



RaT-Newsletter



Dear members and friends of RaT,

The month of May is kind of an "in-between", as it changes from late spring to the early summer warmth of June while flowers and trees are blossoming and birds are chirping. An in-between can also be observed at the RaT office: we are in between deadlines, in between holidays and in between transitioning from the fourth to our fifth term as a research centre.

With our second newsletter of the summer term, we would like to inform you about recent publications, current research projects and upcoming events by RaT members.

We are pleased to present in this newsletter our latest JRAT articles which are published "in advance" on the website of Brill. Furthermore, we would like to introduce to you our upcoming book in the JRAT Supplementa series, written by Paolo Costa.

Also worth mentioning here is the new [dashboard](#) by the European Academy on Religion and Society which displays, amongst many others, blog articles by RaT and summaries of selected JRAT contributions.

Last but not least, we would like to invite you to read our most recent [blog entries](#) where we discuss societal issues and present topics that currently influence the work of our members: Read the urgent appeal for peace by the Austrian military chaplain Stefan Gugerel, who addresses the war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as a profound analysis on the state of democracy today written by Ingeborg Gabriel.

We wish you a pleasant reading and hope you all are well!

Lisa Achathaler, Kurt Appel, Hannah Bleckenwegner, Jakob Deibl, Martin Eleven, Daniel Kuran, Marian Weingartshofer.

Please consider forwarding our newsletter to those interested in the topics we work on!

JRAT

Interdisciplinary Journal for
Religion and Transformation
in Contemporary Society



Latest Contributions published online "in advance":

"La Virgen de Regla: a Material Approach to Lived Religious Transformation in Latin America" by Amy Whitehead

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

"Umbanda: Hybridity, Tradition and Semantic Plurality" by Steven Engler

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

These contributions have already been published in advance on the website of Brill. Both of them will later be integrated in the JRAT issue "From Syncretism to Hybridity", edited by Bettina Schmidt and Gerald Hödl.

For further information on JRAT, you can find our page on facts and figures [here](#).

JRAT Supplementa



Preview: Volume 2 "The Post-Secular City", edited by Paolo Costa

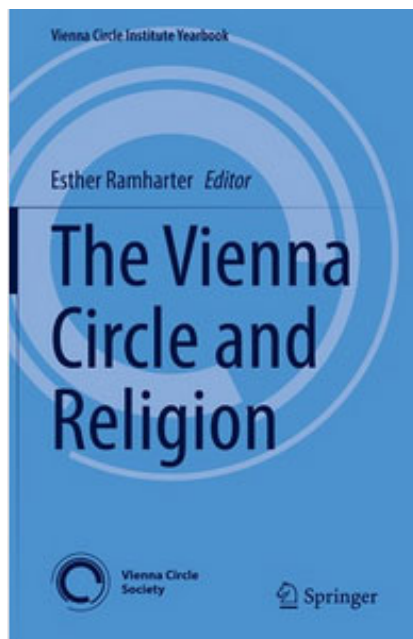
The Post-Secular City examines the purported shift from a "secular" to a "post-secular" dispensation from the perspective of the ongoing de-construction of the secularization "theorem" (as Hans Blumenberg called it). Accordingly, the new secularization debate is described as being polarized between the "de-constructors" and the "maintainers" (or re-constructors) of the standard thesis of secularization.

This is the assumption underlying an ambitious effort to map out the field, which consists of a long introduction where “secularization” is analysed as a deeply problematic concept-of-process and of eight chapters in which several protagonists of the recent (i.e. post-1960s) debate are selected and used as placeholders of crucial junctions in the space of reasons enveloping such multidisciplinary conversation. They are (in order of appearance): H. Blumenberg, D. Martin, C. Taylor, H. Joas, T. Asad, M. Gauchet, J. Habermas, G. Vattimo. The book’s conclusion is open-ended, to the effect that it is unclear whether the concept is still helpful for understanding what is going on around us and what is in store for us in the near future.

To be published by October.

Paolo Costa was a research fellow at RaT from May to July 2017 during which he gave two talks, respectively, on the new secularisation debate and the concept of “religious unmusicality”.

PUBLICATIONS: Monographs & Anthologies



Heinrich-Ramharter, Esther (ed.): *The Vienna Circle and Religion*. Cham: Springer 2022.

This book is the first systematic and historical account of the Vienna Circle that deals with the relation of logical empiricists with religion as well as theology. Given the standard image of the Vienna Circle as a strong anti-metaphysical group and non-religious philosophical and intellectual movement, this book draws a surprising conclusion, namely, that several members of the famous Moritz Schlick-Circle - e.g., the left wing with Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Philipp Frank, Edgar Zilsel, but also Schlick himself - dealt with the dualisms of faith/belief and knowledge, religion and science despite, or because of their non-cognitivist commitment to the values of Enlightenment. One remarkable exception was the philosopher and Rabbi Joseph Schächter, who wrote explicitly on religion and philosophy after the linguistic turn. The book also covers another puzzling figure: the famous logician Kurt Gödel, who wrote on theology and the ontological proof of God in his so far unpublished notebooks. The book opens up new perspectives on the Vienna Circle with its internal philosophical and political pluralism and is of value to philosophers, historians and anybody who is interested in the relation between science and religion.

[Link to the publication.](#)



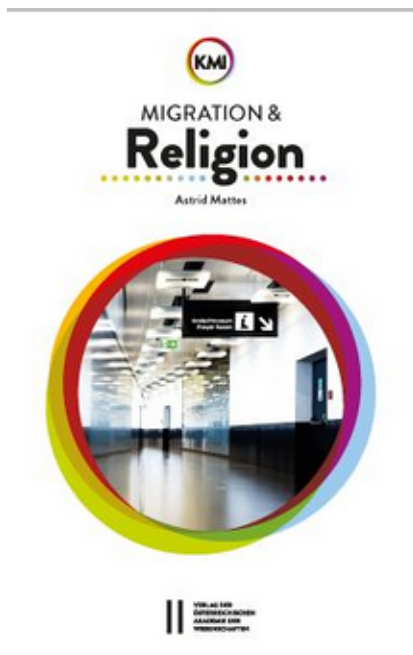
Langer, Gerhard: *Judentum für Dummies*. Weinheim: Wiley-VCH 2022.

Are you also fascinated by the world of Judaism?



This book offers you an insight into the self-image of the Jewish people, their religion and life practices as well as Jewish mysticism, the Kabbalah. Gerhard Langer guides you through three millennia of exciting history and does not exclude persecution and anti-Semitism. He explains the customs and festivals, the symbols, rites and commandments and their meaning. Discover why learning is so important for Jewish people, why the State of Israel has a special significance and get to know the typical Jewish humour.

[Link to the publication.](#)



Mattes, Astrid: *Migration & Religion*. Volume 2 of the series "Religion &", edited by Rainer Bauböck and Wiebke Sievers. Vienna: ÖAW Verlag 2022.

How are migration and religion related? In the Austrian context, this question is mostly reduced to debates on whether Islam belongs to Austria and whether Muslims are integrated into society. The book "Migration and Religion" asks more fundamental questions. How are migration movements and changing religious landscapes connected? Which societal and institutional adaption processes are provoked by migration regarding the handling of religion? Why is religion such a dominant subject in migration discourses? Which party-political considerations concern the intersection of religion and migration? How is religion related to debates about shared values? And what are the roles of international actors when it comes to religion and migration? The author presents state-of-the-art results from the fields of research migration and religious studies in an easily understandable format. In each chapter the author discusses the issues at hand from different theoretical perspectives, to allow for a variety of angles. Readers are introduced to the perspectives of liberal theory, social constructivism, and multiculturalism, practically discussed through examples from Austria, such as the reform of the Islam Law, Christian Orthodoxy as a migrant religious community below the radar, and the ban of headscarves in schools. The book concludes by sketching future prospects for society, research, religious communities, and politics at the intersection of religion and migration.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)



Michalski, Krzysztof: *Die Flamme der Ewigkeit. Eine existentielle Interpretation Nietzsches*, translated by Thomas Weiler, edited by Ludger Hagedorn/Piotr Kubasiak/Klaus Nellen. Verlag Karl Alber: Baden-Baden 2022.

This book is an attempt to read Nietzsche anew with regard to the old question of the *conditio humana*. The reader will not find one answer, but many, and the paths to them often long and winding. The author



takes as guiding clues key concepts and metaphors of Nietzsche's thought that can be traced back to antiquity and still remain influential today. He places Nietzsche in dialogue with the multitude of voices that bear witness to the pursuit of the mystery of human existence – from Greek philosophy to the New Testament and the Church Fathers to classical thinkers and writers of the modern age.

[Link to the publication.](#)

Thanks to Thomas Weiler, Ludger Hagedorn, Piotr Kubasiak and Klaus Nellen, one of the main works by Michalski was translated for the first time into German.

The editor Piotr Kubasiak was a research fellow at RaT and wrote his dissertation on Michalski at the Department of Fundamental Theology.

PUBLICATIONS: Selected Articles



Costa, Paolo: “Democracy Is Always Going to Be Hard”: An Interview with Charles Taylor, in: *The Review of Politics* 84 (2/2022), pp. 238-251.

This interview with the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor was designed and realized to celebrate his ninetieth birthday in November 2021. The interview touches on all the main themes of Taylor's oeuvre, from his view of philosophy to the inherent link between human intelligence and strong evaluations, from the Immanent Frame to postsecularity, from today's democratic crisis to the 1980s debate between liberals and communitarians, from Xi Jinping's China to the global health emergency, from spirituality to Philosophical Romanticism. It is both a hindsight analysis by a first-class thinker and a glance into the future by an incurable optimist.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)



Haselbacher, Miriam / Limacher, Katharina / Mattes, Astrid / Novak, Christoph: *Religious “Bubbles” in a Superdiverse Digital Landscape? Research with Religious Youth on Instagram*, in: *Religions* 13 (3/2022).

Religious activities are no longer confined to local religious communities, but are increasingly taking place online. In that regard, social media is of particular importance for young believers that connect with their peers via platforms such as Instagram. There are conflicting views on the functioning of social media platforms: they are either conceptualized as superdiverse spaces, in which social boundaries can be overcome, or as resulting in separate bubbles that foster exclusive exchanges between like-minded people sharing certain characteristics, including religious affiliation. This article assesses online

religious activities based on qualitative research involving 41 young, urban, religious Instagram users of different faiths. We demonstrate how young believers' interactions on social media produce thematically bound content bubbles that are considerably homogeneous when it comes to religion, but superdiverse in other areas.

[Link to the publication \(full access\).](#)

[Discover more publications by our members](#)

(ONLINE) EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

"AUF DER SCHWELLE. VON RELIGION UND POESIE."

Poetics lectures by Christian Lehnert

10 & 24 May 2022, 7 pm

Venue: HS6, Main Building of the University of Vienna

The poet and theologian Christian Lehnert seeks out thresholds in four lectures. At the borders of language, he explores the kinship of poetic and religious search movements into the unsaid. The silencing of God on the cross and the opposing idea of creation as a linguistic event form the points of reference from which Christianity appears as a linguistic force that can never remain in what is said.

More information can be found [here](#).

BOOK PRESENTATION: MIGRATION & RELIGION

by Astrid Mattes (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW 2022).

11 May 2022, 6 pm

Venue: Haus der Begegnung, Innsbruck

More information can be found [here](#).

OPEN RESEARCH DAYS

VDTR Open Research Days – in cooperation with RaT

23 – 24 May 2022

Venue: HS 5, Hauptgebäude, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna

The Open Research Days, organised by the Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion (VDTR), offer all those who are interested in interdisciplinary theological and religious research questions the opportunity to gain insights into various current research fields and to exchange ideas with others. The lectures will be given by junior researchers of the VDTR as well as by RaT members.

You can find the programme [here](#).

Registration until 16 May 2022 at: contact@vdtr.univie.ac.at

ON THE DEATH GIVING: WAR AND SACRIFICE IN PATOČKA AND DERRIDA

Workshop with David Dusenbury, James Dodd, and Martin Koci

3 June 2022, 9.30 – 12 am

Venue: SR1, Faculty of Theology, Schenkenstraße 8, 1010 Vienna,
organised by Katerina Koci, supported by RaT
The programme can be found [here](#).

**(UN-)SICHTBARKEIT UND SICHTBARMACHUNG:
WISSENSCHAFT UND OKKULTISMUS UM 1900**

Lecture by Jonas Staehelin, Forum Religionsphilosophie

17 June 2022, 4 – 5.30 pm

Venue: NIG HS 3B, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Vienna,
organised by Esther Heinrich-Ramharter and Michael Staudigl, supported by
RaT
[Link](#) to the flyer.

**PAUL TILLICH IN DRESDEN. INTELLEKTUELLEN-DISKURSE IN
DER WEIMARER REPUBLIK.**

**Congress of the German Paul Tillich Society
6 – 9 July 2022**

Venue: Tillich Building of the Dresden University of Technology,
directed by Christian Danz

From the winter term of 1925/26 to the end of the winter term of 1928/29, Paul Tillich taught at the Cultural Studies Department of the Technical University of Dresden as Professor of Religious Studies. In Dresden, not only fundamental works such as "Die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart" (1926), "Das Dämonische. Ein Beitrag zur Sinndeutung der Geschichte" (1926) and the two Kairos volumes (1926 and 1929) were written, also his Dogmatics, which he had already begun in Marburg, was further elaborated here.

The Paul Tillich Congress in Dresden is dedicated to the theologian's dense intellectual networks against the background of the struggles for interpretive sovereignty over the Weimar Republic.

The programme can be found [here](#).

WORKSHOP: MEDIEN – ERINNERUNG – AFFEKTE

Dimensionen einer Theologie der Kultur

15 – 16 September 2022

Venue: Faculty of Protestant Theology,
directed by Christian Danz, supported by RaT
The programme can be found [here](#).

PAST EVENTS

14th MAIMONIDES LECTURES

**Faith, Science, Superstition: Health and Mental Health and the
Abrahamic Religions**

04 – 05 May 2022

RaT members Gerhard Langer and Rüdiger Lohlker both held a talk at this event,
Gerhard Langer on the topic of "Faith, Superstition, Reason: Dealing with Disease, Plague
and Pandemic in Judaism" and Rüdiger Lohlker on "Islamic traditions between natural
science and non-evidence".

The programme can be found [here](#).

**TAGUNG: RECHTSSTAAT UNTER DRUCK
– Perspektiven in der sozialen und ökologischen Krise
24 – 26 March 2022**

Venue: Juridicum, Schottenbastei 10–16, 1010 Vienna

The aim of the event was to analyse the current tendencies towards authoritarian patterns of action in the context of social and economic conditions.

One of the panel speakers was RaT member Elisabeth Holzleithner.

Please find more information [here](#).

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES

RaT members contribute to public discourse by writing in newspapers, giving statements in television and podcasts, and by publishing on our blog. These are two of our most recent blog entries:

RAT BLOG

"The voluntary linguistic uniformity of Western reporting is a frightening reflection of the rigid language control of Eastern news."

In this [contribution](#), the Austrian military chaplain Stefan Gugerel addresses us with an urgent appeal for peace.

"The few spotlights show that the age of democratic complacency, which was fed by the conviction of the global victory of democracy, has come to an end. "

[In her text](#), the social ethicist Ingeborg Gabriel presents us with a profound analysis of the state of democracy today.

PRESS FEATURES

Rudolphina

Elisabeth Holzleithner

...on the topic of "[Ukraine: Women at war - empathy instead of armament](#)".

ORF & Kathpress

Astrid Mattes

The publication of Astrid Mattes' most recent book "Migration & Religion" has been discussed by [religion.orf.at](#) and [Kathpress](#).

Ö1

Astrid Mattes

...in an interview on the topic of organizational structures of religious communities in the Ö1 Radio programme [TAO](#).

VISITING PROFESSORSHIP



HAVE A NICE STAY, KURT APPEL!

Kurt Appel holds a visiting professorship in modern philosophy at the University of Perugia in the summer semester of 2022. He is teaching four courses which will focus on Leibniz's Monadology, Hegel's Early Writings, Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and Schelling's Late Philosophy.

VDTR SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS

(Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion)

We would like to take the opportunity to present in this newsletter the first scholarship holders of the newly founded VDTR. Below, you will get to know Alisha Saikia and Martin Eleven and in the next newsletter we will introduce Sabine Wolsink and Chris Gamrot.



CONGRATULATIONS, ALISHA SAIKIA!

Dissertation supervised by Lukas Pokorny

Alisha Saikia is a doctoral student in the Religious Studies Department at the Vienna Doctoral School of Theology and Research on Religion (VDTR), University of Vienna. She holds a B.A. in Sociology (2010), an M.A. in East Asian Studies (2012), and an M.Phil. in Japanese Studies (2014), all from the University of Delhi, India. She also holds an M.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Tsukuba, Japan where she was a Monbukagakushō Fellow.

Her research in Japan focused on Japanese religion and popular culture (Kyara in Japanese Religious Spaces) where she looked at the embeddedness of kyara or mascots in certain religious spaces in Japan and the impact on the practice of religion in those spaces. Her current research project is based on studying dolls from a Religious Studies perspective where she explores the field of doll collecting and doll making as alternative means of meditation, healing and spirituality.



CONGRATULATIONS, MARTIN ELEVEN!

Dissertation supervised by Kurt Appel, Esther Ramharter, Jan-Heiner Tück

Martin Eleven studied Philosophy and Advanced Theological Studies in Vienna. From 2018 to 2022, he worked at the research centre "Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society", where he was responsible for the administration of personnel and financial matters as well as editorial tasks for the RAT book series. Of particular research interest for him are religious-philosophical questions in the light of postmodern theories and current psychoanalysis.



As a young scientist, it is particularly important to him to make a contribution to scientific discourse at the interface of religion and society.

Based on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body and the flesh, his doctoral project aims to explore the theological topoi of Creation, Shekinah and Incarnation undergo an innovative reading and show their genuinely affective dimension. In his dissertation, he starts from the problem that modern thinking left theology not only a subject-object separation, which she was inclined to rationalize with increasing demands of her own, but also an equally disembodied subject, that is radically separated from purely virtual god. The World as a place of Creation degenerates into an empty container in which only clearly defined entities face each other. Accordingly, humans and God are not only invariably (substantially) separated from each other, the question is rather what is now the connecting element between them. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body and the flesh can help to rethink this connection in terms of the affective.

Impressum

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