

DIALOGUE, RELIGION AND A CRITICAL SCIENCE OF EDUCATION

Thorsten Knauth
Centre for Contextual Hermeneutics
University of Stellenbosch

1. Introduction

In recent times the discussion in religious education circles in Germany about intercultural and inter-religious learning has focused more and more on the concept of dialogue¹. Indeed, it appears that this concept adequately expresses the challenges to religious education in Germany brought about by the growing multicultural and multireligious environment.

However, as yet no conceptual clarity on the concept of *dialogue* has been achieved in religious education circles. What is needed is a concept which on the one hand deals adequately with the practical problems of teaching, while on the other hand acknowledging the relationship between what is learned in the school and a rather contradictory social context.

How important the concept of dialogue is, can be demonstrated by a closer look at a position which is gaining in influence. This position can be stated as follows: inter-religious and intercultural dialogue *follows on the prior* establishment of a religious and cultural foundation.

This position must be understood in the light of the constantly receding influence of the Christian church. As a consequence the religious socialisation of the youth seems to suffer. As the Christian identity of German youth seems to be in jeopardy, religious education is deemed to be something which can bring the pupils to accept their religious tradition. Only when this has been achieved could the dialogue with other religions be engaged in.

Werner Haussmann (1992:291) formulated this position as follows:

“The point of departure should be a model whereby the pupil, at least partially, be made to feel at ‘home’ in ‘his/her’ own faith. By doing so, an identity is created which is the prerequisite for the ability to enter into dialogue with other religious institutions and beliefs. Even if in many cases ... the socio-cultural assumptions held by the pupils have changed fundamentally, even if in many cases one can hardly speak about ‘their’ confession, it is still necessary to root the pupils in their own religion to which they, at least formally, still subscribe. In this way religious education must compensate for the deficits of inadequate religious socialisation in order to help the pupil to establish a foundation upon which he or she can approach, unpack and interpret the unknown. In this way of dealing with the interface of other religious orientations a better understanding of one’s own tradition is achieved.”

1 See Lohman/Weisse (1994) as well as the EKD publication: *Identität, und Verständigung. Standort und Perspektiven des Religionsunterrichts in der Pluralität*. (Gütersloh, 1994)

It is evident that this position is the expression of a perspective in which the Christian confession is taken as point of departure of religious education. First and foremost, Christian religious education should aim to compensate for the negative consequences of the individualisation of religion in modern society. The religions of other pupils do not come into consideration. One cannot escape the conclusion that this dialogue is meant to serve the legitimization of a Christian, confessional religious education system. Serious objections and pertinent questions have to be raised in this respect.

- 1.1 Is the fundamental distinction between own and unknown not rather superficial? Is the identity defined by a formal allegiance to a confession acquired by means of religious education, an identity strong enough to distinguish one from others? Does this way of defining one's identity not come close to an ascribed rather than an appropriated identity?
- 1.2 Is the attempt to make the pupils 'at home' in a particular religion not a biased wish in the light of those social conditions which even the protagonists of this position acknowledge as the cause of the present condition? If that is so, the attempt to reconsecrate the pupils runs a double risk. On the one hand it could easily become an authoritarian enforcing of religion or on the other hand peter out into a fruitless exercise in which the pupils will have no interest.
- 1.3 I am afraid that dealing with dialogue on the basis of a fixed prior foundation does not adequately take into account the consequences of the social transformation which has led to the present position. Furthermore it also does not take into consideration the real needs of young people who are in their own way attempting to comprehend religion. Why can it not be contemplated that the youth might be searching for a dialogue outside the predetermined circle of strict confessional presuppositions? Fearing a spiritual relativism, this model tries to coerce pupils into faith experiences instead of relating to their normal and daily contact with the religious dimension of human life and society.

This model for religious education is paralleled by a theology which stresses the deficiency of normal and daily life in order to emphasize faith experiences. To me this is not an appropriate foundation for an adequate pedagogical definition of the concept of dialogue. Let me therefore attempt to state a concept of dialogue which is pedagogically sound and useful for religious education. Such a concept of dialogue should enable us to develop a critical concept of intercultural and inter-religious learning.

2. Dialogue and a critical science of education

One should understand the development of a critical science of education in Germany as a critique on a particular concept of dialogue which focuses only on the immediate pedagogical interaction.

A critical science of education draws our attention to the fact that a concept of dialogue defined in this way does not adequately reflect on the social systems and their influence on the individuals involved, particularly in relation to mechanisms of authority and coercion. This can easily lead - as we have already seen in the

totalitarian era of national socialism - to a position where the ethos of 'goodwill' and 'functional societal relations' serve as cover-up for 'a sordid enterprise of subservience' (Thiersch 1983).

Over and against this a critical science of education must put the question as to the relationship between social processes and pedagogical activities. In doing so attention is inevitably drawn to the systemic power relations and their influence on the physical structures governing the individuals involved, thereby underlining the constant possibility of a false consciousness and distorted communication, calling for a transformation of such alienation into humane and non-authoritarian structures.

The real challenge to a critical science of education lies in the attempt to execute the called for transformation of individual and social structures from within and in terms of praxis rather than on the basis of a theoretical reflection in the abstract. This means that a critical science of education has to take its point of departure in analysing and understanding the interdependence of social processes and the development of individuals. In so doing attention should not be limited to the immediate interaction between educator and educated, the analyses of the pedagogical interface only, but must also try to relate the analysis of the process of education and learning to an analysis of pedagogical and democratic institutions and their supportive social structures which inform and support the entire process of education (Peukert 1983, 1984, 1992).

The question is, which theory of pedagogical activities will serve such a double purpose? On the one hand we need a critical science of education with a theory which allows us to discern a normative dimension within the relationship of acting subjects which fosters the transformation of social activities. On the other hand the theory must allow for a critique of social activities as such and the structure of pedagogics within that system.

Most exponents of a critical science of education have answered this question with recourse to the German social philosopher, Jürgen Habermas's, attempt to establish an universally pragmatic theory of subject rooted speech and actionobjectivity². Known as the theory of *communicative activity* (= kommunikativen Handelns). Habermas concluded his contributions in 1981. For the purposes of a critical science of education we need to outline the essence of his social theory here.

The core of Habermas's theorising is to conceptualise the conditions for non-authoritarian intersubjective human activity. This provides the basis for both a theory of identity which takes its point of departure in intersubjectivity and a normative measure for a theory of a constant reconstruction of modern society. Habermas points out that in any act of language communication, a telos for mutual understanding is assumed (Habermas, 1981a:387). Every utterance of speech is in itself an assumption that truth is being expressed, the activity is normatively acceptable and the disposition of the speaker is one of integrity. The same assumptions apply to and in the case of the partner with whom is being interacted. It is this assumption which opens the possibility for correction. In other words, built into the reflexive-communicative structure of speech is the *possibility* to draw explicitly on the above implicit assumptions. When this happens the implicit assumptions are transformed into a meta-

2 In this respect the work of K Mollenhauer (1972) must be mentioned not only because it represents one of the first attempts in this regard but also attracted much attention.

communicative structure of discourse in which the interactive partners consciously and explicitly argue and legitimate their claims as to truth and integrity.

Thus, in Habermas's view, discourse is the normative structure of communicative activity. Analysing the discourse provides Habermas with the formal entry point into a explication of a discursive ethics³. In the discursive examination of the mutual claims an ideal situation of communication is assumed, in which in principle every communicant has the possibility to choose freely what to say and how to do so. This constitutes a universal community of communication and the anticipation of such a community. Therefore, it provides the foundation of a violence-free and just human existence. In this way the principle of a discursive ethics broadens our horizon to assume a universal society of mutual recognition. The theory of communicative action in the form of a transcendental-pragmatic discursive ethics appears to provide the critical science of education in more than one way with a foundation for a theory for pedagogical activities:

- 2.1 In the utopia of a non-authoritarian society (at least implicitly given in the structure of language and of communication) the critical science of education could find a solution to its quest for normativity.
- 2.2 On the basis of the anticipated society of communication it is possible to elaborate on those competencies needed to participate in the discourse.
- 2.3 This in turn makes it possible to understand pedagogical activities as a form of ethically informed communicative activity (Keckeisen 1983).

In this context it is important to note that although the ethical implications of human actions become visible in the discursive reflection on claimed truth and integrity, such implications first and foremost relate to the actual events of communicative activities. This means that the normative dimension of the theory of communicative activity should also be understood as applicable not only to the level of discursive ethics, but also to the actual interaction of communicative activity. This allows us the conclusion that the possibility of any relevance whatsoever in language communication depends on the prior assumption that from the start any one partner in the act of communication accepts the other as equal, thereby allowing disagreement while at the same time undertaking to strive by means of interface to reach consensus concerning truth and normativity (Peukert 1989:52, 1992).

Therefore, already at the beginning of communicative activity the acceptance of the other is constitutive, allowing a non-authoritarian intersubjectivity. Thus the model of a discursive ethics is refined and developed in a way which is vital for pedagogic activities. Understood in this way, an ethical approach to a dialogical pedagogical activity is made possible in which existing inequalities in interactive relations are not ignored. Rather the asymmetry is taken seriously, the partner is acknowledged in his/her own right and responsibility is accepted for the promotion of such conditions as they might require. In this way pedagogical dialogue anticipates the situation of equality. The purpose is to realise the equality starting with the acknowledgment of the other as partner. In this way, even within the context of inequality, room is made

3 See in particular some earlier works of Habermas now available in: *Vorstudien und Ergänzungen zu einer Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (Frankfurt, 1984) and: *Vorlesung. Wahrheit und Gesellschaft. Die diskursive Einlösung faktischer Geltungsansprüche*. 104 - 126, 174 - 183.

for intersubjective reciprocity, actualising in the process that form of equality which is available at that stage⁴.

The ethical foundation of pedagogical dialogue is radicalised in those situations in which the self-expression of the other is curtailed or suppressed. In such situations the essence of dialogue becomes explicit, namely in that by persisting in one's acknowledgment of the other, room is being maintained for the eventual self-expression of the other. What happens here is that the concrete individual otherness of the partner is protected, particularly in the moment of its powerlessness. This dimension of one-sidedly realised and persistent acknowledgment through pedagogical activities seems to be a necessary ingredient of any ethical understanding of pedagogical dialogue. This is particularly the case in conflict situations where the elements of advocacy and solidarity implicit in such action serves to counteract violence and oppression⁵.

It is clear that this form of pedagogical dialogue is normative to the core. Rooted in a dialectical-dialogical understanding, this normativity finds its expression in the mutual acknowledgment of the freedom of equal partners while striving for a universal solidarity and a just and non-authoritarian society. To subscribe to an ethic which allows the other to exist in his/her own intersubjectivity and self-expression, is an option for principled inclusivity. Therefore the full scope and ultimate aim of such a universal solidarity, is the global responsibility to change those relationships which impede the self-expression of others. Thus, the reality of factual asymmetries in the interactive relations calls us to engage with those situations where individual freedom is in jeopardy in order to create conditions which will allow others to be themselves and to realise the possibilities of their own freedom⁶.

Acknowledging the other in this way radicalises itself into the option for the other. Our dialectical-dialogical understanding of activity now turns into an active anticipation of the freedom already acknowledged in principle.

“We are striving for a dialogue which in the process of mutual understanding brings the individuality of the other into focus. Dialectical dialogue means acknowledging the other by means of the actual participation in the process of mutual understanding.” (Peukert 1992:119).

-
- 4 Ursula Peukert (1979) in her study on the process of social learning during pre-school years has combined this theory with the latest positions in development psychology, the sociology of family life and language theory.
 - 5 This insight can also be supported by socio-philosophical considerations. A. Honneth (1995), in discussion with post-modern (Lyotard, Derrida) and feminist approaches (Gilligan), has shown the need for a an "ethic of the other". Also Brumlik (1992) comes to the same conclusion. Arguing from the perspective of the Philosophy of Education he arrives at the concept of *advocative action*.
 - 6 Peukert has described this approach to a pedagogical ethics as the "ethics of intersubjective creativity within the horizon of universal solidarity" (1992, 1994) and the consequences for religious education as "identification within universal solidarity". See also Mette (1989).

3. The place of religion in a dialectical-transformational understanding of dialogue

In what way does religion or the religious dimension fit into the structure of the above dialogical, pedagogical activities? Can it be shown that the religious dimension⁷ provides us with an important contribution to develop more sophisticated skills to deal with the diversity of social and cultural activities, to development of a critical historical competency and of fundamental values? If so, religion cannot simply be classified as one element of the above dialectical-dialogical structure. We will have to see that the religious dimension is in its very core a mirror image of the dialectical-dialogical structure itself.

This is not to legitimate the view on religion or theology which sees its educational role as the arbiter of all learning. It is only to draw attention to a productive potential for education and learning which is present in religious education and would allow a useful interface between general pedagogics and religious education⁸.

The following remarks intend to explain the relationship between pedagogical activities in general and religious education in particular and how this interface could serve to enhance our understanding of general learning and education.

3.1 In recent years various writers have pointed to the resurgence of the religious dimension and general call for a return to religion (Luhmann 1977; Koslowski 1985; Lübke 1986). In this respect the discussion about the social use of religion centre primarily on the function of religion as community and the general need to come to terms with contingency. An understanding of religion as that praxis which allows people to cope with the residual problems not solved by the technological rationality, is nothing but an extension of a tradition in the sociology of religion whereby religion is defined according to its functional usage in the daily processes of society. The functionalist understanding of religion is shared by both the critical and the new conservative schools, particularly in as much as religion can be described as a force which affirms and constitutes community. However, the critique on the theory of religion as a means of coping with contingency has allowed us to see that in both these positions the functional place assigned to religion is in fact where a reductionist and instrumentalist logic cannot cope any longer with the problems it had created itself. This definition of religion is a mirror image of the irrationality of such a society in turn legitimating and sanctioning this irrationality and establishing it in terms of authority structures (Peukert 1981; Arens 1995).

An important but negative consequence of a functionalist definition of religion is its failure to give due recognition to the normative and hermeneutical aspects of religion. Such a concept of religion cannot but be blind for the prophetic and socio-critical character of, for instance, the Jewish Christian tradition. What remains in the end is merely a focus on the destructive potential of religion (something which should not be underestimated). Proper, constructive hermeneutics, however, has the potential to bring to light that powerful Biblical tradition which neutralises authoritarian

7 The concept "religious dimension" is used here in the objective sense to denote religious traditions, and in the subjective sense to denote individuals' appropriation of religious functions as found in their immediate context. This distinction is derived from H. Luther (1992).

8 K.-E. Nipkow (1992) has elaborated on this relationship.

relationships. Also the language of the Bible, its symbolic and narrative structures read against its historical backdrop, can be interpreted and understood as an attempt to establish a way of life in which violence and destructive relationships are not taken for granted; texts which prompt us to strive for ways of human interaction in which identity is guaranteed and fostered. (Peukert 1989). If this is so, it is quite conceivable that reconstructed religious traditions could be relevant to education theory. This they do because they transmit proven life experiences, images of hope and expressions of lament, protest and wish - borne from factual historical praxes - into the present context and experiences. Present experiences of alienation, of fractured subjectivity could then become understandable in the light of such traditions and through the appropriation of their histories and symbols. Religion - understood in this way - could be a productive *intermezzo* in the daily praxis of alienation. This it can be because it introduces a symbolic potential which points beyond the present praxis and conjures up new possibilities of life and hope.

Thus, for the theory of education, religious traditions are relevant when they are not seen as historical entities, as abstract foreign and sealed packages of knowledge. Instead they are relevant because they present the suffering, the struggles and the hopes of previous generations and precisely in doing so open up future potential in as much as past experience becomes the short-hand of present experiences, thereby transmitting also the hopes and possibilities.

3.2 Recent research in the psychology of personal development has shown the relevance of religion in this respect (Fowler 1989; Oser/Gmünder 1984)⁹. In general structural genetic theories regarding the development of cognitive judgment and moral consciousness show, as do the related empirical-reconstructive theories on the ontogenesis of religious consciousness, that the development of religiosity takes place in elementary experiences derived from interactive relationships. Questions arising from this development process invariably relate self-interpretation in the context of immediate or mediated reflection on relationships to other people. Equally, religious experience always comprises reflection about the boundaries of communicatively derived experience: what is the foundation of my freedom in a world which I experience as accidental? What is the root of that trust which allows me to open myself up to reality and not to close myself to it? (Oser/Gmünder 1984).

Thus, in addition to the relevance of religious traditions for the theory of education which was elaborated upon in 1., we can now emphasize the significance of religion for the development of identity. Religion offers a way of expressing, a format for understanding and dealing with experiences fundamental to our being.

“In this sense religion is not to be perceived any longer as something which is foreign to the process of personal development, but because of its integral relationship with elementary experiences, religion turns out to be intrinsically part of our coping with life” (Mette 1983:166).

3.3 The final aspect of the relationship between religion and pedagogical activities is at the same time the most important. We will state this point by summarizing H. Peukert's (1976) views.

9 For a discussion on these see F Schweitzer (1987).

The theory of communicative activity adequately expresses the universal phenomenon of an egalitarian solidarity within communicative activities and intersubjectivity as necessary provision for identity. The normative structure of communicative activity faces a crisis, however, in the light of the uncalled for end of those who attempted to act in solidarity and to whom we might even owe our existence as a consequence. As they are exterminated the question arises if and in what way one can act in future in such a way that they remain in memory; in such a way that, even in the face of the death of the other, it still remains true that the acknowledgment of the other establishes the possibility of my identity (Peukert 1976:341)?

In putting the question as to the acknowledgment of the other, even in death, the acceptance of total annihilation is rejected. Such an anamnestic, thus communicative activity becomes the basis for the possibility of maintaining myself. I can acknowledge the other, even in death, only as long as, in my act of remembrance in solidarity I anticipate God as the one who keeps the other from total annihilation.

The conclusion is clear: if the reality of God can be identified and described only in the praxis of an acknowledgment of the other which includes death, then religion and communicative praxis are irrevocably intertwined¹⁰. The acknowledgment of the other, even in death, the immediacy of such an acknowledgment in which God is accepted as the one who does not turn the other over to total annihilation, provides me with the basis to hope to be acknowledged myself.

It is clear that Peukert defines the boundaries of communicative activity on the basis of its finite structure. Communicative activity becomes aporetical when it does not emanate from the experience of one's finiteness and that of the other. It becomes aporetical when it reflects on universal solidarity but not against the background of the historical dimension of humanity, thereby failing to recognize the history of those unjustly sacrificed. This experience of human limitations, according to Peukert, is resonated in religious traditions, particularly the Jewish Christian tradition where in the Exodus tradition, the prophetic tradition and in the gospel of Jesus Christ whose radical input in favour of others brought his own destruction with it. In this tradition faith, grounded in remembrance, is an anticipation of absolute, saving freedom which takes shape and is embodied in communicative activity.

From the foregoing we can conclude that the significance of religion for pedagogical activities lies in its individual social and historical contribution to a normative praxis within the framework of universal solidarity. At the same time it is clear that religion defined in a way which emphasises its liberating, prophetic impulses and its meaning for processes of successful development of identity and interactive acknowledgment through relationships, stands in sharp contrast to the present condition of religion in society. Where in present society the significance of religion is acknowledged it normally is within the framework of its function as 'holiday'-religion, which either serves to relieve us from the tediousness of everyday routine or marks biographically important stations of one's way through life. The

10 "Im solidarischen, zeitlichen, auf den Tod zugehenden kommunikativen Handeln wird vorgegriffen auf eine Wirklichkeit, von der durch den eigenen praktischen Vollzug behauptet wird, dass sie den anderen retten kann und rettet. Der Vollzug der eigenen Existenz im kommunikativen Handeln ist dann faktisch, im Handeln, die Behauptung einer Wirklichkeit, die den anderen nicht einfach zu einem schon Überholten Faktum der Geschichte werden lässt." (Peukert 1976:341)

practical and 'real-life' significance of religion, it being an integral part of the communicative processes of relationships seems to function only in those small religious groups who for political reasons find themselves on the periphery of popular society. In this respect new conservative theories about religion are correct in as much as religion is by enlarge appropriated by society only on the basis of its functionality. This of course is the consequence of a process over a long period of time in modernity whereby systematically the locus of religion was transferred from institutional and social structures to the individual.

The process of the transfer of the locus of religion has its parallel in a process of destabilisation of social relations. Franz Xaver Kaufmann, sociologist of religion at Freiburg, writes in this connection:

"The apories of modernity express themselves most explicitly in the paradox that on the one hand modernity makes room for freedom and individuality while on the other it undermines the presupposition and development of a strong individuality or personal identity" (Kaufmann 1989:267):

Following the same line of reasoning as above and linking religion to communicative praxis, Kaufmann sees a relationship between a growing loss of religious meaning in society and the crisis of intersubjective identity. The sophisticated forms of subjectivity required by modern society depend on intersubjective mediation:

"... which seems to disappear in tandem with the weakening of the presuppositions, hitherto religiously informed, for the development of individuality." (Kaufmann 1989:270).

If this is true, the presuppositions and aims of religious education should be radically different. Imparting knowledge of religion can no longer serve primarily the interests of religious institutions. It can no longer convey the 'property claims' of a particular religious institution. Rather, religious education has to face the challenge to contribute to the re-establishment of human subjectivity and structures within which stable, sympathetic social relations are possible.

Religion is an integral component of communicative praxis. It has to speak about the acknowledgment of the other, about promoting the possibilities for development and life of the other, about the opening of space for the other to maneuver; and it has to embody such speaking in the reality of praxis. This kind of praxis cannot be reduced to one on one interactivities, but must also focus on the transformation of more complex relationships, particularly those which allow or impede acknowledgment, participation and the development of identity.

4. Consequences for the practical, dialogical religious education

4.1 Dialogical religious education must be understood as a praxis-oriented pedagogics of religion within the framework of a critical science of education.

In the foregoing I have attempted to argue that religious education first and foremost must be understood as part and parcel of the general science of education. This is the only way in which religious education can link to the general theory of education and

contribute to the transformation of relationships into a more humane dispensation. However, religious education as 'property claim' by churches is excluded. The question which has to be dealt with in the education and learning process is:

"...how, in the light of the crises inherited from the process of modernisation, lifestyles can be developed and founded in which the necessary changes in individual, social and ecological relationships take shape and are demonstrated in the praxis of education itself" (Mette 1994:105).

Within the framework of a critical science of education religious education must widen its vistas. No longer can only the institutionally significant forms of religious expression be the subject of study, but also all religious phenomena in society at large. Particularly in as far as the teaching of religion in schools is concerned, this means that attention should be paid to all forms of world views and ideologies which seek to interpret the sense of life and express themselves in a wide variety of new forms of religiosity.

This will of course entail a critical examination of such religious expressions themselves. There always is a (healthy) tension between a phenomenological approach and an ideology-critical analysis. Religious education - as critical and practical science - should in this respect be lead by a comprehensive, social perspective. Although it deals with subjective praxes, the aim of religious education is a liberatory *communicative* praxis. In this respect, in particular, the challenge for religious education is to fulfill its task to critique social processes which make it ever more difficult for youth to establish their identity. In this the aim is also to transform subjective orientations and social structures and to contribute to a common good characterised by liberty and innovative ways to deal with systemic contradictions¹¹.

4.2 Religious education aims to infuse the transformatory potential of religion into dialogical teacher-pupil relations.

It seems inevitable to conclude that, within the framework of a radical pluralisation of societal relations, religious education cannot aim to impart norms, values and role model in a normative way on the basis of an unquestioned concept of religion. A dialogical religious pedagogics should not enforce religion on pupils, but help them to sensibly appropriate the pluralisation and subjectivity of modern society. In other words, the general weakening of the normative powers of religious traditions cannot be counteracted by a normative authoritarian approach to religious education. In fact there is much which points in the direction that the possibility of religious learning depends on the latitude given to the pupils by means of a communicative and interactive approach in order to establish an understanding of themselves and the world in which they live. This means that religion is relevant also to questions of identity, which emanate from relationships of inter-subjective acknowledgment, as well as questions which arise from the need to develop independently one's self-understanding and are accompanied by a process of reciprocating participation.

11 "Die Religionspädagogik erhebt Einspruch dagegen, dass das Leben in all seinen Bezügen banalisiert zu werden droht; indem sie durch das Einbringen von Religion den normalen sozialisatorischen Alltag unterbricht, wehrt sie sich dagegen, dass der Mensch bereits in der Erziehung auf seine gesellschaftlich erwünschten Verhaltensmuster reduziert wird und somit die affektiven bzw. Pathischen Dimensionen seines Handelns nicht mehr leben und erleben darf." (Mette 1983:281)

Seen in this light, the relevance of religious explanations depend on whether they succeed to link in a plausible and practical way with the pupils' process of discovery and appropriation of a meaning and life orientation which would foster relationships of solidarity and communication and would protect against the harmful dimensions of life. The teaching of religion in this way takes its point of departure in a dialogical structure of learning and teaching whereby pupils are not confronted with religion and religious traditions in a prescriptive way as immutable canons of knowledge, but as a potential of meaning which could help them understand their own lives and could serve as a resource from which a positive identity and life-style could be generated.

4.3 The concept of dialogue in a religious education is compatible with a critical concept of intercultural and inter-religious learning.

To my mind the above structure of a religious education in which the process of learning is characterised by an egalitarian solidarity is in principle compatible with a critical approach to intercultural and inter-religious learning. The above understanding of religious education therefore implies an approach to intercultural and inter-religious learning in which the acknowledgment of various religious understandings is promoted and the dialogical interaction between them is taken as the point of departure for religious learning as a whole¹². This means that intercultural and inter-religious reciprocity becomes the focus. The primary aim of learning within the framework of an inter-religious dialogical approach to religious education then becomes the acceptance and acknowledgment of the unknown religiosity over and against which the development of one's own religious self-understanding becomes possible (Lott 1992).

Dialogue within the context of religious education is something else than reconessionalising the pupil. Religious education is not the vehicle to strengthen or to establish the claim of a particular religious community. Dialogue is rather the premise and structure of a concept of education in which the attention given to religions and worldviews is part of a process of creative self-reflection and cosmization of young people who now and in future have to cope with challenges unknown to previous generations.

12 Reciprocity in this case is to be understood as both selfinterpretation and understanding of the other. A change of perspective should be the result. Pupils should learn to see themselves as others see them but also how others see themselves. (See Ziebertz/Van der Ven 1994)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- E. Arens, Konturen einer praktischen Religionstheorie, in: E. Arens (Ed.) *Anerkennung der Anderen. Eine theologische Grunddimension interkultureller Kommunikation*, Freiburg-Basel-Vienna 1995.
- G. Auernheimer, *Einführung in die interkulturelle Erziehung*, Darmstadt 1990.
- G. Auernheimer, *Der sogenannte Kulturkonflikt. Orientierungsprobleme ausländischer Jugendlicher*, Frankfurt/ New York 1988.
- M. Brumlik, *Advokatorische Ethik: Zur Legitimation pädagogischer Eingriffe*, Bielefeld 1992.
- J. Fowler, *Glaubensentwicklung. Perspektiven für Seelsorge und kirchliche Bildungsarbeit*, München 1989.
- I. Gogolin/A. Kalpakka, *Interkulturelle Bildung - Über die Fähigkeit zum Umgang mit Verschiedenheit*, in: *Pädagogik* 5/ 1993.
- F. Hamburger, Der Kulturkonflikt und seine pädagogische Kompensation, in: E. J. Dittrich / F.-O. Radtke (Eds); *Ethnizität. Wissenschaft und Minderheiten*, Opladen 1990.
- W. Haussmann, "... in den Schuhen eines anderen gehen"?!- Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Öffnung für andere Religionen im konfessionellen Religionsunterricht am Beispiel Islam, in: J. Lähnemann (Ed), *Das Wiedererwachen der Religionen als pädagogische Herausforderung - Interreligiöse Erziehung im Spannungsfeld von Fundamentalismus und Säkularismus*, Hamburg 1992.
- W. Haussmann, *Dialog mit pädagogische Konsequenzen. Perspektiven der Begegnung von Christentum und Islam für die schulische Arbeit*, Hamburg-Rissen 1993.
- J. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, Frankfurt a.M. 1981.
- A. Honneth, Das Andere der Gerechtigkeit. Habermas und die ethische Herausforderung der Postmoderne, in: *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 1994.
- F.X. Kaufmann, *Religion und Moderne. Sozialwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*, Tübingen 1989.
- W. Keckeisen, Kritische Erziehungswissenschaft, in *Enzyklopädie Erziehungswissenschaft*, Vol 1, Stuttgart 1983, pp. 117-136.
- P. Koslowski (Ed), *Die religiöse Dimension der Gesellschaft. Religion und ihre Theorie*, Tübingen, 1985.
- I. Lohmann / W. Weisse (Eds), *Dialog zwischen den Kulturen. Erziehungshistorische und religionspädagogische Gesichtspunkte interkultureller Bildung*, Münster / New York, 1994.
- J. Lott, Die Beschäftigung mit fremder Religiosität als Bestandteil eigener religiöser Sozialisation. Religionsunterricht und interkulturelles Lernen, in J. Lott (Ed), *Religion - warum und wozu in der Schule?* Weinheim, 1992.
- H. Lübke, *Religion nach der Aufklärung*, Graz 1986.
- N. Luhmann, *Funktion der Religion*, Frankfurt a.M. 1977.
- H. Luther, *Religion und Alltag. Bausteine zu einer Praktischen Theologie des Subjekts*, Stuttgart 1992.

- N. Mette, *Voraussetzungen christlicher Elementarerziehung*. Vorbereitende Studien zu einer Religionspädagogik des Kleinkindalters, Düsseldorf 1983.
- N. Mette, Identität in universaler Solidarität. Zur Grundlegung einer religionspädagogischen Handlungstheorie, in: *Jahrbuch der Religionspädagogik*, Vol 6, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989, pp. 27-55.
- N. Mette, *Religionspädagogik*, Düsseldorf 1994.
- K. Mollenhauer, *Theorien zum Erziehungsprozess*. München 1972.
- K.-E. Nipkow, Religion in der Pädagogik, in *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 1992, pp. 215-233.
- F. Oser / P. Gmünder, *Der Mensch- Stufen seiner religiösen Entwicklung. Ein strukturgegenetischer Ansatz*, Zürich / Köln 1984.
- H. Peukert, *Wissenschaftstheorie- Handlungstheorie- Fundamentale Theologie*. Analysen zu Ansatz und Status theologischer Theoriebildung, Frankfurt a.M. 1988, Englisch: *Science, Action, and Fundamental Theology*. Toward a Theology of Communicative Action, Cambridge (Mass.) 1984.
- H. Peukert. Kontingenzerfahrung und Identitätsfindung. Bemerkungen zu einer Theorie der Religion und zur Analytik religiös dimensionierter Lernprozesse, in J. Blank / G. Hasenhüttl (Eds), *Erfahrung, Glaube und Moral*, Düsseldorf 1982.
- H. Peukert, Kritische Theorie und Pädagogik, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 30 1983, pp. 195-217.
- H. Peukert, Über die Zukunft von Bildung, in: *Frankfurter Hefte*, FH-extra 6 1984, pp. 129-137.
- H. Peukert, Kommunikatives Handeln, Systeme der Machtsteigerung und die unvollendeten Projekte Aufklärung und Theologie, in: E. Arens (Ed), *Habermas und die Theologie. Beiträge zur theologischen Rezeption, Diskussion und Kritik der Theorie kommunikativen Handelns*, Düsseldorf 1989, Englisch: Enlightenment and Theology as Unfinish Projects, in: D.S. Browning / F. Schüssler Fiorenza (eds.), *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology*, New York 1992.
- H. Peukert, Die Erziehungswissenschaft der Moderne und die Herausforderungen der Gegenwart, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 28. Beiheft (1992), Englisch: Present Challenges to the Educational Theory of Modernity, in: *Education* 47 (1993), pp. 7-24.
- H. Peukert, Basic Problems of a Critical Theory of Education, in: *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol 27, No.2, pp. 159-170,
- U. Peukert, *Interaktive Kompetenz und Identität. Zum Vorrang sozialen Lernens im Vorschulalter*, Düsseldorf 1979.
- F.-O. Radtke, Zehn Thesen über die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen interkultureller Erziehung, in: *Zeitschrift for Pädagogik* 23, Beiheft 1988, pp. 50-56.
- F. Schweitzer, *Lebensgeschichte und Religion. Religiöse Entwicklung und Erziehung im Kindes- und Jugendalter*, München 1987.
- H. Thiersch, Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik, in: *Enzyklopädie Erziehungswissenschaft*, Vol 1, Stuttgart 1983, pp. 81-116.