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Mutuality and Intersubjective Dialogue in Religious Education

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Wzajemność i międzypodmiotowy dialog
w edukacji religijnej

This paper is situated in a particular temporal context of massive, interrelated, and unprecedented, global shifts in the physical, economic, and political spectra that generates precarity and a turbulent, white-water milieu around human affairs. Education is not immune to the forces in play. We are in a time where neoliberal corporatism has expanded globally and has encroached on all levels of education with a self-serving, static, instrumental pedagogy. In an article assessing modern, widespread abandonment of critical thinking and redirection of reading, Chad Wellmon describes the current trend of digitizing literature and reducing its breadth. He describes a shift from far-reading to close-reading ‘topologies’ at a time when books and literature are being reduced to digital objects. He recalls those prescient, early moderns bemoaning “the loss of coherent and fully integrated forms of life”.

[From] Friedrich Nietzsche’s last man, Max Weber’s disenchantment, and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s lament for a lost *Lebenswelt* (‘world of lived experience’) we can add the loss of ‘literature’ and the reduction of reading to a rationalized, technically determined process bereft of meaning.¹

¹ C. Wellmon, “Sacred Reading: From Augustine to the Digital Humanists”, *Hedgehog Review* 2015, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 72.

KEY WORDS

hermeneutics, ethics, social justice, critical pedagogy, intersubjectivity, neurolinguistic interactions, genetic phenomenology, tripartite intersubjectivity

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hermeneutyka, etyka, sprawiedliwość społeczna, pedagogia krytyczna, międzypodmiotowość, interakcje neurolingwistyczne, fenomenologia genetyczna, trójpodział międzypodmiotowości

Broad, far-reaching reading of texts and open dialogue in today's education systems are largely dismissed in favor of filling-the-pail 'teaching.' There is increasingly little time or place for phronetic teaching and practicing "*Bildung* where espoused values are tested; and where trusted, informed feedback is exchanged".² Today's individualized students toiling to meet corporate-driven curriculum objectives are not given the opportunity to dialogically and hermeneutically explore shared "horizons constituted by history and language".³

This paper is situated in a time when most educational systems are under enormous pressure to align pedagogies with the interests of ideological hegemons controlling governments. Parochial religious primary and secondary schools not taking government subsidies, and colleges not reliant on government or corporate research contracts or support, can more easily preserve education that includes the more hermeneutic, humanistic, and ethical side to life for their students to flourish as 'coherent and fully integrated' human beings in communion.

This paper attempts to briefly survey some of the deep roots of three modes of being-in-the-world and link them to samples of secular and ecumenical practices and methods from a range of social science traditions and endeavors that can enhance *mutuality*, *intersubjectivity*, and *dialogue* to establish a new pedagogical platform that is sustainable and extendable. The confluence of these three praxes of being can form a strong communal framework for adaption of newer and emerging learning and creative strategies (such as those few included here under italic subheadings) which will be needed to survive democratically in the rising global climate disruption and neoliberal regime.

Mutuality

The intentional practice of mutuality has a rich history in religious communities. Pastoral care ministries in the tradition of Stephen Ministries and BeFriender Ministries use the relational paradigm of mu-

² D.J. Shuster, *The Confluence of Intersubjectivity and Dialogue in Postmodern Organizational Workgroups* [unpublished master's thesis], St. Paul 2006, p. 6.

³ *Between the Human and the Divine: Philosophical and Theological Hermeneutics*, ed. A. Wierciński, International Institute for Hermeneutics, Hermeneutic Series, vol. 1, Toronto 2002, p. xiv.

tuality for spiritual healing. Mutuality is often used as the exclusive modality for lay ministers relating to those visited. It is defined as a “respectful give-and-take between people with the experience and frame of reference of each [to be] held worthy of dignity and respect”.⁴

There are two levels of mutuality that, if practiced with integrity and authenticity, can lead to formation of genuine mutual relationship and spiritual growth. Level 1 combines the “telling the story appropriately” by those ministered to, with “understanding the story accurately from the [minister’s] perspective”.⁵ This level is accomplished with active listening skills, total attention to the story, use of open-ended questions, and suspension of all judgment and comparison to the minister’s “assumptive world” of ideas and values. After a solid base of trust and compassion is established and the one visited feels understood and empowered, the minister can gently lead the mutual relationship into Level 2. The complementary elements of this level of mutuality are “giving feedback respectfully” and “receiving feedback with a measure of openness”.⁶

Level 2: Mutuality occurs when the minister can safely share a reaction to what was heard in the shared context of each person’s assumptive world. It is done carefully with extreme reverence for the other’s dignity and validity, and is always introduced with the form “I feel _____ [*a feeling word*] when you say _____ [*a non-evaluative story detail heard*] because I _____ [*reference to a detail of one’s own assumptive world*]”.⁷ Brief, appropriate self-disclosure is offered as a contrasting thought only, and not as a persuasion to a new worldview. At this point in the relationship the minister remembers that the assumptive world of each party makes possible, and at the same time limits, the interpretation of what each has actually heard from the other. That interpretation in any case will affect, alter, or transform the assumptive world of each in an iterative and self-reflexive manner. This level of mutuality need not be reached expediently, but when and if it is achieved, it forms a completely mutual and authen-

⁴ BeFriender Ministry, *BeFriender Ministry coordinator manual*, St. Paul 1997, p. 2:4.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 2:5.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 2:15.

tic relationship. That relationship can catalyze spiritual healing and ontological growth with both.

The cultivation of trust for Level 1 Mutuality requires disciplined confidentiality. Going forward, empathy is the tool with which to achieve Level 2 Mutuality. Sweeten, Ping, and Sweeten define empathy as a rigorous balancing of “thought” with “feeling”—and of “needing to be right” with “needing to be needed”.⁸

A powerfully generative communication and learning methodology now in widespread use for 28 years in leading-edge organizations, Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has its roots in mutuality and democracy. AI has steadily evolved to become a *trans-valuing* process of bringing all voices into the room to find a ‘life-giving’ path together forward in an indeterminate world of *impermanence, suffering, and finitude* with positive, co-constructive spirit.⁹ AI can be a mode of operation for schools that begin early education with relationships fostered with mutuality and joy. One of its founders, David Cooperrider, speaks of AI as an “approach to life centric and strength based, instead of deficit based and problematizing change...”.¹⁰

In their founding paper, David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva¹¹ steered action research away from its “pervasive deficiency/problem orientation” (24) toward a generative model of appreciative inquiry founded on four principles. They state that “research into the social potential of organizational life should [1] begin with appreciation, [2] ... be applicable [3] ... be provocative, [and 4] ... be collaborative” (27). “Much of the theory, implicit and explicit, behind the effects of AI focuses on the bonding, healing and enlivening qualities of appreciative dialogue on social relations”.¹²

⁸ Ibidem, p. 2:5.

⁹ See K. Gergen, “Forward”, in: *Organizational Generativity: The Appreciate Inquiry Summit and a Scholarship of Transformation*, ed. D.L. Cooperrider, D.P. Zandee, L.N. Godwin, M. Avital, B. Boland, (Advances in Appreciative Inquiry, vol. 4), Bingley 2013, pp. xxi–xxiii.

¹⁰ D.L. Cooperrider, D.P. Zandee, L.N. Godwin, M. Avital, B. Boland, *Organizational Generativity: The Appreciative Inquiry Summit and a Scholarship of Transformation*, (Advances in Appreciative Inquiry, vol. 4), Bingley 2013, p. 5.

¹¹ D.L. Cooperrider, S. Srivastva, “Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life”, *Research in Organizational Change and Development* 1987, vol. 1, pp. 129–169.

¹² G. Bushe, *Clear Leadership: How Outstanding Leaders Make Themselves Understood, Cut Through the Mush, and Help Everyone Get Real at Work*, Palo Alto, CA 2001, p. 11.

Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity has commonly been associated with consensual agreement, participation, and co-creation—each closely related in social interaction. A review of the literature reveals many other perspectives on the term as it evolves from historical traditions such as the I–Thou and I–Other dyads of Martin Buber¹³. Definitions and names for intersubjectivity also shift with the perspectives of the fields, sciences, and disciplines that study and utilize it. The study of human group life has a multitude of “roots, variations, issues and debates”¹⁴ that run through the gamut of social sciences. One simple definition of intersubjectivity is the shared meaning generated through the social, physical, neurolinguistic, and dialogical interactions of people, however this understanding is not sufficient to appreciate its polysemic nature and growing significance in many social sciences.

Nelson Coelho and Luis Figueiredo¹⁵ credit Edmund Husserl with turning the tide on modern philosophical tradition that supposes the “I” as self-constituted and presuppose the subject/object opposition as an *a priori* given. The authors also point to a number of other philosophers—including who define intersubjectivity in similar fashion to Husserl as “a sense of interpersonal communion between subjects who are attuned to one another in their emotional states and in their respective expressions”. Secondly the authors distinguish Jürgen Habermas’ understanding of intersubjectivity “as that which defines joint attention to objects of reference in a shared domain of linguistic or extra-linguistic conversation”. A third interpretation of intersubjectivity offered is “the capacity for inferences to be established concerning the intentions, beliefs and feelings of others” as related to *Einfühlung* [or] empathy. A fourth interpretation Coelho and Figueiredo cite from Jolivet is “the situation in which, through their mutual relations, [two or

¹³ M. Buber, *I and Thou*, transl. R.G. Smith, New York 1937.

¹⁴ R.C. Prus, *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research: Intersubjectivity and the Study of Human Lived Experience*, Albany, NY 1996, p. 10.

¹⁵ N.E. Coelho, L.C. Figueiredo, “Patterns of Intersubjectivity in the Constitution of Subjectivity: Dimensions of Otherness”, *Culture and Psychology* 2003, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 193–208.

more] subjects form a society or community or a common field and can speak of us”.¹⁶

The authors consider all four definitions as facets of intersubjectivity that are simultaneously in play. As many writers and theorists have pointed out, Coelho and Figueiredo only cite Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations* as their source of tribute to the ground shift in perspective which phenomenology brings to the value and praxis of intersubjectivity. This leaves the challenge of using these insights, in conjunction with Husserl’s more generative phenomenology revealed in recently translated later works.

Many thinkers have predicated their understandings and disagreements about intersubjectivity on Husserl’s earlier static phenomenology, however it is his genetic phenomenology which implicates temporality, the streaming, living present, and community to open the way for new conceptualizing of relationality¹⁷. Donohoe’s explication of Husserl’s passive and active genesis of the ego substantially furthers the understanding of transcendental intersubjectivity stemming from its founding in the prepredicative realm of constitution. Because “there is [Husserl’s] pre-individual, passive givenness [...] it is possible to speak of a coincidence between ego and Other”¹⁸. This is a foundation for intersubjectivity, mutuality, and the shared generation of realities. Constructivism with its trivial, radical, social, cultural, critical, and constructionist dimensions—as described by student Martin Dougiamas¹⁹—seems to be a valid and useful alternative to Kantian epistemology and not mutually exclusive to the relational perspective we have followed here.

The field of human ethology illuminates the earliest evidence of intersubjectivity in human ontogeny and may, in the future, provide ways to enhance or accelerate its development. Stein Bråten²⁰ correlates three levels of ontogenetic development in infants that res-

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 196.

¹⁷ J. Donohoe, *Husserl on Ethics and Intersubjectivity: From Static to Genetic Phenomenology*, Amherst, NY 2004.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 88.

¹⁹ M. Dougiamas, *A journey into constructivism*, 1998, November. Available at: <<http://dougiamas.com/writing/constructivism.html#faces>>.

²⁰ S. Bråten, “Participant Perception of Others’ Acts: Virtual Otherness in Infants and Adults”, *Culture and Psychology* 2003, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 263.

onate with Coelho and Figueiredo's delineation of trans-subjective intersubjectivity. A "primary level of sensorimotor attunement and interpersonal communion in the mode of felt intimacy prevailing throughout life" begins in the first two months after birth. A "secondary level of object-oriented intersubjective attunement and joint attention to objects ... [begins] at around nine months of age when infants identify others as agents and movers of objects". The "tertiary level of intersubjective understanding [entails] first-order mental understanding of self and others in representational mediacy, mediated by personal pronouns and a sense of verbal self and others in symbolic conversation" beginning between 18 and 24 months, and "second-order mental understanding of others' minds" beginning between 3 and 6 years of age.

Consciousness Studies

From the field of consciousness studies, Christian de Quincey situates intersubjectivity in second-person, I-Thou perspectives. He places subjectivity in first-person I-I perspective of personal "contemplation". He places objectivity in third-person I-It perspective "as in study of the brain"²¹. In the same text he cites Francis Jacques' *Tripartite Intersubjectivity* which can be described as an I-Thou-He/She triad to allow for "presence of absence—the felt presence of the departed other [...] how it is when an absent spouse or boss hovers in the background of many conversations"²². De Quincey delineates his second-person perspective into three meanings for intersubjectivity:

Intersubjectivity – 1. *We connect by communicating*. This starts by assuming the Cartesian notion of self-encapsulated subjects, individual "I"s who connect with each other by *exchanging physical signals* (for example by speaking or writing). Individuals form relationships through communication. We could call this "*linguistic*" intersubjectivity—and this is the weakest meaning of the three.

Intersubjectivity – 2. *We condition each other*. Individual subjects don't merely exchange signals; we change each other's sense of self. By engaging

²¹ C. de Quincey, *Radical Knowing: Understanding Consciousness through Relationship*, Rochester, VT 2005, p. 2.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 200.

and participating in communication, we *condition* each other's experience. This is "*mutual conditioning*" intersubjectivity—and is mutual strength.

Intersubjectivity – 3. *We co-create each other.* This is the most radical of all the types of intersubjectivity because it means that individuals don't merely influence and change each other by communicating and participating in relationships, but literally *co-create* each other's existence. Rather than connecting by exchanging signals and informing each other ("linguistic"), or coming together in relationships and changing each other ("mutual conditioning"), this strongest meaning implies that *relationships are primary* and that our sense of individuality is secondary, arising from a network of relationships.²³

Working in the field of ethnographic research, Herbert Blumer created the term "symbolic interaction" in 1937 to describe the intersubjective phenomena of human group life. Blumer fully credited his insights on the reflective, interactive and emergent nature of group life to his mentor George Herbert Mead. Combining Mead's position that society is essentially an ongoing process of action with the hermeneutic principles of Wilhelm Dilthey, Blumer created an analytical research method of interpreting actions and signals between persons to determine how each is influenced by the other. Prus cites Dilthey for clear and unequivocal direction:

Dilthey stressed the fundamentally *intersubjective* nature of human behavior: that human life is group life and is built on a *sharedness of understandings*. Interpretation [...] depends pivotally on making sense of the other by reference to the community context in which the actions of the other are embedded. A self without another, an outer without an inner—these are merely senseless words.²⁴

Blumer's method, known as Chicago-style symbolic interaction, is scalable from dyads to large groups. His post-Cartesian interactionist framework, as influenced by Mead and Dilthey, is strictly founded on interpretation of actions and language, which is not to say it's inconsistent with the study of emotionality (i.e. fear, shame, etc.) as a generic social process. "[The framework] embraces equally well such relationships as cooperation, conflict, domination, exploitation, consensus, disagreement, closely knit identification, and indifferent concern for one another".²⁵

²³ Ibidem, p. 183–184.

²⁴ R.C. Prus, *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research*, op. cit. p. 35.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 2.

The interactionist school of thought which began with the work of Mead and was advanced by Blumer and others, takes as a given that those who interact with words and action intersubjectively share a common reality at that particular point in time. “Intersubjectivity is [...] a social accomplishment, a set of understandings sustained in and through the shared assumptions of interaction and recurrently sustained in processes of typification”.²⁶ Mead was a contemporary of Husserl’s though there is no evidence they knew of each other’s work. Resonant with Husserl’s “streaming, living present” is the “specious present”²⁷ of Mead whose theory of the emergence of mind and self out of the social process of communication became the foundation of the symbolic interactionist school. It is the moment-to-moment impressions that become sedimented and constitutive of the ego to form habitualities of behavior within dyads and groups. “Culture is the emergence of pattern in the form of habits. What we call culture is that aspect of our emergent interaction that is iterated as continuity”²⁸.

Intersubjectivity has been studied in the field of neurobiology. Vittorio Gallese describes a new hypothetical tool named the shared manifold of intersubjectivity “that can be empirically tested at [three] levels both in healthy and psychotic individuals”.²⁹ Three operational levels of the shared manifold are: the phenomenological, the functional, and the subpersonal. Gallese claims that the implicit recognition humans have for one another has a neurological basis in identification mapping of specialized F5 area visuomotor neurons of the ventral premotor cortex shared with macaque monkeys, and with the homologously comparable Broca’s region in humans, known as mirror neurons. “Mirror neurons require, in order to be activated by visual stimuli, an interaction between the action’s agent . . . and its object”. Gallese and his colleagues propose that “mirror neurons may constitute a neural mechanism *enabling implicit action*

²⁶ J.F. Gubrium, J.A. Holstein, “Analyzing Interpretive Practice”, in: *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. N.K. Denzin, Y., S. Lincoln, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks, CA 1994, pp. 487–508.

²⁷ R.D. Stacey, “Organizations as Complex Responsive Processes of Relating”, *Innovative Management* 2003, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 27–39.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

²⁹ V. Gallese, “The Roots of Empathy: The Shared Manifold Hypothesis and the Neural Basis of Intersubjectivity”, *Psychopathology* 2003, vol. 36, p. 178.

understanding".³⁰ Human brain imaging experiments have revealed an extended sensorimotor integration process that "instantiates an 'internal copy' of [intentional] actions utilized not only to generate and control goal-related behaviors, but also to provide—at a pre-reflexive and prelinguistic level—a meaningful account of behaviors performed by other individuals".³¹

Citing Lipps and Husserl on their perspectives of empathy, Gallese conceives *Einfühlung* as "an intentional form of perception by analogy".³² Gallese's hypothesis is that this neural substrate of mirror neurons, when activated, creates a "*subpersonally instantiated* common space" that "could [...] underpin our capacity to share feelings and emotions with others [...] that [in turn] can be empathized and [...] implicitly understood".³³

These studies continue and have not yet shown how damage to the mirror neurons may modulate intersubjective capacity.³⁴ One recent exception has been MRI studies of autistic children by Mirella Dapretto and colleagues that suggest a correlation of reduced activity in, and blood flow to, the mirror neuron system.³⁵ Autistics are known to lack of intersubjective awareness.

The hormones oxytocin and vasopressin have been found to intermediate social interactions between individuals. Lack of parental bonding in the first two years of child development deprives the child's ability to produce oxytocin later in life. Oxytocin elevates trust levels between individuals. Neglected children exhibit low levels of oxytocin after efforts to comfort them. The researchers also found low levels of vasopressin in adopted children. "This hormone, they say, is critical for recognizing individuals as familiar, an essential step in forming social bonds".³⁶

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 173.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 174.

³² Ibidem, p. 175.

³³ Ibidem, p. 176

³⁴ B. Bower, "Goal-Oriented Brain Cells: Neurons May Track Action as a Prelude to Empathy", *Science News* 2005, no. 167(18), April 30, pp. 273–288.

³⁵ B. Bower, "Mirror Cells Fading Spark: Empathy Related Neurons May Turn off in Autism", *Science News* 2005, no. 168(24), December 10, pp. 370–383.

³⁶ N. Wade, "Exploring a Hormone for Caring", *New York Times* 2005, November 22. Retrieved from: <www.nytimes.com>.

The drug ecstasy (3-4 methylenedioxyamphetamine or MDMA) is a synthetic, psychoactive, and neurotoxic (produces brain lesions) drug used illegally as a recreational drug. It is reported to produce a syntonic and empathic effect among and between individuals under its influence. No studies could be found linking the drug to the shared manifold of intersubjectivity to date.

In research with collective resonance theory, Renee Levi describes collective resonance as “a felt sense of energy, rhythm, or intuitive knowing that occurs in a group of human beings and positively affects the way they interact toward a common purpose”.³⁷ Working with a diversity of participants and group contexts, Levi discovered a number of experiential phenomena that indicated the presence of biophysical rhythm entrainment [which matches the signature of intersubjectivity], and nine shifting factors that each worked at different energetic, physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual levels to shift the group into a felt collective resonance. They are: “vulnerability, silence, story, place/space, container contraction, shared intention, truth, sound/vibration, and spirit”³⁸.

Relational psychoanalysis has emerged since the 1980s as a distinct relational form of psychoanalysis that utilizes mutuality on both the conscious and unconscious levels to co-construct meaning between therapist and analysand and recognizes the uniqueness of the dyad. The positivist idea of the neutral authoritative expert has been displaced with an intersubjective, relational paradigm that allows for a wide range of mutuality, depending on the relative needs of the participants.

Within the evolving relational school of psychoanalytic theory Pamela Cooper-White describes a new reification praxis:

Meaning and therefore reality itself in the form of one’s worldview, is continually being co-constructed in relationships (including all helping relationships). Subjectivity is also no longer understood solely as the product of individual consciousness, but rather as a shared experience of reality in any given moment. Individual subjectivity is relativized in importance, in favor of a view toward *intersubjectivity* as a central (if not the central) area of knowing and experiencing of reality.³⁹

³⁷ R.A. Levi, “Group Magic: An Inquiry into Experiences of Collective Resonance”, *Reflections* 2005, vol. 6, no. 2/3, p. 21.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ P. Cooper-White, *Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Minneapolis 2004, p. 47.

Development of the relational form of psychoanalysis that utilizes mutuality on both the conscious and unconscious levels to co-construct meaning between therapist and analysand and recognize the uniqueness of the dyad is a complete paradigm shift. This has changed the approach to understanding (*Verstehen*) and the human condition in most of the social sciences by co-construction of realities through relationships situated in the temporal, streaming, living present. As each ego acquires sedimentations of experience, habitualities form to express language and behavior patterns and anchor expectations. Through dialogical relationship each offers a mirror for the other and alternate patterns to compare and differentiate those patterns within unfolding circumstances. If such relationship is authentic and mutual, the sharing is transcendental and leads from fragmentation toward a Gestalt. Absence of dialogue and mutuality leaves a subjectivity with the sedimentations of its narrow experience to become entrenched in habitualities and representations that are parochial and incongruent with others except in a most tangential way. This can calcify boundaries that impede the sharing of knowledge and development of larger truths and realities.

Gordon Wheeler offers intersubjectivity as a new way of thinking about evolutionary theory from the perspective of the relationship between organisms and not the features of the individual organism. Wheeler draws from experience in Gestalt psychology to eschew the atomistic trend in Western thought, and points to Homer's *Odysseus* as a prototype of evolved humanity as evidenced by the character's unique use of intersubjective skill. In Jung's analysis of the Book of Job, Wheeler shows how Job is defined through his relationship with God, and presumably with the counselors who visit to dissuade him from his intersubjective connection to God. Wheeler is also said to have postulated that the sudden increase in hominid brain size at the point of divergence from adult chimp brain size may have been driven by social complexity—contrasting it with the view of some archeologists who attribute the change to manual coordination with tools. An insightful quote taken from Wheeler is “I am loved, therefore I am”⁴⁰ revealing identity through relationship and a clear portal into

⁴⁰ G. Wheeler, *Intersubjectivity: A New Way of Thinking about Evolutionary Theory*, 2000, November. Unpublished conference summary of *Evolutionary The-*

the new paradigm of intersubjective relationality that is displacing the Cartesian positivism that has ruled organization science through most of the 20th century.

The polysemic nature of intersubjectivity as described by Coelho and Figueiredo, Bråten, de Quincey, and others are reconcilable, supplemental and without contradiction. The concept of symbolic interaction stemming from the work of G.H. Mead was synchronously developed at the same time Husserl defined intersubjectivity. The interactionist takes as a given that those who interact with words and action intersubjectively share a common reality at that particular point in time.

Emanuel Shapiro's⁴¹ 'unfulfilled need for twinship affirmation' from loss of 'extended family or tribal structure' will increasingly be addressed by classrooms, workgroups and teams in Western culture. Since 'twinship provides for the bonds that exist in a group' and 'intersubjectivity [...] provides the perspective with which to explore those bonds' the sense of belonging to these groups can promote healing and growth for individuals within them. Everyone needs a tribe and meaningful work to actualize. R. Naomi Remen's inequality model of helping *vs.* serving is easily addressed in learning groups where mentoring and assisting is defined as part of the job and where daily *quid pro quo* opportunities abound in a syntonic field of mutuality. An extended quote from Remen clarifies what can be used in effective teaching:

Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what is going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who's not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am. People feel this inequality. When we help we may inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem, their sense of worth, integrity and wholeness. When I help I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations

ory: *An Esalen Invitational Conference*, p. 3.

⁴¹ E. Shapiro, "Intersubjectivity in Archaic and Mature Twinship in Group Therapy", in: *Self-Experiences in Group: Intersubjective and Self-Psychological Pathways to Human Understanding*, eds. N.H. Harwood, M. Pines, London 1998, pp. 47–57.

serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. The wholeness in you is the same as the wholeness in me. Service is a relationship between equals.⁴²

This survey of thought on intersubjectivity points to its primary sources of ontology. Most first order derivative use of intersubjectivity is largely predicated on epistemes that find intersubjectivity as constituting of identity and knowledge. Inchoate biophysical theories appear to align with the philosophical, phenomenological, and psychological theories described, to form potentially useful schema for adaption of dialogue to intentionally modulate intersubjective fields. The most salient impression here is the continuity and lack of friction among the growing number of relational perspectives.

Dialogue

Dialogue comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Logos* means “the word”, or in our case we would think of the “meaning of the word”. And *dia* means “through”—it doesn’t mean “two”. [...] This derivation suggests [...] *a stream of meaning* flowing among, and through, and between us.⁴³

This understanding of the term dialogue⁴⁴ excludes the alternative definitions as a literary form and that of the technological form as in ‘dialogue box’. The earliest form of dialogue associated with intersubjectivity is the elenctic dialogue of Socrates otherwise known as the Socratic method of ethical inquiry as portrayed in Plato’s Dialogues.⁴⁵ The underlying purpose of the Dialogues is to educe moral accountability to the polis with a process of answering questions with more questions that invite the interlocutor to examine their anteced-

⁴² R.N. Remen, “In the Service of Life”, *Noetic Sciences Review* 1996, Spring, no. 37, p. 24.

⁴³ D. Bohm, *On Dialogue*, ed. L. Nichol, revised edition, London 1996, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Variations of the term ‘dialogue’ germane to this discussion (in the sense of verbal exchange of thought between two or more persons) from the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* 2004 (<http://www.oed.com/>) include dialogic, dialogical, dialogism, dialogist, dialogistic, dialogistical, dialogistically, dialogize, dialogous (rare), *dialogue de sourds*, dialoguer (rare), and dialoguize (obsolete).

⁴⁵ E. Hamilton, H. Cairns (eds.), *Plato: Collected Dialogues*. *Bollinger Series LXXI*, Princeton, NJ 1969.

ing premises. Socrates' use of the elenchus was intended to expedite the discovery of an interlocutor's predications and inconsistencies. As effective of a learning tool the elenchus was, it had the unintended consequence of humiliating those who wanted only to be seen as knowledgeable.

A modern and less threatening use of Socratic dialogue, which originated with the work of philosopher Leonard Nelson⁴⁶ is used to find specific answers to singular questions—often ethical in nature. It requires the participation of a facilitator trained in rhetoric and argumentation, and the goal is to arrive at consensus about a specific issue or problem among a small group.⁴⁷

Martin Buber⁴⁸ explained the perils of the “I and it” relationship shortly after Freud's major works were published, but it did not deter the hegemony of Freud's followers until recent years. Buber⁴⁹ found “[...] communicative openness is maximized in situations which have certain structural attributes. The most important such attribute is that the participants have a strong commitment to direct interpersonal relations. The emphasis on such communicative situations seems close to the more recent formulations by Jürgen Habermas”. For Habermas “the intersubjective sphere has an autonomous existence, beyond any one individual”⁵⁰ whereas Buber's focus was on the spiritual and transcendent qualities of dialogic exchange. Pamela Cooper-White⁵¹ also links Habermas with the spirit of this new paradigm: If reality is no longer seen as imposed, but co-constructed in relationship, then

⁴⁶ L. Nelson, *Socratic Method and Critical Philosophy: Selected Essays*, transl. T.K. Brown, New Haven 1949.

⁴⁷ H. Bolton, “Managers Develop Moral Accountability: The Impact of Socratic Dialogue”, *The Journal of Philosophy of Management* 2001, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 21–34. Available online at: <<http://www.boltenraining.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Hans-Bolten-The-Impact-of-Socratic-Dialogue.pdf>>.

⁴⁸ M. Buber, *I and Thou*, op. cit.

⁴⁹ M. Buber, *On Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity*, ed. S.N. Eisenstadt, Chicago 1992, pp. 11–12.

⁵⁰ H.H. Grady, S. Wells, “Toward a Rhetoric of Intersubjectivity: Introducing Jürgen Habermas”, *Journal of Advanced Composition* 1985, June, 6, pp. 33–47. Available at: <<http://www.jaonlinejournal.com/archives/vol6/grady-toward.pdf>>.

⁵¹ P. Cooper-White, *Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, op. cit., p. 188.

relations among people require a higher level of intentional listening and intentional speaking. The 'ideal speech situation' to use the language of Habermas, will be one of inter-subjectivity.

David Bohm identified the principal elements of modern dialogue and began a surge of interest in its utility beginning in 1970. Bohm conceived a multi-faceted dialogical worldview that encompassed a wide array of human experience. On its simplistic level, dialogue is seen as a process of creating meaning among individuals in a group; however as members of such a group become aware of each other's assumptions, the phenomena of shared new meaning unfolds.

A short excerpt from *On Dialogue* captures the dynamic of Bohmian dialogue:

In dialogue, when one person says something, the other person does not in general respond with exactly the same meaning as that seen by the first person. Rather, the meanings are only similar and not identical. Thus, when the second person replies, the first person sees a difference between what he meant and what the other person understood. On considering this difference, he may then be able to see something new, which is relevant both to his own views, and to those of the other person. And so it can go back and forth, with the continual emergence of a new content that is common to both participants. Thus [...] each person does not attempt to make common certain ideas or items of information that are already known to him. Rather it may be said that the two people are making something in common, i.e., creating something new together.⁵²

Bohm brought to the forefront this idea of emerging new content at a time when most interpretations of dialogue were narrowly focused. As with Socrates, shared consciousness of underlying impediments to authentic communication is the first priority of Bohm's process as described by his editor, Lee Nichol:

[...] dialogue is aimed at the understanding of consciousness *per se*, as well as exploring the problematic nature of day-to-day relationship and communication. This definition provides a foundation, a reference point [...] for the key components of dialogue: shared meaning; the nature of collective thought; the pervasiveness of fragmentation; the function of awareness; the micro-cultural context; undirected inquiry; impersonal fellowship; and the paradox of the observer and the observed.⁵³

⁵² D. Bohm, *On Dialogue*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵³ L. Nichol, "Forward", in: D. Bohm, *On Dialogue*, op. cit., p. xi.

In his work on religious reconciliation through dialogue, Leonard Swidler⁵⁴ contends we must shift to a relational model of truth that is deabsolutized in the manner of the Jain *anekintavada*⁵⁵ tradition that accepts many equifinal paths to the truth and “states that contrary alternatives can be true from different standpoints”. This epistemological relationality in the Swidlerian model links truths with the contextualized reality of each speaker-knower. “Relationality and mutuality are at the very foundation of this new model of truth and they point ineluctably to the need for dialogue”.

Work and learning groups positioned in hierarchical command-and-control oriented non-democratic organizations are constrained by directives, micromanagement, and the metaphors of superior layers of management. This precludes unrestrained meaning-making through dialogue because expressions must to some degree align to the egoistic and political pall over the intersubjective space. It is for this reason that the better locus for the dialogic container is found in emergent, postmodern organizations, or once-positivist organizations intentionally transforming toward the relational quantum paradigm. That new paradigm has brought forth the awareness that particles do not tend to exist except in relationship with others, and the same can be said for the self in relationship with others.⁵⁶ As Martin Luther King said: “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality”.⁵⁷ The quality of our actions is predicated on the quality or nature of our relationships.

⁵⁴ J. Sahadat, “A Swidlerian and Jain Prolegomenon to Dialogue”, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 1997, September 22, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 531–550.

⁵⁵ Jainism which dates back to the sixth century B.C.E. is a non-theistic Indian religion that offers a timely contribution to dialogue through its model of truth, fundamental to which is *anekintavada*: nonabsolutization or many-sidedness. This theory states that reality is complex with infinite sides or aspects, all of which can never be known through either the various categories of thought or sense perception or both. The Jain theory of many-sidedness presupposes a manifold number of viewpoints [...] hence, the true nature [of a thing] will always be beyond our grasp. The fundamental principle in Jain ethics, nonviolence (*ahimsa*), is an excellent complement to Swidler’s ground rules for dialogue. See J. Sahadat, “A Swidlerian and Jain Prolegomenon to Dialogue”, op. cit.

⁵⁶ M.J. Wheatley, *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time*, San Francisco 2005.

⁵⁷ M.L. King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963, August. Available at: <<http://www.uscrossier.org/pullias/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/king.pdf>>.

A plethora of epistemologies and communication praxes have been developed for industry during the steep rise in capitalism post WWII which have been slow to transcribe into academic pedagogy. Whereas there may be some variegated boundaries between pedagogy and andragogy, there has not been as much funding to adapt such corporate funded research to education during the current neoliberal age—which is ironic given that much of the research has been done in universities. Many universities fail to utilize organization development, organizational behavior, or dialogical principles researched by their own professors for corporate funding. One remembers a time when secondary schools taught about democracy in civics class until the cognitive dissonance caused by learning about democracy, while not being allowed to practice it in an authoritarian school system, was solved by dropping most civics classes altogether.

In the case of experimenting with teamwork technology, the pragmatic thing to do in this time of precarity is to encourage students to learn interdependently across the topology of diverse age, race, abilities, culture, wealth, and predisposition. This minefield can only be traversed hermeneutic, intersubjective dialogue.

Borrowing from the direction set for developing groups into teams by Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith⁵⁸ that—albeit unintentionally—lends well to the behavioral framework for fully intersubjective dialogue and learning:

- (1) Establish urgency and direction. [A natural sense of urgency—not externally imposed time-result pressure—stemming from the revelations can serve like a stochastic resonance reinforcing the contextual orientation. Providing general direction at the outset of dialogue prevents *non sequitur*].
- (2) Select members based on skills and skill potential, not personalities. [Similar personalities can conceivably reduce diversity of creative thought, whereas polarity can be dialogically fruitful].
- (3) Pay particular attention to first meetings and actions. [Expectations are best set early in the dialogic process to cement the group in uncontaminated unity of purpose].

⁵⁸ J.R. Katzenbach, D.K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High Performance Organization*, Boston 1993, pp. 119–127.

- (4) Set some clear rules of behavior [i.e. balancing ‘advocacy and inquiry’⁵⁹].
- (5) Set and seize upon a few immediate performance-oriented tasks and goals [—the topical part of the dialogue container].
- (6) Challenge the group regularly with fresh facts and information [—providing waves of opportunity for double-loop and triple-loop learning].
- (7) Spend lots of time together [—one of Bohm’s essential requirements for surfacing assumptions and thereby generating sensitivity⁶⁰].
- (8) Exploit the power of positive feedback, recognition, and reward. [Paraphrasing, validating, encouraging all lead to increased mutuality, generative dialogue, and new shared meaning.]

A good learning team can intentionally coordinate these actions to lay a strong groundwork for the dialogic container. William Issacs⁶¹ likens a successful team or workgroup using dialogue to an “improvisational jazz group” that creates new music simply by interacting with their unique skills and idioms within an intersubjective space. Getting learners engaged is an intersubjective process. A certain level of polarity through diversity enhances this process. David McCullough⁶² attributes America’s “historically great accomplishments” to its peoples’ unique ability to improvise [and one might add, its diversity].

There are many layers of scholarship to be reviewed in the literature, such as for one example, the caveat of Vincent Brown, Michael Tumeo, Timothy Larey and Paul Paulus⁶³ regarding the “negative effects of expressing feelings and emotion” in brainstorming sessions. A term Ivan Illich introduced is *conviviality* to mean “autonomous and creative intercourse among persons” and “individual freedom

⁵⁹ C. Argyris, *Knowledge for Action: A Guide to Overcoming Barriers to Organizational Change*, San Francisco 1993.

⁶⁰ D. Bohm, *Unfolding Meaning*, New York 1985; D. Bohm, *On Dialogue* op. cit.

⁶¹ W. Issacs, *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together: A Pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and in Life*, New York 1999.

⁶² D. McCullough, “Knowing History and Knowing Who We Are” (Abridged transcript of remarks delivered February 15, 2005 in Phoenix, AZ), *Imprimis* 2005 April, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 1–7.

⁶³ V. Brown, M. Tumeo, T.S. Larey, P.B. Paulus, “Modeling Cognitive Interactions During Group Brainstorming”, *Small Group Research* 1998, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 495–536. Available at: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1046496498294005>>.

realized in personal interdependence”.⁶⁴ As society moves into the post-industrial era, Illich theorized that industrial productivity and professional services will quickly fall short of helping people with their authentic needs. Religious or faith-based schools and universities not dependent on Federal funding and its political oversight can offer a way to develop learner-based pedagogies.

Chris Argyris developed action science for effective stewardship in any group or organization. Used as a framework for learning, it enables groups to become resilient to external changes. Values are fundamental in explaining action theory. Theories of action are governed by a set of values that provide the framework for the action strategies chosen. Thus, human beings are designing beings. They create, store, and retrieve designs that advise them how to act if they are to achieve their intentions and act consistently with their governing values. These designs are key to understanding human action. Argyris has developed two action models for organizational limited-learning systems that pivot on the potential embarrassment attached to actions.

- Model 1 tells individuals to craft their positions, evaluations, and attributions in ways that inhibit inquiries into them and tests of them with others’ logic. The consequences [...] are likely to be defensiveness, misunderstanding, and self-fulfilling and self-sealing processes.⁶⁵
- Model 2 behaviors are crafted into action strategies that openly illustrate how the actors [reach] their evaluations or attributions and how they [craft] them to encourage inquiry and testing by others. As a consequence, defensive routines that are anti-learning are minimized and double loop learning is facilitated.⁶⁶

The process of intentionally engaging action science on the Model 2 level produces trust in the actions taken and, by default, in the people executing them. This trust is vital to each dialogical container in which healthy, ethical transactions occur. The intersubjective field of that container is enlarged with the confidence that exchanges are reliable; and authentic learning and growth are present upon which to build.

⁶⁴ I. Illich, *Tools for Conviviality*, Berkeley 1973, p. 11.

⁶⁵ C. Argyris, *Knowledge for Action*, op. cit., p. 52.

⁶⁶ C. Argyris, D.A. Schön, *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice*, Reading, MA 1996, p. 55.

Specific practices of identifying defensive routines and avoidance of escalating inferential presumption support a healthy dialogic culture. Defensive routines can be discerned through conversational patterns using Argyris' "left-hand column method" of annotation. Inferential presumption is tested by analyzing his "ladder-of-inference" as described by its rungs:

- (1) Experience Some Relatively Directly Observable Data—Listen to a recorded conversation, not merely to what he, she, or they recall was said.
- (2) Impose Meanings on Conversation—"The meaning of the conversation is....".
- (3) Impose Meanings on Actions—"The intention the person had in taking the action was....".
- (4) Evaluate an action—"The action was effective or not".⁶⁷

The original author of action science, action research, and more recently action inquiry, William Torbert describes action inquiry as a kind of behavior that "is simultaneously productive and self-assessing [...] listens into the developing situation [...] accomplishes whatever tasks appear to have priority [...] invites a revisioning [...] if necessary [...] is always a timely discipline [...] because its purpose is [...] to discover [...] what action is timely".⁶⁸

Fundamental to action inquiry is what Torbert names "super-vision" which is achieved through the systems theory process of triple-loop feedback within each person's awareness to generate and maintain mutuality within a group. He reveals that there are three nested levels of feedback that constitute triple-loop feedback. Single-loop feedback acceptance leads to change in behaviors and operations; this is the deepest level of acceptance most people tolerate to one extent or another. Double-loop feedback acceptance can lead to change in structure, strategy, and action-logic but it is difficult to accept because of the propensity for strong self-identity with these constructs. It requires the pull of a deeper spiritual sense of presence, attention, intention, and vision found in triple-loop

⁶⁷ C. Argyris, R. Putnam, D. McLain Smith, *Action Science*, San Francisco 1985; C. Argyris, D.A. Schön, *Organizational Learning II*, op. cit.

⁶⁸ W.R. Torbert and Associates, *Action Inquiry: the Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership*, San Francisco 2004, p. 13.

feedback to move one out of this self-identity anchoring, to full acceptance of changes required in structure, strategy, and action-logic, and to acquire super-vision and the ability to lead others in mutuality to such actions. “Triple-loop feedback makes us present to ourselves now”.⁶⁹

Correlating to the levels of feedback are territories of experience and parts of speech that facilitate the acquisition of triple-loop feedback. The first two territories of experience Torbert names “outside events” and “own sense of performance” which are the actions and the behavioral responses of others and self-respectively. These correspond to single-loop feedback. Torbert’s third territory of experience is “action-logics” which are the schemas and experiential modes of reflection to educe double-loop feedback. The fourth territory named “intentional attention”, is the rarified field of presencing awareness, vision, and intuition that confirms the second-loop response-actions by generating confidence and mutuality among immediate others. Moment-to-moment reflection on this plane of awareness generates triple-loop feedback. Torbert’s four corresponding styles of speech that draw timely content from the four territories of experience are: “inquiring and listening [to] outcomes in the external world [...] illustrating behaviors [and] operations [...] advocating strategy and structure [and] goals [...] [and corresponding to triple-loop super-vision] framing of attention [and] intention [and] vision”.⁷⁰ The “interweaving [of] first- [objective], second- [intersubjective], and third-person [objective] action-inquiry” can generate transformation in any community of practice⁷¹.

Conclusions for Education

In a hermeneutic, educational setting that artfully hovers in the liminal confluence of intersubjective dialogue and mutuality, the religious teacher must adopt the roles of:

- pastoral care minister to maintain and illustrate the critical parameters of mutuality;

⁶⁹ Ibidem, p. 18.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 30.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 219.

- pastoral care minister to provide spiritual direction when sought;
- co-learner-researcher with the class room or plenary group;
- co-learner-facilitator within a dialogic, learning triad of self, individual students, and one individual parent or adult advocate in student's sphere. "The parent-teacher-student triad can invent novel spheres of learning activity within [Vygotsky's] 'zones of proximal development'"⁷² for proposal to the class regularly;
- radical pedagogist employing critical and dialectic tools to protect students from neoliberal hegemony and to practice democracy in real time;
- steward of a community of practice that engages diversity;
- researcher-as-bricoleur finding new tools and methods to provide students engaged in meaning-making to have agency with new phenomena appearing in their unfolding lives;
- ethical practitioner of *phronesis* committed to facilitating each student's *Bildung* and character development;
- collaborator on student-led walk-about and volunteer projects; and
- servant leader attending to learning styles, personality types, and personal histories.

In the case of primary school children, the teacher, with each respective child's parent (or adult advocate) can triangulate with the child to form a monthly micro community of 'situated learning'.⁷³ Youth and adult students can create triads or very small groups among themselves with a teacher to create a zone of proximal development in weekly dialogue. In either case the teacher is always needed to provide "scaffolding, modeling, mentoring, and coaching",⁷⁴ as well overview and continuity as seen in the Waldorf schools. As triads develop, new advocates or older students

⁷² L.S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: the Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, eds. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, E. Souberman, Cambridge, MA 1978.

⁷³ J. Lave, E. Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, New York 1991.

⁷⁴ V.P. Dennen, "Cognitive Apprenticeship in Educational Practice: Research on Scaffolding, Modeling, Mentoring, and Coaching as Instructional Strategies", in: *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*, ed. D.H. Jonassen, 2nd edition, Mahwah, NJ 2004, pp. 813–828. Available at: <<http://www.aect.org/edtech/ed1/31.pdf>>, p. 813.

can trade places with original ones and students can also move to different triads. As students mature triads can gradually grow in size to enrich diversity and to use conflict as a generative tool. Groups over six in number are not as productive for highly focused conversations. Full plenary classes are best for observing general content, recreation, and performances. Within such a system, university upperclasswomen and upperclassmen can serve freshmen as study group leaders as part of their requirements for graduation. A part of all students' learning performance assessment (from middle school up) should be their leadership and facilitation of others' learning.

Renowned teacher John Gatto conveys that modern public schooling "renders most of us passive, incompletely human, [and] unable to function as sovereign spirits".⁷⁵ Intrepid explorers of pedagogy and communication like Henry Giroux⁷⁶ and John Shotter⁷⁷ shake the sieve daily to reveal what is dangerous and what is healthy or possible in this age of authoritarian violence, and each in his own way maps remaining routes of egress. It appears to this author that home school coops and religious schools may be the last bastion for modeling a 'pedagogy of hope'.⁷⁸ Educating children, youth, and young adults with agency to be joyful, free, creative, empathically interdependent, democratic, and loving calls for phronetic teachers who are allowed to model those capacities and lead the students out from under the neoliberal pall.

⁷⁵ J.T. Gatto, *Weapons of Mass Instruction: A Schoolteacher's Journey Through the Dark World of Compulsory Schooling*, Gabriola Island, BC 2008, p. 141.

⁷⁶ H.A. Giroux, "Terrorizing Students: The Criminalization of Children in the US Police State", *Truthout* (Online). 2015, November 11. Available at: <<http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/33604-terrorizing-students-the-criminalization-of-children-in-the-us-police-state>>.

⁷⁷ J. Shotter, *Why Being Dialogical Must Come Before Being Logical: the Need for a Hermeneutical-Dialogical Approach to Robotic Activities* (Online post). 2015, April 7. Available at: <<http://www.johnshotter.com/2015/04/07/why-being-dialogical-must-come-before-being-logical-the-need-for-a-hermeneutical-dialogical-approach-to-robotic-activities>>.

⁷⁸ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*, London 1994.

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Celowa wzajemność i międzypodmiotowy dialog, wplecione w pedagogię młodzieży i dorosłych, stanowią radykalną ideę w dziedzinie edukacji. W przypadku edukacji religijnej może to oznaczać organizację generatywną i hermeneutyczną platformę nauczania, służącą rozwijaniu chrystocentrycznego modelu życia (jako jednego z przykładów). W ten sposób platforma ta może łatwo się rozszerzać, wkraczając na obszar ponowoczesny i świecki, łagodząc i równoważąc przy tym jego epistemiczne formy hermeneutyką, etyką, empatią i sprawiedliwością społeczną. Tam, gdzie edukacja religijna pozostaje wolna od kontroli ze strony neoliberalnej ideologii, tam może pomóc uczniom w rozwoju ich człowieczeństwa i aktywności. W tym samym czasie edukacja religijna oraz krytycznie ukierunkowane pedagogie mogą być rozwijane przez ich głównych orędowników, zbierając przy tym doświadczenia również ze świeckiego świata, tj. praktyki i metody reprezentujące rozmaite tradycje. Podążając za tym przykładem, autor przejmuje znaczące elementy ze swej wcześniejszej pracy (Shuster 2006) na temat skuteczności dialogu i międzypodmiotowości w ponowoczesnych grupach pracowniczych i zastanawia się nad ich przydatnością w grupach osób uczących się oraz podczas zajęć w klasie szkolnej.

Intentional mutuality and intersubjective dialogue woven into the pedagogy of youth and adults is a radical idea in any educational setting; however in the case of religious education it can provide a generative, hermeneutic, learning platform for the development of Christocentric living (as one example). Through so doing, this learning platform can easily extend into the postmodern secular sphere to temper and balance its epistemic forms with hermeneutics, ethics, empathy, and social justice. Where religious education can remain free of the control of neoliberal ideology, it can help students flourish in their humanity and agency. At the same time, religious education and critical pedagogies can be further developed on the shoulders of their giants with gleanings from the secular world—practices and methods from a range of human traditions. In that spirit, the author borrows substantial elements from his previous work (Shuster 2006) on the effectiveness of dialogue and intersubjectivity in postmodern workgroups and speculates on its utility to learning groups and classrooms.

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