and the ERSTE-Stiftung.

Workshop „Prayer, Pop and Politics: researching post-migrant religious youth culture“, September 29th-30th, 2017

This workshop is organized by Astrid Mattes and the research platform RaT. It brings together scholars from different disciplines, interested in empirical research on migrant religious youth culture. We are interested in a broad spectrum of research questions, from macro-sociological perspectives covered in large scale surveys to micro-perspectives on individual aspects of migrant religious youth culture. In particular, we invite contributions addressing one of the following aspects:

- Politics of belonging: intersectionality and the negotiation of ideas, ideals and identities among migrant religious youth.
- Religions in mobile times: migrant religious youth cultures and their confrontation with/influence on/relation to established religious traditions and communities.
- Migrant religiosity in secular societies: migrant religious youth cultures as an expression of vital/revitalized religiosity and their interactions with secular environments.

International Congress: „SIMAGINE (Social Imaginaries between Secularity and Religion in a Globalizing World), November 1st-3rd, 2017, Utrecht

The precarious relationship between religion and secular modernity is a generic element of societies in the 21st century: they are characterized by their social and cultural “super-diversity” caused by globalization. The multiple encounters and confrontations between groups and individuals relate to what was shaped by social imaginaries. This involves shared implicit assumptions that often implicate moral and religious claims of the society we are part of: claims about the values of a society and about the way it should be organized. Social imaginaries do not refer to explicit doctrines or beliefs but to the concrete and contingent way in which a society imagines its subtle presumptions and ideals. Therefore, social imaginaries represent “lived spaces” in which humans share and contest the meaning of their existence.

Location: Utrecht

Workshop “‘...Is There Anything New under the Sun in Polemics?’ Change and Continuity in Jewish–Christian polemics from Late Antiquity to Modernity“, November 14th–15th, 2017

Jewish-Christian controversy is contemporaneous with the separation of the nascent Christian community from its Jewish background. From the moment of its birth, polemical discourse exhibited great diversity both in the method of argumentation as well as in style and form. Polemical “encounters,” in the widest sense of the word, manifested themselves in variegated forms such as biblical interpretations, philosophical treatises, liturgy, sermons, stories, descriptions of real or imaginative disputations, chronicles, legal works, poetry, mystical works, and quite often they were written in separate treatises. In addition, the polemical intention often expressed itself in non-verbal forms, e.g. in wall paintings or illustrations of manuscripts or books. In the long history of the Jewish-Christian controversy the current forms and “norms” of polemical literature always arose from prevailing circumstances. The workshop aims at filling a historiographical gap and shedding new light on the phenomenon of change and continuity in the history of Jewish-Christian polemical encounters. Organization: research platform RaT, Department of Jewish Studies (University of Vienna), Department of the History of Jewish People (Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Conference “Religious Experience, Secular Reason and Politics around 1900” (Orig.: „Religiöse Erfahrung, säkulare Vernunft und Politik um 1900“) November 16th-17th, 2017

Between 1870 and 1930, different regions of the world experienced religious awakenings that engaged with secular reason in two forms, namely Historicism and Positivism (or Evolutionism). Around 1900, a broad spectrum of theological and philosophical approaches to religious experience and mysticism emerged, which was closely connected to ideological and political struggles. The conference exemplarily investigates selected paradigmatic approaches to religious experience, secular reason and politics.

Location: University of Vienna

Coordination: Hans Schelkshorn, Herman Westerink

Organisation: research platform RaT, Department of Christian Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Titus-Brandsma-Institut at Nijmegen

Conference SE 020056 “Management of Religious Diversity in European States. New challenges for state institutions, religious communities and academic research in countries of the migration routes: Greece, Austria, Denmark“, November 24th-27th, 2017

The conference deals with the challenges of three countries selected due to the contemporary routes of immigration. The backgrounds depend on country-specific historical and religious differences: Greece is shaped by Orthodoxy, while Austria is characterized by Catholicism and Denmark by Lutheranism. At the conference, experts from Copenhagen, Thessaloniki and Vienna will talk about their research in the fields of integration and religious diversification in consequence of immigration. The contributions will address the country-specific situations concerning integration and refugees in schools as well as the management of religious diversity in prisons. Moreover, the question of religious minorities in Danish institutions will be discussed.

Location: HS 1 Schenkenstraße 8-10 (5th floor)

Coordination: Wolfram Reiss

With contributions by Karsten Lehmann/ Viola Raheb (University of Vienna), Angeliki Ziaka/ Triantafylos Tanos (University of Thessaloniki), Hans Raun Iversen and Lisbeth Rasmussen (University of Copenhagen).

Guest lecture Zahra‘ Langhi (from Kairo): “Politics and Religion in Libya” November 30th, 2017

The guest lecture is organized by the research platform RaT and the Department of Political Science. Zahra‘ Langhi is a researcher and expert in gender-related topics, a political activist and cofounder of the Libyan Women’s Platform for Peace (LWPP). The British newspaper The Guardian referred to her as one of “7 women to watch in global politics”. As part of her visit to Austria Langhi will also visit Vienna, besides Innsbruck, and give a lecture co-organized by RaT.

Location: University of Vienna

4. REVIEW

Guest lecture „Tolerance between religions and Muslims of different schools. Perspectives of the Sultanate of Oman“, March 16th, 2017

On March 16th, 2017, Prof. Dr. Suleiman al-Hussaini from the University Nizwa (Oman) gave a speech in lecture hall 50 of the University of Vienna. Initially, Suleiman al-Hussaini taught English, but now he holds a professorial chair in the context of which he devotes himself to topics of the history of Oman and their relevance for current issues. In his lecture Suleiman al-Hussaini showed how the coexistence of different Islamic schools of law as well as different religions is experienced in the predominantly Muslim Ibadi sultanate. Suleiman al-Hussaini ascribed the religious tolerance in the “seafaring nation” that is Oman to its geographically exposed location that encouraged encounters between different cultures and to the peaceful and consensual adoption of the religion in the 7th century.



Suleiman al-Hussaini

The event was hosted by Univ.-Prof. Dr. Wolfram Reiss in cooperation with the research platform RaT.

Interreligious dialogue, Alevis Austria, denomination Vienna, April 6th, 2017

To fulfill a responsible role in society and contribute to integration processes while maintaining Alevism constitute the two core aspects about which the Federation of Alevi communities in Austria (Föderation der Aleviten Gemeinden in Österreich, in Turkish: Avusturya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu or AABF) informed the participants of this evening event dedicated to interreligious dialogue. Embedded in its eventful history, Alevism should be revitalised and the work with youth should be encouraged beyond the borders of Vienna both in Austria and Turkey. The textualization, publication and establishment of the Alevi doctrine in teaching and research at Austrian universities represent important milestones on this path. Furthermore, the participants were informed about the current status and the significance of the recognition as a statutory body under public law and the newly created Cemevi (meeting place) in Simmering (Vienna). The research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society was represented by Lisa Achathaler.

Symposium „Learning to be Human for Global Times: Current Challenges from the Perspective of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion“, April 7th-8th, 2017

On the 7th and 8th of April the international Symposium „Learning to be Human for Global Times: Challenges and Opportunities from the Perspective of Contemporary Philosophy of Religion” took place at the campus of the University of Vienna. The event was organized by Brigitte Buchhammer and Herta Nagl-Docekal in cooperation with the research platform RaT, the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. The symposium was dedicated to the general topic of the XXIV. World Congress of Philosophy in the year 2018. Due to the longtime and intense cooperation of Brigitte Buchhammer with the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (Washington D.C.), the results of the symposium will be published and presented at the World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing in 2018. Speakers from six different nations and eleven different Universities ensured a varied and multidisciplinary examination concerning the questions of humanity and what it means to be and become human in a global context. The research platform RaT was represented by Kurt Appel, Isabella Guanzini and Birgit Heller.

The first panel was introduced by Kurt Appel with a paper on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, which investigated Hegel's notion of Religion as a radical rupture in human self-reflection. Subsequently Thomas Schmidt (Professor at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt) presented his contribution about Georges Bataille's concept of an atheistic religion and its relevance for human intimacy. Further contributions revealed the necessity for renewed reflection on the ethical dimensions of being human in times of the climate crisis and growing utopias of "moral enhancement". Birgit Heller's paper enriched the discussion by an important interreligious investigation from the perspective of Religious Studies. The necessity to develop a global ethics in the sense of cosmopolitan moral duties, which was inherent in all discussions, was highlighted by Herta Nagl-Docekal's interpretation of Kant's philosophy of history. The role of religion between ethics and the experience of radical contingency became a focal point of reflections considering the constantly critical, ruptured and abysmal character of being human. The complex and abysmal structure of human desire and its humanizing potential within a dialectics of desire and law were considered by Isabella Guanzini's interpretation of Jacques Lacan. The pedagogical dimension of becoming human was stressed by many speakers referring to traditional as well as modern positions reaching from Lessing to Arendt. The wide spectrum of perspectives on the topic of being human allowed to encompass the philosophy of pragmatism as well as current new approaches to performativity in theology.

Organization: Brigitte Buchhammer and Herta Nagl-Docekal
(both Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna)

Cooperation: RaT

Location: Seminary room of the Department for Ethics and Law in Medicine, Vienna



Brigitte Buchhammer

Study day - „Living in the Anthropocene - Ecology, Politics, Religion. A Dialogue on Pope Francis' encyclical “Laudato sí””, April 27th, 2017

On April 27th 2017 a study day entitled „Leben im Anthropozän - Ökologie, Politik, Religion. Ein Gespräch zur Enzyklika “Laudato sí”” was held in Melk. Eva Horn (Department of German Studies) and Kurt Appel (Department of Fundamental Theology) initiated this workshop and thereby created a framework in which the question on a life in the Anthropocene could be discussed in an interdisciplinary debate and based on Pope Francis' encyclical.

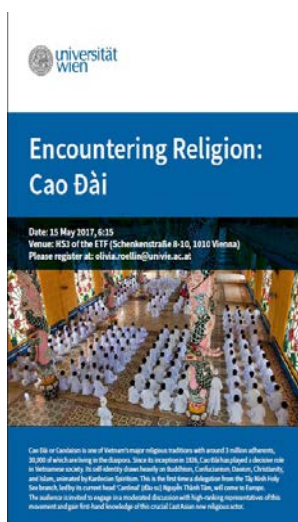
The opening remarks were provided by Eva Horn, who approached “Laudato si” from a socio-political perspective. By adjacent questions on the topic she

built a bridge to the subject area of theology and the encyclical. Picking up on these questions, Kurt Appel developed thoughts on a dynamic, tightly intertwined correlation of the world. On that basis he developed socio-critical and theological considerations and took on conceptions of nature from the philosopher Leibniz as well as core elements of the encyclical. Following this contribution, Lisa Achathaler picked up the topic of vulnerability, whereas the concluding contribution of the biologist, publicist and poet Andreas Weber focused especially on the topicality of “enlivenment”, a term coined by Heike Löschmann. Similarly to the other contributions, Andreas Weber also introduced humans as beings which integrate themselves in a network of living and correlating arrangements. He put these thoughts into the framework of core conclusions of “Laudato si”, before confronting them with current developments.



Andreas Weber and Eva Horn

Encountering Religion - Cao Đài, May 15th, 2017



Cao Đài or Caodaism is among the largest religious traditions in Vietnam with approximately 3 million adherents. 30,000 of them live in diaspora. Since its foundation in 1926 Cao Đài has played an important role in Vietnamese society. Its self-concept is strongly based on Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Christianity and Islam, but also on Kardecian Spiritualism.

This was the first time a delegation of the Tây Ninh Holy See branch, led by its current head ‘Cardinal’ (đầu sư) Nguyễn Thành Tám came to Europe.

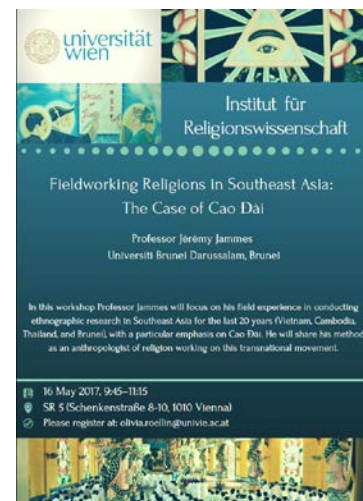
At this event the audience was invited to participate in a discussion with high-ranking representatives of this movement and to gain insights into this significant and new religious protagonist in East Asia.

Scientific management: Lukas Pokorný

Workshop with Jérémy Jammes, May 16th, 2017

In this Workshop Prof. Jammes was focusing on his ethnographic research in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Brunei) having twenty years of experience in this field. Particular attention was paid to Cao Đài. Prof. Jammes shared his methodological knowledge as an anthropologist of religion, who participates in transnational movements.

Scientific management: Lukas Pokorny



Encountering religions: Wŏn Buddhism, May 8th, 2017



Wŏn Buddhism is one of the largest religious movements in Korea and East Asia with significant international presence. At this religious studies event Bop-U Stabnau, the priest of the Wŏn temple in Regensburg, introduced a small group to the theory and praxis of Wŏn Buddhism.

Scientific management: Lukas Pokorny

Guest lecture Hana Bendcowsky: “A cross and a star in the Holy Land. Jewish-Christian Relations in the Israel context.”, May 8th, 2017

Summary report by Regina Polak, Department for Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology

“Who is Jeshua?” – “The son of God!” – “No, not the Jeshua in church, the one from school!” In Hebrew the names Josua and Jesus are pronounced identically. For the Catholic migrant child from the Philippines this can easily lead to confusion, being born in Israel, attending a Jewish school, speaking Hebrew fluently, knowing and living by the Jewish holiday calendar, but also going to church and Sunday school, which has been established especially for the second generation of Catholic immigrants by the Catholic Church. This short dialogue is an impressive proof of that.

The question how these children and adolescents describe their identities is just one of countless questions raised by Hana Bendcowsky, Program Director of the JCJCR, in her inspiring lecture at the University of Vienna. In her 90-minute lecture she regards the challenges concerning living together and the dialogue between a Jewish majority and a Christian minority in the Holy Land as the main

issues. She sensitized the audience to such difficult questions as: Which “Israel” are we talking about at all – considering the biblical, political, religious, the real borders or the ones hoped for? To which Jews and Christians are we referring to when talking about Judeo-Christian relations?

In her speech she dealt with the specifics of and the differences in the dialogue between Israel and Europe, the achievements today and the important topics for a future “theological” agenda. It became clear that sociological factors like majority and minority issues shape the dialogue just as much as curricula in schools do as well as the impact of migration or the question what the terms “religious” or “secular” mean. For instance, being a secular Jew means something different in Israel than the western European point of view might suggest – secular Jews also know and live their traditions, only differently or not according to religious rules. “Being religious” in Israel means, on the other hand, primarily affiliation and a praxis, but doesn’t imply anything about “faith” or “ideology”. In the lecture the differences between Israel and Europe (Austria) within Catholic Christianity were also mentioned: For instance, for Arab Christians it is very difficult to acknowledge that Jesus was a Jew – within the horizon of their experience of life “Jew” could mean “the enemy”. Texts like *Nostra Aetate* are for Catholic Christians in Israel often not only unknown, they are, by some, considered as being “European”.

Evangelic Church Congress, May 24th-28th, 2017

“What do you see in me? – Church service with refugees”: During the ecumenical workshop at the Getsemane Church in Berlin on May 25th, this question was explored by Regina Polak, Jutta Binder, the evangelic superintendent Salzburg-Tirol, Innsbruck/Austria, and Sabine Dreßler of the Reformed Alliance in Germany. Difficult issues were discussed like the baptism of Muslims, the question of prayers in religious diversity, the important role of communities that stand up and care for refugees thus acting as bridge builders in society.

Study day “The Religious Foundation of Human Rights: Georg Jellinek (1851-1911)”, June 9th, 2017

On June 9th, 2017, a study day with Francesco Ghia (Professor for Political Philosophy at the University of Trento) on the topic “The Religious Foundation of Human Rights: Georg Jellinek (1851-1911)” was hosted by the department of Fundamental Theology in collaboration with the research platform RaT. The talk focussed on the renowned Austrian philosopher and theorist of constitutional law Georg Jellinek. In his lecture Francesco Ghia elaborated on Jellinek’s understanding of law as “ethical minimum”, which, however, always remains dependent upon a given ethos which cannot be produced but only recognized by law.



Francesco Ghia

The main topic was Jellinek’s historical reconstruction of the origins of the rights of the individual, which rejected the contemporarily common ascription of the human rights of the *Déclaration* from 1789 to Rousseau’s influence.

According to Jellinek human rights, with their emphasis on individual freedom and equality, are more likely to have their foundation in the religious freedom of the American Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution, whose nonpolitical but religious origin lies in Protestantism. Jellinek's interpretation of the religio-historical genesis of human rights was emphasized, on the one hand, in order to demonstrate the relevance of Jellinek's approach of looking for the importance of religious phenomena where they are not suspected at first. On the other hand, the thesis of a religious origin of political rights became the starting point for further discussions on the necessity of the self-limitation of the state with respect to the ethical domain of conscience, whereby the current relevance of this self-limitation reaches up to the threat of the loss of the difference between the public and the private sphere in the postmodern era.

"The doctrine of Apokatastasis. A reconstruction of the history of the concept and an attempt at a philosophical interpretation", June 10th, 2017



Francesco Ghia

In the context of the second part of the block seminar for graduate, doctoral and habilitating students that took place on Saturday June 10th, 2017, at Melk Abbey, Francesco Ghia held a lecture headed "The doctrine of Apokatastasis. A reconstruction of the history of the concept and an attempt at a philosophical interpretation". Francesco Ghia, who is Professor for Political Philosophy at the University of Trento, examines authors like Humboldt, Rosmini, Troeltsch, Weber and Jellinek in particular in the course of his research. In his lecture, he treated the history of the theological concept "apokatastasis" since Origen – the doctrine of the restoration of all things at the end of time. Starting from the central question as to the possibility of universal salvation Ghia reconstructed the debate around this controversial theologoumenon from late Antiquity to Dante, Leibniz, Kant, Lessing, Herder, Hegel up until the 20th century (Bonhoeffer, Taubes) and present times. In the course of the discussion following the lecture the necessity of a renewal and actualization of the theological questions to which the doctrine of apokatastasis is linked was stressed above all: the challenge of thinking an alliance between man and God which persists even when broken.

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Study day „The Post-Secular City. The New Secularization Debate“ , June 21st, 2017

On June 21st, 2017, a study day with Paolo Costa took place in English on the premises of the research platform. He is currently Senior Researcher at Fondazione Bruno Kessler in Trento and Senior Research Fellow at the research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society in Vienna. Costa is a renowned expert on J. Habermas and Ch. Taylor whose book *A Secular Age* he translated into Italian in 2009. At the moment he is working on his project "The Post-Secular City: Religious Pluralism, Global Consumerism, and the Future of Democracy" in the context of his Visiting Fellowship at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (IWM).



Paolo Costa

During the study day, he shared aspects of his current research on the secularism debate with the participants. His talk focused on alternative perspectives or rather paradigm shifts as to the standard theory on secularism and on how religion and modern secular rationality could be put in a different relation to each other aloof from assumptions in sociology of religion that have been overcome. Instead of deducing a total loss of meaning as a consequence for religion from the historical process of modernization, it could be more fruitful to see modernity not so much as a history of decline in which narratives lose every meaning but to understand it as cultural innovation allowing for the reconstruction and productive rethinking of the contingency in the genesis and development of religion.

International Conference „The Crisis of Representation. Neoliberalism, Ethnonationalism, Religious Conservatism and the Crisis of Representation in Politics, Religion and Culture“, June 25th-27th, 2017



Florian Nährer, Civitas Dei 20

The international conference on “The Crisis of Representation. Neoliberalism, Ethno-nationalism, Religious Conservatism and the Crisis of Representation in Politics, Religion and Culture – an Interdisciplinary Conference”, which was organized by the research platform RaT, took place from June 26th to June 27th, 2017 at Melk Abbey. Six lecturers from the University of Vienna and researchers from the US, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium and Germany participated in it. The interdisciplinary discussion of the broad topic that is the crisis of representation in the different areas of economy, politics, society, religion and culture originated in the collaboration of the research platform RaT with the US-American philosopher Carl Raschke from the University of Denver.

The conference inquired into the question of the reasons and the meaning of the contemporary crisis of representational systems as well as into the adequate analytical categories in order to reflect on the balance and the collapse of these systems. The crisis of representative democracy through the phenomenon of ethno-nationalism was discussed by **Hans Schelkshorn** in his analysis of the ideological matrix of new rightist parties and their instrumentalization of a distorted picture of Christian identity. In the context of the political, **Oliver Marchart** confronted the demonstrated impossibility of a total representation with the concept of negative representation. The idea of the suspension of sovereignty in democracy transformed into the idea of an ethics of democracy. **Philip Goodchild** brought up the topic of economic crises and their connection to the extensive and systematic loss of faith that has taken place in global Capitalism. He succeeded in presenting the function of the expectation for the future as a structural analogy between functioning capitalism and faith. Here he took a closer look at the significance of religions for a possible rupture of the self-destructive capitalist circle of fear through the renewed establishment of “faith in faith” as well as of faith in future welfare. Furthermore, the transformation of religion through globalization was linked to the phenomenon of the crisis of the concept of culture by **Olivier Roy**. The standardization of life and the ensuing replacement of all implicit contents of religion and culture through explicit rules characterize fundamentalisms and lead to the crisis of culture as such and to the necessity of calling into question the relation between religion and culture once again. **Kurt Appel** and **Marcello Neri** especially widened the understanding of the crisis of representation by one facet, the crisis of public space as one of the most central achievements of modernity. Two phenomena – the privatization of public space through its economization and the becoming public of the private – were pointed out as reasons for the danger of the annihilation of identity and of virtualization set as absolute. In view of this danger Europe’s project simultaneously is presented with the opportunity to find a new vision of the coexistence of Christianity, Islam and the secular world in a common public space. The potentials of the religions in view of a new order of the public space were considered with regards to a possible culture of affectivity and of recognition of vulnerability.



Moreover, religion was highlighted as a counterweight to the exclusion of the dead out of the public space. With a different regard to the crisis of public space Marcello Neri emphasized the possibility of new performative forms of representation beyond the function of public space as hierarchically structured mode of subjectivization and referred particularly to the potentials of art. Furthermore, **Rüdiger Lohlker** illustrated the concrete case of representation without representation in Saudi Arabian politics and Wahhabism

and discussed it as an important phenomenon of globalization. Thereby Lohlker examined special warfare techniques and asked which forms of representation – especially in relation to the role of civil population – were at work in those. The connection between representation, media and virtualization was resumed by **Carl Raschke**. Starting from Agamben's thesis on the replacement of the role of glory as operating mode of sovereignty through the media in the 21st century he developed a theory of the media introducing the concept of tawdry. The crisis of representation triggered by the increasing and decoupled virtualization of the present raised the question of the possibility of new forms of sovereignty beyond representation and its invalidation. Furthermore, based on the reflection on the Biblical motive of the exodus **Peter Zeillinger** introduced the idea of representation as blank position, which finds its urgent actuality in the event-like breach of the representational form of sovereign power. Finally, the contributions to the conference were summarized by **Daniel Minch**, **Joshua Ramos** and **Roger Green** and perspectives that remained open with regards to the topic of the "Crisis of Representation" were taken into consideration, whereby a political theology of economics and a philosophical analysis of neoliberalism seemed indispensable.

Guest lecture „The logic of language: Hölderlin and Hegel“ , June 28th, 2017 and Workshop on June 29th, 2017

On June 28th and 29th, 2017, a guest lecture as well as a workshop by Johann Kreuzer, Professor for History of Philosophy at the University of Oldenburg, took place at the department of Fundamental Theology, which was organized in cooperation with the research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society. The title of the talk was called "Die Logik der Sprache: Hölderlin und Hegel" (The Logic of Language: Hölderlin and Hegel). In order to understand the specificity of the act of the finding of language in Hölderlin's poetry, Kreuzer presented the common starting point of Hegel's and Hölderlin's thought as rooted in language and showed ensuing shifts in the conceptions of both thinkers.

Hölderlin's work plunged into a crisis at the end of the 1790s when his so-called Empedocles project fails, a play on Empedocles as a political reformer who presides over the avant-garde. Initially he worked out his crisis in theoretical writings (Das untergehende Vaterland ..., Wenn der Dichter einmal des Geistes mächtig ist ...). Here, Hölderlin most notably developed a theory of historical transitions. Unlike his earlier work on Empedocles in this context, language does not appear as an instrument of a political avant-garde, but reveals itself in acts of finding language more and more as an attempt at expressing what eludes. Where this succeeds, poetry occurs. As Kreuzer interprets Hölderlin, this is an attempt at expressing the reality of language itself through language. Hölderlin's great songs that came about after 1800 seem to be an expression of that.



Johann Kreuzer

Guest lecture „Gilles Deleuze“ June 28th, 2017



Carl Raschke

On the 28th of June Carl Raschke, who is a professor for religious studies at the University of Denver and one of the major experts in the field of postmodern philosophy in the USA, gave a guest lecture as part of the last session of the seminar “Gilles Deleuze – Die Falte”. Raschke provided an essential introduction to Deleuze stressing his new vision of philosophy as an image of thought. Thought is no longer understood as an abstract world-view, but rather as an open-ended experience with the way language makes us see the world. Unlike Derrida, Deleuze’s work is neither limited to a philosophical language and terminology nor does it primarily aim for a re-rea-

ding of the philosophical tradition. Deleuze’s project can be described as an inversion of Platonism proceeding Nietzsche and leading to a notion of transcendental empiricism. In this way, the object of philosophy, after Deleuze, is neither logic nor rationality, but it is the pre-logical that is encountered in the body, the tone or the gesture. Raschke pointed out the importance of the notions of “difference” and “intensity” for Deleuze’s oeuvre. First, the notion of difference – not seen as negation, but as affirmation – is not only an important key to Deleuze’s philosophy, rather it is a key to thinking itself which, after Deleuze, is understood as intrinsically philosophic. Moreover Deleuze’s new image of thought is starting to think of philosophical concepts not as abstract models, but as intensities and even as persons. Beyond that, Raschke also gave a short overview on major books of Deleuze reaching from *The Difference and Repetition*, *The Logic of Sense* and *The Fold* to *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Guest lecture „Religious Unmusicality: What Does it Mean? And Does it Matter?“, June 29th, 2017

On June 26th, 2017, a study day entitled “Religious Unmusicality: What Does it Mean? And Does it Matter?” with Paolo Costa (Senior Researcher, Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trient; Research Fellow at the research platform Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society as well as Visiting Fellow at the Institut für die Wissenschaft vom Menschen) took place at the research platform RaT.

The concept of religious unmusicality dating back to a private letter from Max Weber to Ferdinand Tönnies from 1909 was brought up by Weber in order to express his own experiences of estrangement relative to spirituality and religion. Simultaneously, by maintaining the difficulty of the articulation this concept reflects the then emerging possibility of living an authentically areligious life. First Paolo Costa introduced the topic by asking about the reasons enabling one to become estranged from something that used to be familiar. Alongside the remaining mysterious aspect, approaches were discussed that could be opened up by others, whereby the issue of a lack of self-receptivity emerged.



But Costa showed that upon closer examination this seems to depend on the ability of resonating with the affective part of the religious experience on the one hand and on the necessity of participation on the other hand.

The dimension of the so-called upstream disagreement, which was explained through music, was a further focal point. Here the attention was turned to the functioning of corporeity as a bridge and to the essential aspect of self-abandonment. At the same time Costa emphasized that when the experience of being deeply moved fails to happen, no translation - in the sense of some form of verbalization - can be achieved that would make the experience-related dimension accessible externally. Therefore, the articulation through which the relation of resonance remains central seemed to constitute the core element of the upstream disagreement of religious unmusicality.

Conference „The Loss of the Self in Modernity – Perceptions from Literature and Religion“ (Orig. „Verlust des Ich in der Moderne - Wahrnehmungen in Literatur und Religion“), July 6th-7th, 2017



Led by Christian Danz and Michael Murrmann-Kahl the conference „The Loss of the Self in Modernity – Perceptions from Literature and Religion took place on July 6th and 7th, 2017.

The themes ranged from fictionality and religious experiences of nature to resignation, relief and poetics of memory in the „Bildungsroman“ of realism. Furthermore, literary representations of decay were outlined, such as the decay of values in the period between the world wars, the loss of the self – linked to religious personal development and the loss of god. Moreover the area of religious bigotry, the loss and vanish of the “self” up to death and suicide in literature were discussed and questions about the self were approached.

Location: HS 3 of the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the University of Vienna
Coordination: Christian Danz and Michael Murrmann-Kahl

5. THIRD-PARTY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Newly approved projects

The Peace Pagoda in Vienna: A Survey of the Buddhist Order Nipponzan Myohoji in Austria (funded by: Kulturabteilung der Stadt Wien, Wissenschafts- und Forschungsförderung, MA 7)



Project leader: Isabelle Prochaska-Meyer, in cooperation with Lukas Pokorny. Project duration: February 2017-December 2017. The Nichiren-based Buddhist order Nipponzan Myōhōji was founded in 1917 by the Japanese monk Nichidatsu Fujii (1885–1985). At present the group comprises about 1,500 monks and nuns as well as close-knit lay supporters worldwide. Major components of the group's peacebuilding agenda include peace walks (e.g., in commemoration of the end of World War II), individual and collective recitation activities and the establishment of the so-called Peace Pagodas, currently numbering around eighty worldwide. In 1983, one of the earliest of these massive Pagodas was erected in Vienna, the same year that Buddhism was formally recognised as a religion by the Austrian authorities. In fact, the development of Nipponzan Myōhōji, and especially the Vienna Peace Pagoda, is closely entwined with the general history and visibility of Buddhism in Austria since the early 1980s. The Peace Pagoda represents a vitally important Buddhist institution in Austria. Likewise, Nipponzan Myōhōji's Peace Pagoda is an essential symbolic domestic landmark of the international peace movement and the growing acceptance of religious diversity at the time, as well as an important rallying point for interdenominational and interreligious dialogue. Discussions pertaining to the establishment of the Vienna Pagoda under Nipponzan Myōhōji's administration included high-ranking Nipponzan Myōhōji dignitaries on one side, and representatives of Austria's political elite, such as Bruno Kreisky (then Chancellor), Rudolf Kirchschläger (then President), and Helmut Zilk (then Minister of Education, later Mayor of Vienna), on the other, all of whom took particular interest in the realisation of the building project and the vision of peace and religious tolerance attached to it.

Magomed al-Shishani – Ways out of the Extremism-Trap: Possibilities for Prevention (funded by: Zukunftsfonds der Republik Österreich)

Project Leader: Rüdiger Lohlker. Project duration: May 2017-September 2017. The project installed a cooperation with a young Chechen man who, on the one hand, is imprisoned because of criminal and jihadist activities but who, on the other hand, began to criticize his former convictions and now develops an Islamic alternative against jihadist ideas. The project that includes the production of video-clips and a blog in co-production with the imprisoned man will be intensively supported by youth workers and scientifically supervised by the department for Islamic Studies at the University of Vienna. Through this pilot project it is possible to initiate a process which can include also other actors within communities that are endangered by jihadist ideas.

Current projects

Social Imaginaries between Secularity and Religion in a Globalizing World (SIMAGINE) (funded by: Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research NWO)

Project leader: Laurens ten Kate and Hans Alma (both University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht) in cooperation with RaT and 9 further international and interdisciplinary research institutions. Project duration: 2016-2019.

The central research question of the project is: What can the concept of social imaginaries in recent cultural theory, religious studies and theory of globalization contribute to an analysis of an intercultural and highly diverse society which embodies a complex composition of secular and religious components? Based on this question the project engenders its research following theoretical and empirical lines and focuses, in the light of globalization, on social imaginaries in urban and virtual environments.

Completed projects

„The Visual Culture of Sufism in Vienna: Ways of Viewing in the Mystical Islam of the Chishti-Inayati and the Halveti-Jerrahi“ (funded by: Kulturabteilung der Stadt Wien, Wissenschafts- und Forschungsförderung, MA7)

Project leader: Lukas Pokorny, in collaboration with Sara Kuehn. Project duration: January 2017-June 2017. Proceeding from current debates in the discourses of image science the visual culture of Sufic orders based in Vienna were investigated. In order to adequately understand the universal religious ideas of Sufism, it is necessary to take into account the modern self-image of the classical Sufi orders. This project investigated the visual culture of two of these orders. The first subject of this study was the visual culture of the Inayati Order. Secondly it also examined the visual culture of the Jerrahi (Turkish: Cerrahî)

in Vienna, one of the numerous classical Sufi orders of Islam and a branch of the Halveti (Arabic: Khalwati) order. A common feature of both orders is the possibility of experiences that transcend the usual, regulated forms found in mainstream Islam. A central working hypothesis was that visual culture and religious practice both drive forward, and indeed foster, religious pluralisation.



Religion and Diaspora – The Korean Community in Austria (funded by: Baijin Trading, Seoul)



Project leader: Lukas Pokorny, in collaboration with Sang-Yeon Loise Sung. Project duration: October 2016-February 2017. The project investigates contemporary Korean diasporic religions focusing on Protestant and Catholic Korean churches in Austria and their role within the Korean community.

6. PRESS REVIEW

January 3rd, 2017: Interview with Hans Schelkshorn „Gefahr von rechts“, in: Kirchenzeitung Diözese Linz

January 8th, 2017: Interview with Hans Schelkshorn on the topic „500 Jahre ‚Utopia‘: Auf den Spuren der Ideen des Thomas Morus“ in the serial program „Orientierung“, in: ORF

January 10th, 2017: Regina Polak participated in the panel discussion „Comeback nach dem Kirchenaustritt“ published at religion.orf.at

January 19th, 2017: contributions by Brigitte Schinkele and Richard Potz on the topic of religious symbols „Religiöse Symbole: Experten mahnen zu Seriosität“, in: religion.orf.at

January 23rd, 2017: Interview with Ednan Aslan „Der Islam, wie er jetzt ist, ist nicht zukunftsfähig. Der Islamwissenschaftler Ednan Aslan über den ‚gegenwartsfremden‘ islamischen Religions-Unterricht an den Schulen“, in: Kurier

February 1st, 2017 Interview by Kerstin Tretina with Wolfram Reiss in the light of the anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution in: Ö1, Praxis – Religion und Gesellschaft

February 05th, 2017: Artikel by Richard Potz „Kreuz im Klassenzimmer ja, im Gerichtssaal nein“, in: Die Presse

February 05th, 2017: Holzleithner, Elisabeth in the studio discussion of the program „Orientierung“ of the ORF with the title „Kopftuch nein, Kreuz ja?“

February 18th, 2017: „Praxis Spezial“: Studio diskussion with Birgitt Heller and Stefan Schima „Wie viel Kopftuch trägt die Öffentlichkeit? Studiodiskussion mit Birgit Heller, Amani Abuzahra, Amar Rajkovic und Stefan Schima“, in: religion.orf.at

February 22nd, 2017: Interview with Hans Schelkshorn on the topic „Philosophie der Neuen Rechte“ in der Sendung „Salzburger Nachtstudio - Die Neue Rechte“ on Ö1

February 23rd, 2017: Sieglinde Rosenberger was Key Note-Speaker at the bilateral Conference „Migration und religiöse Diversität. Der Umgang mit gesellschaftlicher Vielfalt in Frankreich und Österreich“ in Paris, with support of the Austrian Embassy

March 06th, 2017: Interview with Ednan Aslan „Religionspädagoge Aslan: Was am Kopftuch-Gebot gefährlich ist“, in: Der Standard

March 23rd, 2017: Interview with Richard Potz „Religionsrechtler: Islam in Europa wird ‚kirchlicher‘“, published at religion.orf.at

April 14th, 2017: Hans Gerald Hödl: „Opferlamm und alte Rituale“ Gespräch mit Johanna Grillmayer, ORF.at.

April 19th, 2017: Kurt Appel: „Philosophie und Theologie statt Ethik“ Kommentar zu Lisa Nimmervoll, in: Der Standard

April 19th, 2017: Martin Jäggle / Martin Rothgangel: „Einladung zur Entdämonisierung“ Kommentar zu Lisa Nimmervoll, in: Der Standard

April 25th, 2017: Artikel von Jakob Deibl „Neue Fragen, neue Bündnisse. Zur Rolle der Religionen in Europa“. In: Newsletter für Engagement und Partizipation in Europa 4/2017

April 25th, 2017: Article by Christian Danz „Die Bedeutung der Religion für die Zivilgesellschaft“. In: Newsletter für Engagement und Partizipation in Europa 4/2017

April 25th, 2017: Artikel by Kurt Appel „Religion und Zivilgesellschaft in Europa – Plädoyer für einen neuen Narrativ“. In: Newsletter für Engagement und Partizipation in Europa 4/2017

April 30th, 2017: Interview with Christian Danz „Luther und die Macht der Sprache“, in: religion.orf.at

May 6th, 2017: Article by Jan-Heiner Tück „Der Papst und der Dialog der Religionen. Mit gespaltenen Zungen ist Verständigung nicht möglich“, in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung

May 12th, 2017: Kathpress Info Nr. 760, Beitrag „Engagierter Buddhismus“ auf Tuchfühlung in Wien 4. Der koreanische Won-Buddhismus soll weltweit rund eine Million Mitglieder zählen – Erste Begegnung mit Studierenden in Wien unter Leitung des Religionswissenschaftlers Lukas Pokorny

June 5th, 2017: The Viennese legal philosopher Elisabeth Holzleithner talks about a society in which the readiness is decreasing, to confederate with each other above all differences, published in an interview in Kurier

June 8th, 2017: Contribution on a study entiteled „Muslimische Milieus in Österreich“ by Ednan Aslan and Jonas Kolb at ORF.at

June 8th, 2017: Reply letter by Jakob Deibl to Marcelo Neri „La teologia: una lettera amica“, in Settimana News



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