*Title:* **Subaltern Thinking in Religious Education? Postcolonial Readings of (German) Schoolbooks**

*Author*: Prof. Dr. Kathrin Winkler (Lutheran University, Nuremberg, Germany) kathrin.winkler@evhn.de

Dr. habil. Stefan Scholz (Friedrich Alexander University, Erlangen/Nuremberg, Germany) stefan.scholz@fau.de

*Content:* Postcolonial Analysis of (German) Schoolbooks for Religious Education

## 0 Introduction

The contemporary Christian self-understanding and the related church pronouncements and positions in Europe are often based on the demand for social justice and advocacy on behalf of socially disadvantaged people. Correspondingly, the Christian profile receives its identity from the gospel of Jesus Christ with the aim of assuming social responsibility and promoting the well-being of all people.

This concern is also reflected in the educational goals of religious education in Germany. Racism and misogyny, environmental degradation and sexual exploitation are attitudes that religious education studies have already and almost as a matter of course critically addressed, pedagogically reflected and attempted to overcome by using counter-models such as cultural diversity, equal rights, sustainability and sexual self-determination (cf. Pithan 2009; Birkel 2002; Streib 2005; Eisenhardt and Kürzinger and Naurath and Pohl-Patalong 2019).

In dramatic contrast to this quite uniformly declared basic grounding of current religious education, textbooks remain with remnants of exactly such colonial ideology. And this is precisely what outlines the research horizon of this study:

- To what extent constructions of the *subaltern Other* can be identified in religious education textbooks?
- What is the relation of such constructions in terms of anthropological, religious, cultural and ecological aspects?

For the hermeneutical framing of this analysis, the approach of a postcolonial reading seems to be particularly promising. Hierarchical relationships that imply a power gap between top and bottom are brought up anew and their supposed self-evidence is exposed. Furthermore, hidden hegemonic forms of expression are made visible and critically analyzed.

The study presented here therefore follows on from a broad international interest in decidedly postcolonial textbook research, which is being promoted mainly in the historical sciences, in linguistics and also in geography (vgl. Grindel 2012; Markom and Weinhäupl 2007; Renz 2014; Schissler 2003). The current state of research on European and non-European postcolonial textbook analysis has been documented in detail by Lars Müller (Müller 2018). Furthermore, the exemplary single depictions of postcolonial educational processes in a special volume with the speaking title "Postcolonial Memory Politics in Educational Media" offer a good insight into such concretization of different disciplines (GEI 2013). Decidedly theological investigations are so far classically limited to perspectives of ideology criticism and discourse analysis (cf. Dieterich 2015, 6f and paradigmatically Herrmann 2012), which means that the postcolonial investigation carried out here expands textbook research on religious education.

Thus, this study in progress provides a first insight into a larger research project that integrates various aspects of textbook research into a comprehensive postcolonial study. The following presentation focuses on the production-aesthetic analysis of textbooks that are state-licensed for religious education in Germany. These are therefore closely related to the curricula prescribed by the state. A further empirical focus will be the evaluation of teachers' usage and the impact on school students. In this paper, first observations are described, and initial results are presented.

Aware that the present study is based on the German context and thus cannot be transferred to the whole of Europe, however, colonial tendencies are becoming apparent that could also be found in textbooks from other European countries in a similar, albeit contextually influenced form.

It should also be pointed out that we are aware of the different forms of religious education in Europe. In the concrete study, however, the focus was on textbooks for the denominational religious education as a compulsory subject, which is anchored in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany. In the continuation to this research work, another important field of research could open up in the investigation of the interdependence of European forms of organization of religious education and the reflection of postcolonialism. Linked to this is the further question of attitudes and national narratives with regard to colonial thought patterns in religious education and the textbooks they use, which depend on the context of the individual European countries. The diversity of models of religious education in schools in European countries and the analysis of the underlying contextual conditions is the subject of an extensive research network at the University of Vienna (cf. Jäggle and Rothgangel and Schlag 2016; Jäggle and Jackson and Rothgangel 2014; Jäggle and Skeie and Rothgangel 2014).

## 1    *Postcolonial reading as a theological task*

As a hermeneutical framing we understand post-colonial theory formation as an analytical tool for theological statements and interpretations. Therefore, a short insight into our way of postcolonial thinking is given.

In its beginning postcolonialism was engaged in a historical revision of colonialism and its oppressive systems. Viewed historically, colonialism began with the conquest of America in the 15th century and ended step-by-step with the abolition of slavery in the 19th century or the restitution of European colonies in Africa, Asia, and Latin-America in the beginning of the 20th century. The effects of this colonial period were characterized by geographical, economic and social power interests. As a result, dichotomous distinctions with an existing power difference were established like dominant versus underprivileged, well-educated versus primitive and savage, progressive and modern versus archaic and underdeveloped and so on and so forth (e.g. Mbembe 2014; Mignolo 2011; Chakrabarty 2000). "In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference" (Spivak 1992, 45).

The historical reappraisal of colonialism has led to changing perspectives and sustained effects on the views of all actors. Oppressed people are becoming active agents and the subjects of their own stories equipped with power of interpretation. They are playing a dynamic part in historiography and in a culture of remembrance (Fanon 1952; cf. Bachmann-Medick 2009³, 187-192; Kerner 2012, 43-53). Furthermore, suppressors and suppressed were targeting emancipation of the colonial heritage using postcolonial perspectives as a kind of programmatic form of resistance against historical colonialism and its logic of power and oppression (Kreutzer 2013, 617; do Mar Castro Varela and Dhawan, 2015², 16).

But – as Spivak, Bhabha and Said point out – the prefix 'post' doesn't mean the end of colonialism. Its perpetual impact continues to be effective in current identities and realities (Spivak 1990; Bhabha 2010; Said 2003). This means to our understanding, postcolonialism is, citing Bradley McLean, not only a critical historical revision of this historical period but more broadly referred to images of the subaltern Other with regard to class, culture, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability etc. (McLean 2012, 441; cf. Hall 1997). In a more general sense postcolonial perspectives are seeking to overcome Eurocentric attributions and to deconstruct societal devaluation and injustice (Bachmann-Medick 2009³, 185).

In this context *postcolonial reading* is an important approach for analyzing and deconstructing speeches, texts and expressions in terms of power and marginalization. Thereby, postcolonial reading is closely related to indigenous, feminist and queer readings sharing basic concerns of ideological criticism (Geitner 2016, 19-58). The postcolonial proprium can be characterized as consciousness and deconstruction of subtle and obvious expropriation, occupation and subordination processes of the colonial discourse, which remain effective in the present. In the sense of postcolonial reading this analytical perspective is global and considers the ongoing effectiveness of colonial and neo-colonial conditions.

With regard to religion and theology it can be said that the entanglement in forms of exercising power and suppression is especially precarious. Standardization, demarcation and exclusion are the set of rules of religious systems (e.g. Tiedemann 1998). The claim of religion can be seen as a holistic legitimacy. The entire human being in all its dimensions is affected and the whole of creation is related to God's presence and power. At all times, religious institutions make use of this kind of power. With the help of universal perspectives, they legitimize their prominent positions. To what extent this applies to different types of religion worldwide remains controversial since Jan Assmann's thesis of a special coincidence of monotheism and violence (Assmann 2003).

The processes of secularization are a fundamental element in modern societies that pushes back religious influences. Nevertheless, the question arises: What is the relationship between religion and social policy and its debates? In what way is religion involved in political exercises of power? With a cultural-historical view religion has always been deeply involved in hegemonic narrations (Meyer 2006, 41-51) and it is quite understandable what Michel Foucault meant by discourses which never occur in a power-free space (Foucault 1991, 10f). In the German-speaking area the connection between politics, religion (and religious education studies) is widely reflected in theology (cf. Schambeck 2017 und Schlag 2010) According to Mark L. Taylor it is not possible to separate theological and political discourses (Taylor 2011, 1-24). He poses the question of doing theology at the intersection of the political and the theological and tries to give a profound re-imagination of the theological as "a discourse that… critically reflects upon the motions of power" (p. 9). For Taylor, the "weight of the world" is caused by white racism, economic injustice, gender discrimination, and the diverse ways in which humans and communities are constructed as the "other" (p. 7). Theology, as Taylor proposes, lifts up and theologizes the resilience of communities who are made subordinate and vulnerable by agonistic politics and its systemic imposed suffering. Their resilience has the power to haunt, unsettle, and perhaps dissolve the structures of those systems.

With this in mind, theology is more than a "guild discipline" (p. 9). It is struggling with overcoming colonial power and tries to emancipate from political, cultural, moral and also from religious power (cf. Gruber 2018, 28).

Against this background, this study analyzes *religious education schoolbooks*. We ask: In what way does *Subaltern Thinking in Religious Education* exist? In this context, the term 'subaltern' functioned as a heuristic key category to disclose mechanisms of discrimination, devaluation, exclusion and its intersections. As our research subject religious education schoolbooks were analyzed in terms of structures and remnants of colonial thought patterns. The analysis was structured by four leading categories: 1. Anthropological assumptions, 2. religious classifications and interpretations, 3. conceptions of culture and its hybridity and 4. the relationship to creation and the environment. In so doing this survey quite consciously engages in political discourses by confronting societal and political topics with knowledge transfer of religious education by applying postcolonial criticism.

## 2 Postcolonial Analysis of Schoolbooks

Schoolbooks make available detailed and profound insights of what should be learned in school lessons. Initially, they provide information about specific subjects but subsequently they reveal conscious and sub-conscious ideologies and implicit worldviews. Entire generations of learners are growing up influenced by schoolbooks. Consequently, textbooks have significant influence on societal settings and developments (Fuchs and Henne and Sammler 2018; Wiater 2003; Schütze and Matthes 2018; Štimac 2018).

An important reason for the newly established textbook research in post-war Europe was the critical reappraisal of enemy stereotypes of the First and Second World War still existing in European textbooks (Dieterich 2015). In a fundamental manner ideology critique is a basic research perspective of the evolving research of European textbooks (Durović and Matthes 2010; Frey 2014). This approach was intended to reduce past prejudice and resentments and to meet requirements of tolerance and pluralism capability (Dieterich 2015, 2). At the beginning the focus of interest was on *content analysis* and *criticism of ideologies* but later on a whole range of further methods complemented this branch of research: *Discourse critique* deepens the analysis of social and sociopolitical perspectives (Zima 1989; Heinze 2015, 74-84). *Linguistics*, in addition to the precise investigation of linguistic composition, has become particularly relevant for the more precise description of text-image concepts in textbooks (Diekmannshenke and Klemm and Stöckl 2011; Stöckl 2011; Heinze and Matthes 2010; Müller 2010). And *empirical research methods in the social sciences* focus on the one hand on the use of teaching materials by teachers and on the other hand on the effect of textbooks on learners (Doll and Frank and Fickermann and Schwippert 2012).

In the present study the basic hegemony-critical and emancipatory approach of textbook research is continued and deepened through *postcolonial reading strategies*. The exposure of colonial structures is based on the following four clusters, which we consider to be central across all age groups due to their basic educational dimensions.

### 1) Fundamental anthropology: What is the human being?

What kind of basic interpretations and evaluations are made in the textbooks examined? Are humans basically male, white and heterosexual or is diversity realized? How are human impairments to be dealt with?

As early as 1946, UNESCO set itself the task of uncovering and overcoming racist and xenophobic content in schoolbooks (GEI 2018, 11). The guidelines today include a gender-equitable and culturally sensitive language, the representation of diverse identities and the consideration of human rights aspects (p. 13; cf. Bittner 2015, 247-260). Last but not least, the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities plays a central role in the educational context (United Nation 2006). Inclusive education is an essential educational goal.

*2) Religion and religiosity: What are the guiding principles for religious identities?*

Is one's own religion, in our survey Christianity including the corresponding denominational characteristics, presented as natural, normal and self-evident? (Scholz 2008, 52) How do other religions appear and what references are there in textbooks to non-religious people? (Wöstemeyer 2018, 137-161) Is there historical and contextual background information on the different religions?

From the 1970s and 1980s onwards, religious studies analysis of religious representations in textbooks have been developed. At first, they focused on the "correct" presentation of Judaism, Islam and other religions (Murken 1988). Today, interreligious positions and relationships are examined, and emerging questions are discussed: In which way is the identity of one's own religious group and, in addition, "the other" constructed? (Mubaraka 2011, 5) In which manner are evaluations made (Guggeis 2004)? Are there differentiated presentations? (Spielhaus 2018)

3) *Culturality: How is inside and outside being constructed?*

Who and what is regarded as being associated and who and what is excluded? (cf. Pöggeler 2004, 17-34) How, for example, does dealing with "familiar and unfamiliar" guide the representations in textbooks? In which way are dichotomies being formulated or hybridizations made possible?

The discourse on migration and with it the dissolution of boundaries or even the redefinition of what is perceived as one's own comes into special focus here. (Geuenich 2015, XI; Menon and Preziuso 2014). Culturalization reflects that individual and collective identities are deeply grounded in specific contexts. It negates a pyramidal structure of cultures and accepts the equality of different cultures. Culturalization deals with the encounter, amalgamation and reforming of cultures including religious components as well as non-religious elements like language and geographical preconditions (Höhne and Kunz and Radke 1999).

4) *Ecologization: In what way is the relationship to nature represented?*

Is the environment seen primarily as a counterpart to human culture, as an object of use or as having intrinsic value? What significance do animals have in the concepts of textbooks?

The climate change discourse (e.g. Brehm 2015) as well as a changing animal-human relationship (animal studies cf. Ortiz Robles 2016; Bolinski and Rieger 2019) indicate a gradually changing way of dealing with the planet Earth. Can these changes, which go far beyond traditionally introduced programs for the protection of creation, already be found in textbooks or are they still determined by hegemonic structures between humans on the one hand and nature and animals on the other?

### 3 Results of the textbook analysis: Subaltern Thinking in Religious Education?

The results presented here refer to a selection of the textbooks analysed in this study. They are licensed by the Ministries of Culture for denominational religious education in Germany and are based on the currently valid curricula for the subject of Protestant and Catholic religion. The ages for the different school years are indicated:

**Primary School (6 – 10 Jahre)**

- *SPUREN LESEN. Religionsbuch für das 1./2. und 3./4. Schuljahr*. 2015/2017. Stuttgart: Calw. [Protestant]
- *DIE RELI-REISE, Religionsbuch für das 1./2. und 3./4. Schuljahr*. 2014/2016. Stuttgart: Klett. [Protestant]

**Secondary School (11 – 16 Jahre)**

- *KURSBUCH RELIGION ELEMENTAR: Ein Arbeitsbuch für den evangelischen Religionsunterricht im Schuljahr 5. und 6*. 2017. Stuttgart/Braunschweig: Calw/Diesterweg. [Protestant]

**Vocational School (17 – 20 Jahre)**

- *KURSBUCH RELIGION.* 2014. Stuttgart: Calw. [Protestant]
- *SINNVOLLSINN. Religion an Berufsschulen. Materialien für die Fachklassen des Dualen Systems und die entsprechenden Bildungsgänge*. Vol.1-6: 2005 – 2010. München: Kösel. [Roman Catholic]

In the following, these exemplary textbooks were analyzed according to the criteria mentioned above. They show a wealth of subtle as well as explicit forms of hegemonic interpretation.

### 3.1 Fundamental Anthropology: What is the human being?

*Gendering*

The examined textbooks for *primary school* show the ambition to represent female and male role models in different forms equally.

In contrast, analyzed *secondary school textbooks* for the 5th and 6th grade often confirm stereotypical role models: Girls "talk too much, are bitchy and conceited, boys are showing off, fighting and playing shooting games on the computer" (KURSBUCH RELIGION ELEMENTAR 6, p.10f). These dichotomous statements are not reflected enough and not confronted with current counter-images (KURSBUCH RELIGION ELEMENTAR 6, p.6-16). When discussing church structures, male and female Lutheran pastors are equally represented in their areas of responsibility.
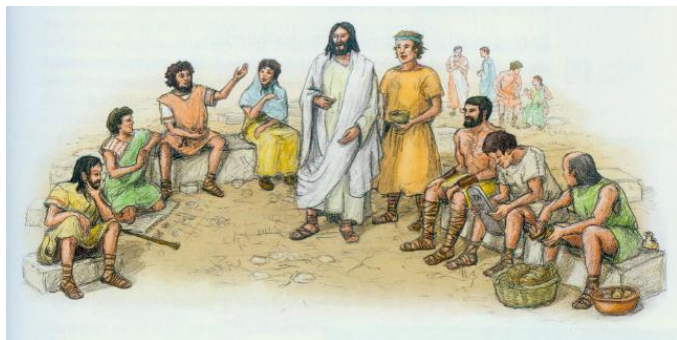
The two textbooks from the *vocational school sector* present people in a gender balanced way as men and women in terms of examples and identification figures. But at the same time SɪɴɴVoʟʟSɪɴɴ stabilizes the conception of a leading role for men in the Catholic Church: Bishops are highlighted by the presentation of statements or symbolic acts (cf. SɪɴɴVoʟʟSɪɴɴ IV, p.61). The relationship of church positions to the male gender is neither discussed nor problematized. (image: SɪɴɴVoʟʟSɪɴɴ V, p.19).

*Inclusive language and the selection of Bible texts*

Inclusive language is especially found in new *primary school textbooks*. The attempt is being made to express gender equality in language and in the selection of biblical texts: In the context of the captivity in Egypt, for example, five courageous women are portrayed who help to prevent the killing of the newborn boys. Miriam leads the people freed from Egypt with her song, Jesus finds male and female friends, God is represented in various symbols and modes of action (Sᴘᴜʀᴇɴ ʟᴇsᴇɴ 3./4., p.37-43).

The examined textbooks for the 5th and 6th grades of the *secondary school* are clearly different. Although gender-sensitive language is also used here in many places, the choice of biblical representations is characterized by biased male typecasting (image: Kᴜʀsʙᴜᴄʜ Rᴇʟɪɢɪoɴ Eʟᴇᴍᴇɴᴛᴀʀ 6, p.17)



In the textbooks of the *vocational school*, including language is not existing. The few biblical stories in Kᴜʀsʙᴜᴄʜ Rᴇʟɪɢɪoɴ contain exclusively male actors, with the Good Samaritan (p.110), Job (p.118+152), the Prodigal Son (p.138) and the healing of the blind (p.172). God is represented exclusively in male characters (p.145-154). Uncritical with regard to feminist objections, the Kursbuch Religion presents the psychosexual development according to Sigmund Freud (p.36f). An obvious proximity to exclusive normative thinking is evident in the designation as a marginal group for the disabled, homosexuals, drug addicts and the unemployed in the same breath (p.143).

*Sexual orientations*

*Primary school* textbooks do not present different family forms that deal with patchwork families or different sexual orientations.

This also applies to the examined textbooks for grades 5 and 6 of the *secondary school.* Neither do different family lifestyles occur, nor is the topic of homosexuality taken up in any way. The textbook for grade 6 deals only with conflicts between girls and boys.

With regard to *vocational school*, people in the Kursbuch Religion have different sexual identities, and the tendency to accept different ways of life is evident (p.35). At the same time, the following image counteracts this line by fixing gay stereotypes (image: Kursbuch Religion, p.34).

According to Catholic teaching, the Catholic textbook SinnVollSinn is consistently characterized by a heterosexual doctrine. Other sexual identities remain almost invisible, only at one(!) point the question is formulated in a dialogue whether it is bad to be gay, but remains unanswered (II, p.75).

*Critical Whiteness and ways of life*



In current *primary school* textbooks, the effort to consider the students' diversity is noticeable. However, it is limited to graphically designed images on the front pages to represent children of different skin colors. This appears as a constructed heterogeneity, because this diversity is not reflected in photographs of different school situations. Here images of white students and white teachers are dominant (image: Spuren lesen 3/4, p.10). Nevertheless, photographs and depictions of students of other skin colors do occur, then in problem situations such as poverty, conflicts or religious practices. Overall, skin color acts as a dominant distinguishing feature to represent cultural and/or religious diversity.



In the analyzed textbooks of the 5th and 6th grade *secondary school*, an astonishing dominance of pictures with people of white skin color can be observed. In nearly all life topics like friendship, living together, conflicts, bullying, but also faith of schoolchildren of the 5th and 6th grade almost only pictures of white teenagers are used. Although the ethnic, cultural and religious heterogeneity is obvious in immigrant societies and in current classroom situations the textbooks examined do not take up these heterogeneous conditions. (image: Kursbuch Religion Elementar 5, p.10; p.21, p.72; Kursbuch Religion Elementar 6, p.15, p.24, p.53)

Even in both textbooks of the *vocational school*, people are always shown in white. This is made clear by a picture-text composition, which actually wants to illustrate the diversity of family relationships (image: KURSBUCH RELIGION, p.39).



In all these textbooks, students learn about dark-skinned people almost only when they live in precarious conditions or when the West / North paternalistically helps the South (image: SINNVOLLSINN I, p.82).

*Human impairment*



Particularly in *primary school* books, students with disabilities are fixed in the image of the wheelchair-bound student (image: RELI-REISE 3/4, p.32) The realities of inclusive teaching, in which students with various disabilities participate, are not taken into account. For example, blind or deaf students, school assistants of students who are dependent on medical equipment or children with mental disabilities are not depicted.

In grades 5 and 6, the topic of human impairment as an aspect of the classroom situation is hardly ever mentioned. Only in the context of the biblical story of healing on the Sabbath a woman with thalidomide damage is shown. (KURSBUCH RELIGION ELEMENTAR 6, p.64)

People with disabilities also rarely appear in the textbooks of vocational schools. If so, they are functionalized by thematic appropriations and turned into objects: In SINNVOLLSINN thalidomide victims are brought in the context of the abortion debate (VI, p.31); paternalistically, a mentally disabled child is presented together with "his" civilian service worker in the thematic context of "being in solidarity" (VI, p.86).

### 3.2 Religion and Religiousness

*Interfaith learning processes*

The presentation of inter-religious learning processes in textbooks makes both one's own and the religious other's constructions clearly visible.

In the textbooks for *primary school*, Islam and Judaism are addressed as subjects of the curriculum. It is remarkable that both religions are presented next to each other without a recognizable historical context. There is no reference to the Holocaust and the painful experiences of Jews in Germany, nor is Islam contextualized in the light of historical and current migration processes.



The worldwide Christianity and the Christian partnership work is described in various primary school textbooks, but without pointing out that Tanzania, Papua New Guinea or Brazil were German colonies that were supported by the missionary work in these countries and only became Christian through colonization. A problematization of colonial history and the continuation of Western dominance, e.g. in form of mimicry as a practice of imitating the behavior and lifestyle of colonizers, like here liturgical dresses, does not take place (image: SPUREN LESEN 3/4, p. 93).

The analyzed textbooks of the 5th and 6th grade *secondary school* show in classical illustration the Christian faith with uniformly white actors (image: KURSBUCH RELIGION ELEMENTAR 5, p.58). Thematic classifications of worldwide Christianity, especially in the context of migration, are missing. With regard to Islam, an attempt is made to connect historical foundations with current issues such as the headscarf, mosque construction or Islamism (p.92-102). Judaism is largely



referred to with a historical perspective on the time and environment of Jesus, which misses the opportunity to relate to contemporary issues.

In the textbooks of the *vocational school* the human being is mostly presented as religious and Christian. Different religions are taken into account when dealing with the issue of death (KURSBUCH RELIGION, p.61). In this connection, the differences to Christianity are worked out in particular (p.58f). Judaism and Islam are here clearly reduced to judicial concepts, while this is completely ignored in Christianity. A significant devaluation of Islam is also visible in the hardly balanced recording of quotations from the Bible, Torah and Koran by presenting Sura 104,4 ("And do not slacken in the persecution of the people of non-believers"), but not biblical passages that are just as violent. Furthermore, Islam is presented primarily as a set of rules (p.188f), and the coexistence of mosque and church is introduced as an open conflict (p.190f).

Betender Jude an der Klagemauer in Jerusalem

In both textbooks of the vocational school Judaism seems to be fallen out of time and essentially focused on the male (e.g. image: SINNVOLLSINN IV, p.84)). Modern living worlds, such as contemporary Jewish life in Israel and elsewhere, almost never come into view. Exceptions are a thematic page on Jewish youth in contemporary Germany (SINNVOLLSINN IV, p.87) and a modern image of the synagogue in Essen (SINNVOLLSINN III, p.55). In all the textbooks examined, spiritual leadership positions in Judaism and Islam are consistently portrayed as male with reference to conservative, orthodox movements (image: SINNVOLLSINN, IV 84). Liberal movements in Europe and their leadership offices, such as women rabbis or women imams, are not named or discussed. As a result, religious practice is



portrayed as biasedly male-dominated and conservatively oriented, without addressing the religious diversity in Judaism and Islam (image: RELI-REISE 1/2, p.98).

In all analyzed textbooks denominationalism is largely restricted to Protestant and Catholic. Inner-Christian diversity, as it becomes visible above all through migration and globalization processes in preschools and schools, does not come into the focus of attention. The different Coptic and Orthodox currents, which are mainly visible through students with migration biographies from Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Armenia but also from Syria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, are not mentioned as reality.

### 3.3 Cultural Diversity

*Multiculturalism and the hybridity of culture*

As already mentioned in points 3.1 and 3.2, primary school textbooks show the intention to reflect ethnic diversity but remain stuck at the simple graphic representation of children of different skin colors (image: SPUREN LESSEN 3/4, p.8) Nowhere it is



discussed how cultural diversity is represented or has developed in the realities of students' lives, such as in friendships, family contexts or migration biographies.

Even in the secondary school books investigated, there are no references to multicultural class compositions or forms of hybrid identities among young people, as they correspond to the current school situations, especially in secondary schools.



The two textbooks from the vocational school sector also miss the chance to represent the diversity and hybridity of culture. Other cultures are presented in an eye-catching way. For example, SINNVOLLSINN IV (image: p.74) illustrates the oppression of women in Iraq by means of a drastically re-enacted stoning scene, but does not address grievances in its own tradition, such as abuse and misuse of power by the Christian churches.

Backgrounds and realities of migration are not addressed. This can be clearly seen in the illustration of name tags of a house entrance in KURSBUCH RELIGION (image: p.41). People of the present time of these textbooks have German names.



*Migration realities*

The realities of migration in the school context and the associated questions and challenges regarding religion and culture are not addressed in any of the teaching materials for primary school, secondary school or vocational school. Reasons and causes of migration as well as narratives on the migration biography are not mentioned.

### 3.4 Ecologization: Climate Change, Animal Ethics and Sustainability

*Climate Change*

The analysis of primary school textbooks reveals the theme of God's good creation, but only in one textbook with small hints and tips on environmental protection (RELI-REISE, p.55). But the huge challenges in the history of mankind that arise from the exploitation of the earth and its consequences for the climate are only taken up in small steps. Only one page of a textbook presents the action 'plant fort the planet' (SPUREN LESEN 3/4, p.94).

In the textbooks of the secondary school for grades 5 and 6 there is no subject area that takes up this existential and serious topic from a theological-ethical point of view.

A detailed integration of climate change into the various learning areas does not exist in the two teaching materials from the vocational school sector either. At least SINNVOLLSINN looks at the connection between climate change and social consequences (IV, p.47).

*Animal Ethics*

There is also a blank space for primary and secondary schools on this topic. Reflections from a theological-ethical perspective are neither explicitly nor implicitly addressed.



For the textbooks of vocational schools, different observations are made in this regard: It is true that the Kursbuch Religion contains introductory quotations on being human, such as "Man is [...] good by nature / a species of animal with the ability to think abstractly / the crown of creation / the only animal that can remember its grandparents [...]" (p.9). The tendency, however, is to focus more on the distance to the animal. Therefore, a task is formulated: "What distinguishes humans from animals?" (p.12) On the other hand, in SinnVollSinn the animal-human relationship is widely discussed (II, p.7-17). Under the slogan "kinship of souls", the close relationship between animals and humans is presented above all (p.9). At the same time, an unbreakable boundary is also introduced, with a quotation from the Catholic Catechism: "One may like animals, but one should not give them the love that is due only to man" (II, p.15).

The certainly delicate subject of "slaughtering" in Judaism and Islam is also discussed in the textbook SinnVollSinn. However, it is not possible to avoid a tendentious presentation through different perspectives, such as critical views of other forms (e.g. slaughter processes in local secular slaughterhouses) (image: II, p.16).

*Sustainability*



In the same way, no theological-ethical discussion on the subject of sustainability can be found in primary and secondary school textbooks that would go beyond tips on environmental protection (image: Reli-Reise 1/2, p.55).

The textbooks for vocational schools differ in this field: In Kursbuch Religion the idea of sustainability can only be perceived as a blank space. But in SinnVollSinn, this topic is discussed in detail: The biblical mandate to rule, the protection of the primeval forest, environmental pollution and, under the heading "ark", a lifestyle in accordance with creation are presented (II, p.39-46) and TransFair is also described (II, p.71; VI p. 47).

## *4      Conclusion*

*What initial results can we now identify for the present textbook analysis from a postcolonial perspective? In order to be able to present these in an appropriate manner, it seems necessary to us to formulate some essential localizations in advance:*

1. Textbooks for religious education try to address societal, social and ethical themes from a Christian perspective for students. They are less flexible than, for example, internet-based learning or teaching materials. Their publication rhythm of about 10 to 15 years explains that they are not always able to match the actuality of contemporary historical developments and therefore also show gaps and blanks. We therefore consider a fundamental de-colonization to be essential for new editions of textbooks as well as for curriculum reforms.

2. The textbook analysis demonstrates that a postcolonial view of religious education teaching material is both productive and necessary, regardless of the age of the students. Across the textbooks of all grades we were able to detect mechanisms of subaltern thinking. In terms of decolonization, our primary concern is to uncover, make visible and sensitize for subaltern- effects.

3. Based on the examined textbooks we were able to illustrate that textbooks have gaps and blind spots in this respect. In our view, however, the possible pedagogical reference to an age-appropriate elementary didactic approach and the renunciation of dealing with these hegemonies is not helpful: The multifaceted reality is also the living world of students and should therefore also be reflected in the realities presented in textbooks of religious education of all ages.

*We can now formulate concrete findings on these orientations:*

4. In particular the including of *other religions* besides Christianity often turns out to be a bold representation of the other. Other religions are being often reduced to cliché-type basic assumptions, are archaized as representations of a distant past, and in their juxtaposition are mostly de-contextualized. How Jewish culture is lived in Germany in its various facets or what the historical reasons are for why and how Muslims live in Germany is often only mentioned in a marginal way.

5. *Inner-Christian diversity*, as it becomes effective and visible through migration and globalization processes, especially in schools, is hardly addressed in these textbooks.

6. The biased *presentation of white people* neither reflects the reality of local classrooms nor has it adequately recognized that Germany, too, has long since become an immigration country. The historical and present interconnections into which the Western churches have entered through colonization and mission are rarely considered on the level of textbooks.

7. Remarkably, the classically traditional way of life, the *family*, is maintained in the schoolbooks as the usual normative concept and further relationship constellations and ways of life are largely ignored or only included as an exception.

8. The broad range of topics relating to *environmental awareness* is clearly underexposed and can hardly match the level of social restructuring processes in ecological discourse. This may be surprising, as particularly children and young people are an active motor for more climate and animal protection and religious education could play a very active role here.

9. In summary, it is clear that *subaltern thinking* are still present in textbooks of current German-language religious education and are thus presumably also passed on in teaching practice.

10. For religious education processes this means using the *postcolonial lens* to uncover subaltern thinking in already existing teaching material. For implementation in school practice, however, it is necessary for teachers to acquire postcolonial competence and sensitivity in basic and further training in religious education, which is still largely a desideratum.

## References:

Assmann, J. 2003. *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt*. Wien: Picus Verlag.

Bachmann-Medick, D. 2009[3]. *Cultural turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*. Reinbek b. Hamburg: Reinbek.

Bhabha, H. K. 2010. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Birkel, S. 2002. *Zukunft wagen – Ökologisch handeln. Grundlagen und Leitbilder kirchlich-ökologischer Bildung im Kontext nachhaltiger Entwicklung*. Münster: Lit.

Bittner, M. 2015. "Die Ordnung der Geschlechter in Schulbüchern. Heteronormativität und Genderkonstruktionen in Englisch- und Biologiebüchern". In *Selbstbestimmung und Anerkennung sexueller und geschlechtlicher Vielfalt. Lebenswirklichkeiten, Forschungsergebnisse und Bildungsbausteine*, edited by F. Schmidt, A.-C. Schondelmayer, and U. B. Schröder, 247–260. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Bolinski, I. and S. Rieger (ed.).2019. *Das verdatete Tier. Zum Animal Turn in den Kultur- und Medienwissenschaften*. Stuttgart: Metzler.

Brehm, P. 2015. *Didaktische Aspekte der Nachhaltigen Entwicklung in aktuellen VWL- Lehrbüchern in der schulischen Bildung. Studie im Auftrag der Lokalen Agenda 21 der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf*. Düsseldorf: n.p.

Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Connell, R. W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Diekmannshenke, H., M. Klemm and H. Stöckl (ed.). 2011. *Bildlinguistik. Theorien – Methoden – Fallbeispiele*. Berlin: Schmidt.

Dieterich, V.-J. 2015. „Schulbuchforschung". In *Wissenschaftlich-Religionspädagogisches Lexikon*. https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/100008

do Mar Castro Varela, M. and N. Dhawan. 2015[2]. *Postkoloniale Theorie. Eine kritische Einführung*. Bielefeld: UTB.

Doll, J., K. Frank, D. Fickermann and K. Schwippert (ed.). 2012. *Schulbücher im Fokus. Nutzungen, Wirkungen und Evaluation*. Münster et all.: Waxmann.

Durović, A. and E. Matthes (ed.). 2010. *Freund- und Feindbilder in Schulbüchern*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Eisenhardt, S., K. S. Kürzinger, E. Naurath, and U. Pohl-Patalong (ed.). 2019. *Religion unterrichten in Vielfalt: konfessionell – religiös – weltanschaulich. Ein Handbuch*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press.

Fanon, F. 1952. *Peau noire, masques blancs.* Paris: n.p.

Foucault, M. 1991. *Die Ordnung des Diskurses*. Aus dem Französischen von Walter Seitter. Mit einem Essay von Ralf Konersmann. Frankfurt-Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch.

Frey, C.-C. 2014. "Zur Aktualisierung einer ideologiekritischen Forschungsperspektive auf Lehrmittel". In *Methodologie und Methoden der Schulbuch- und Lehrmittelforschung*, edited by P. Knecht, E. Matthes, S. Schütze, and B. Aamotsbakken, 85–98. Bad Heilbrunn 2014: Klinkhardt.

Fuchs, E., K. Henne and S. Sammler. 2018. *Schulbuch als Mission. Die Geschichte des Georg-Eckert-Institutes*. Wien: Böhlau.

Geitner, U. 2016. "Stand der Dinge: Engagement-Semantik und Gegenwartsliteratur-Forschung". In *Engagement. Konzepte von Gegenwart und Gegenwartsliteratur*, edited by J. Brokoff, U. Geitner, and K. Stüssel: 19–58. Göttingen：Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press.

Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI) and Berghahn Publishing. 2013. *Postcolonial Memory Politics in Educational Media Special Issue*. JEMMS Vol 5/1.

Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI) and UNESCO. 2018. *Schulbuchinhalte inklusiv gestalten. Religion, Gender und Kultur im Fokus*. Braunschweig/Paris: n.p.

Geuenich, H. 2015. *Migration und Migrant(inn)en im Schulbuch. Diskursanalysen nordrhein-westfälischer Politik- und Sozialkundebücher für die Sekundarstufe I*. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Grindel, S. 2012. "Kolonialismus im Schulbuch als Übersetzungsproblem. Deutsche, französische und englische Geschichtslehrwerke im Vergleich". In *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38, 272–303.

Gruber, J. 2018. "Wider die Entinnerung. Zur postkolonialen Kritik hegemonialer Wissenspolitiken in der Theologie". In *Postkoloniale Theologie II. Perspektive aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum*, edited by A. Nehring, and S. Wiesgickl, 23–37. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Guggeis, K. 2004. "Der Mohr hat seine Schuldigkeit noch nicht getan. Afrika und seine Bewohner in zeitgenössischen Schulbüchern aus ethnologischer Sicht". In *Interkulturelles Verstehen und kulturelle Integration durch das Schulbuch? Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Fremden*, edited by E. Matthes, and C. Heinze, 251–269. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Hall, S. 1997. *Wann war "der Postkolonialismus"? Denken an der Grenze*. In Hybride Kulturen. Beiträge zur anglo-amerikanischen Multikulturalismusdebatte, edited by E. Bronfen, B. Marius, and T. Steffen, 219–246. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Heinze, C. 2015. "On the Pedagogization of Knowledge Orders – Discourse-Analytical Approaches and Innovation-Theoretical Perspectives". In *Methodologie und Methoden der Schulbuch- und Lehrmittelforschung*, edited by P. Knecht, E. Matthes, S. Schütze, and B. Aamotsbakken, 74–84. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Herrmann, H. J. 2012. *Das Kursbuch Religion - ein Bestseller des modernen Religionsunterrichts. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Religionspädagogik seit 1976*. Braunschweig/Stuttgart: Diesterweg and Calwer.

Höhne, T., T. Kunz and F.-O. Radke. 1999. *Bilder vom Fremden. Formen der Migrantendarstellung als der „anderen Kultur" in deutschen Schulbüchern von 1981–1997*. Frankfurt-Main: n.p.

Jäggle, M., R. Jackson and M. Rothgangel (ed.). 2014. *Religious education at schools in Europe Part 2. Western Europe.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press and Vienna University Press.

Jäggle, M., M. Rothgangel and T. Schlag (ed.). 2016. *Religious education at schools in Europe Part 1. Central Europe.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press and Vienna University Press.

Jäggle, M., G. Skeie and M. Rothgangel (ed.). 2014. *Religious education at schools in Europe Part 3. Northern Europe*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press and Vienna University Press.

Lang, A. 1981. *Die Sprache der Sexualerziehung*. Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann.

Kerner, I. 2012. *Postkoloniale Theorien*. Zur Einführung. Hamburg: Junius.

Kreutzer, E. 2013. "Postkolonialismus". In *Metzler Lexikon Literatur und Kulturtheorie[5]*, edited by A. Nünning, 617–618. Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler.

Markom, C. and H. Weinhäupl. 2007. "Die Anderen im Schulbuch. Rassismen, Exotismen, Sexismen und Antisemitismus in österreichischen Schulbüchern". In *Sociologica* 2, 10–11

Mbembe, A. 2014. *Kritik der schwarzen Vernunft*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

McLean, B. 2012. "Postkolonialismus/Postcolonial Criticism, I. Alttestamentlich/Neutestamentlich". In *Lexikon der Bibelhermeneutik*. 2012, edited by O. Wischmeyer, et al., 441f. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Menon, N. and M. Preziuso (ed.) 2014. *Migrant Identities of "Creole Cosmopolitans". Transcultural Narratives of Contemporary Postcoloniality*. New York: Lang.

Meyer, T. 2006. *Was ist Politik?* Wiesbaden: UTB.

Mignolo, W. D. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mubaraka, S. 2011. *Evangelischer Religionsunterricht zwischen Identität und Verständigung. Eine Untersuchung neuer Schulbücher für die Sek. I im Hinblick auf das Bild des Christentums und Möglichkeiten zur Auseinandersetzung mit Andersgläubigen*. Dortmund: Universitätsbibliothek Technische Universität Dortmund.

Müller, L. 2018. "Colonialism. Review Article of Textbook Analyses", In *The Palgrave Handbook of Textbook Studies*, edited by Palgrave Macmillan, 281-292. New York: Springer.

Müller, W. 2010. "Die Verbilderung unserer Lebenswelt – eine pädagogische Herausforderung". In *Das Bild im Schulbuch*, edited by C. Heinze, and E. Matthes, 33–42. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhard.

Murken, S. 1988. *Gandhi und die Kuh. Die Darstellung des Hinduismus in deutschsprachigen Religionsbüchern*. Marburg: Diagonal.

Ortiz Robles, M. 2016. *Literature and Animal Studies*. London/New York: CRC Press.

Piethan, A (ed.). 2009. *Gender – Religion – Bildung. Beiträge zu einer Religionspädagogik der Vielfalt*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Pöggeler, F. 2004. "Fremde und Fremdheit im Schulbuch und Wandel der Pädagogik". In *Interkulturelles Verstehen und kulturelle Integration durch das Schulbuch? Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Fremden*, edited by E. Matthes, and C. Heinze, 17–34. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Renz, M. 2014. *Kartierte Kolonialgeschichte. Der Kolonialismus in raumbezogenen Medien historischen Lernens – ein Vergleich aktueller europäischer Geschichtsatlanten*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press.

Said, E. W. 2003. *Orientalism.* London: Penguin Books.

Schambeck, M. 2017. "Warum wir die Religionen (trotzdem) brauchen. Wider die Versuchung der Segmentierung postmoderner Gesellschaften". In *Christliches Europa? Religiöser Pluralismus als theologische Herausforderung*, edited by K. Viertbauer and F. Wegscheider, 171–187. Freiburg: Herder.

Schieder, R. (ed) 2014. *Die Gewalt des einen Gottes. Die Monotheismusdebatte zwischen Jan Assmann, Micha Brumlik, Rolf Schieder, Peter Sloterdijk und anderen.* Berlin: Berlin University Press.

Schissler, H. 2003. "Der eurozentrische Blick auf die Welt. Außereuropäische Geschichten und Regionen in deutschen Schulbüchern und Curricula. Gutachten des Georg-Eckert-Instituts für internationale Schulbuchforschung für das Bundespräsidialamt". In *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 25, 155–166.

Schlag, T. 2010. *Horizonte demokratischer Bildung. Evangelische Religionspädagogik in politischer Perspektive*. Freiburg i.Br.: Herder.

Scholz, S. 2008. *Ideologien des Verstehens. Eine Diskurskritik der neutestamentlichen Hermeneutiken von Klaus Berger, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Peter Stuhlmacher und Hans Weder*. Tübingen: Francke.

Schütze, S., and E. Matthes (ed.). 2018. *Religion und Bildungsmedien*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Spielhaus, R. 2018. "Der Umgang mit innerreligiöser Vielfalt im Islamischen Religionsunterricht in Deutschland und seinen Schulbüchern". In *Schulbuch und religiöse Vielfalt. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, edited by Z. Štimac, and R. Spielhaus, 93–116. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press.

Spivak, G. C. 1990. *Post-colonial Critic. Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. New York/London: Routledge.

Spivak, G. C. 1992. "Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak by Leon de Kock". In *New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa*. ARIEL. A Review of International English Literature. 23(3), 29–47.

Stegili, F. 2009. *Gender im Religionsunterricht. Eine Religionsbuchanalyse unter gendersensiblen Gesichtspunkten*. Saarbrücken: Verlag Dr Müller.

Štimac, Z. 2018. "Vom Singular zum Plural. Religion als Gegenstand deutschsprachiger Schulbuchanalysen". In *Religion und Bildungsmedien*, edited by S. Schütze, and E. Matthes, 39–50. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Stöckl, H. 2011. "Sprache – Bild – Texte lesen. Bausteine zur Methodik einer Grundkompetenz". In *Bildlinguistik. Theorien – Methoden – Fallbeispiele*, edited by H. Diekmannshenke, M. Klemm, and H. Stöckl, 45–70. Berlin: Schmidt.

Streib, H. 2005. "Wie finden interreligiöse Lernprozesse bei Kindern und Jugendlichen statt? Skizze einer xenosophischen Religionsdidaktik". In *Handbuch Interreligiöses Lernen*, edited by P. Schreiner, and U. Sieg, and V. Elsenbast, 230–243. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Taylor, M. L. 2011. *The Theological and the Political. On the Weight of the World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Tiedemann, H. 1998. *Die Erfahrung des Fleisches. Paulus und die Last der Lust*. Stuttgart: Radius.

United Nations. 2006. *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).* https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with disabilities.html

Wiater, W. (ed.). 2003. *Schulbuchforschung in Europa. Bestandsaufnahme und Zukunftsperspektiven*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Wöstemeyer, C. 2018. "Säkular-weltanschauliche Diversität in religionsbezogenen Schulbüchern in Niedersachsen". In *Schulbuch und religiöse Vielfalt. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, edited by Z. Štimac, and R. Spielhaus, 137–161. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Press.

Zima, P. V. 1989. *Ideologie und Theorie. Eine Diskurskritik*. Tübingen: Francke.