

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE TEACHING OF  
HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that **THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

SIGNATURE

GERALD MAZABOW

.....

DATE

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## SUMMARY

The advent of democracy in South Africa necessitated a radical transformation in education. It was recognised from the outset that the revision of History education was an activity that had to be accorded special consideration if the renaissance of education in South African public schools was to become a reality. Yet, precisely at a time when the nurturing of historical consciousness, especially among the youth, is so urgent an undertaking, the subject History is increasingly being judged as lacking in utilitarian purpose, and is deemed irrelevant and meaningless.

A strong need is thus felt among History educationists to strengthen History studies because of its importance not only in itself but also because a knowledge of the past is crucial to an understanding of the present. In a South African educational context this thesis attempts to make a contribution to this worthwhile endeavour. It investigates the nature, functions, changing modes and historical role of historical consciousness in the writing and teaching of History in South Africa; proposes a heightened interest in adopting an outcomes-based approach to the teaching of history; and advocates an historical consciousness approach to the teaching of History to learners in the Further Education and Training phase (schools), within the framework of the above-mentioned Outcomes-based Education system.

It recommends, among others, the training and retraining of teachers in the historical consciousness approach; the adoption of a fresh methodology; and the revamping and strengthening of the content and scope of the present curriculum to accommodate the new

historical consciousness approach. The thesis concludes with a set of recommendations which could serve as a basis for the nurturing of historical consciousness in the South African History classroom.

**KEY TERMS:**

historical consciousness; Outcomes-based education; Further Education and Training phase (schools); South African public schools; History studies; learning programmes; History teaching; modes of historical consciousness; didactics of History; assessment.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Prior to the 1994 democratic election in South Africa many schools practised a traditional, highly authoritarian and teacher-centred approach to teaching (DNE 1997b.:14). In the *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (ANC 1995:37), the curriculum implemented during the apartheid era is described as one that was perpetuated by class, gender and an ethnic division which denied the development of a common citizenship or national identity in South Africa. The advent of democracy in South Africa thus necessitated a radical transformation in education. In order to redress past inequalities and promote a system of learning for all citizens that would enable them to develop to their maximum potential, the Department of National Education (DNE 1997b.:3) proposed an outcomes-based (OBE) approach to education which would gradually be implemented through a new curriculum (*Curriculum 2005*) in all schools.

In keeping with this new shift in policy formulation, it was recognised from the outset that the revision of History education was an activity that had to be accorded special consideration if the renaissance of education in South Africa was to become a reality. The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) had, already in 1992, argued for the retention of the subject in the national curriculum on the grounds that an alternative History curriculum could allow for the redress of past wrongs in the interpretation of history; restore the history of the oppressed people as part of the common heritage; and assist in the construction of a new set of common

values and identities. History, it was maintained, also teaches valuable skills and assists in the development of “historical insights into the way things are and the way they have been in both South Africa and the rest of the world” – an important dimension of general education (NEPI 1992:63).

The Report of the History/Archaeology Panel of 2000, has, of late, likewise attributed key importance to the value of teaching History and the creative nurturing of historical consciousness. It states: “When taught by imaginative teachers, the richness of history has a larger capacity than any other discipline to promote reconciliation and reciprocal respect of a meaningful kind, because it encourages a knowledge of the other, the unknown and the different” (DNE 2000:6).

At the same time, however, this new approach to instruction has raised a number of perplexing questions for the History teaching profession in South Africa. Kallaway (1995:11) has expressed serious concern concerning the dilemma facing History teachers today. He asks:

should a controversial and divisive subject like History be taught in the schools of South Africa? If so, how is it to be justified? How will those goals relate to the project of nation building, so vital to the construction of a post-apartheid citizenship ... . What historiography will we tap into for a satisfactory curriculum that redresses past imbalance but leaves space for the history of all of the people? How will we balance interpretations which variously emphasise race, colonialism, community context, ... region, class, ... gender and a multitude of other perspectives ...?

This study attempts to resolve some of these issues through the presentation of a fresh perspective on historical consciousness which would necessitate a significant reconceptualisation of History teaching in South African public schools. It draws its inspiration from the Statement by the South African Historical Society on the implications of Curriculum 2005 for History teaching in the schools which posits the belief that History remains a distinctive, well-established and internationally respected discipline which can serve a number of important and enriching social, political and cultural functions. The statement emphasizes particularly that “this is the case in our own society, a society consciously undergoing transformation: that is, a society attempting to remake itself in time” (Legassick 1998:1).

Although it will be conceded that the teaching of History is essentially a matter of practice in which the mastery of techniques of instruction (History method) plays a predominant role, the theoretical-conceptual basis upon which such practice rests is of crucial importance (Duminy & Söhnge 1987:21). In this regard, Flores (2001:146) stresses the fact that teaching is a process that goes beyond the mere application of a set of acquired techniques and skills, and not only implies the mastery of practical and more technical issues, “but it also encompasses the construction of knowledge and meaning in an ongoing and challenging dialogue with the practice”. In acknowledgement of this fact, this introductory chapter proceeds to briefly clarify some major concepts pertaining to History and History teaching which will, of necessity, be taken up and analysed in a more fundamental and comprehensive fashion in the main body of the study. Against this conceptual backdrop, the background to the study (see pp. 20-22); the



nature and origins of the problem (see pp. 23-24); the motivation for the research (see pp. 28-31); and aims of the study (see p. 32) will, subsequently, be discussed.

## **1.2 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

In this section the following concepts will be clarified: history; historical consciousness; teaching and History teaching; development; South African schools; and Outcomes-based Education.

### **1.2.1 History**

The concept “history”, as commonly used, has three levels of meaning. Firstly, it can connote the entire human past as it actually happened. Secondly, it can connote man’s attempt to study, describe and interpret that past: it is, in the words of the noted historian, Barraclough (1955:15), “the attempt to discover on the basis of fragmentary evidence the significant things about the past.” It is in this sense that the original Greco-Latin word “historia” as coined by Herodotus applies. The Greek historian asked questions wherever he went and a narrative composed by him soon became known as “historia” – “knowledge acquired through investigation”. Thirdly, it can indicate the systematic study of history, i.e. “History” as an academic discipline, a term reserved for a more precise task: a new precision of documentation and a rigorous application of critical techniques and methodology (Marwick 1970:15). German historians use the word *Historie* for the scientific study of the past as distinct from *Geschichte* which suggests “that which occurred”.

Little agreement exists among academic historians as to the nature, role and uses of History as a discipline. Although the History teaching profession need not concern itself with issues of a deep philosophical nature, key areas of these debates must be taken cognisance of, since the latter impact strongly on the manner in which the subject - History - presents itself within the school system (Farista 1996:9).

There has been a great deal of controversy about whether History should deal with current issues or concern itself solely with the past. The notable German historian, L. von Ranke (1795-1886), laid stress on a precision of documentation and “scientific” research that would enable the historian to see the past from the inside “as it really was”. His sole purpose was to let the facts “speak for themselves,” to study history “for its own sake”, an approach that was necessarily dismissive of issues of topical interest or relevance and that would not entertain the thought that history might have some message for contemporary society (Manyane 1999:50).

This notion of History did not go unchallenged. The historian B. Croce (1866-1952) declared that “history is contemporary thought about the past” and must supply the answers to the problems of our times. He was supported by American pragmatists such as J. Dewey (1859-1952), who (as quoted in Oosthuizen 1982:2) stated: “The past is actually the present, because it answers to present purposes, interests and needs.” The Rankean notion continues however to hold sway in prominent contemporary historical circles (Oosthuizen 1982:2-3).

This debate has been carried over into the History teaching profession with negative consequences. The notion that History consists of the compilation of a maximum number of

irrefutable and objective facts which must be learned “for their own sake”, and which can be “digested” during History lessons and “regurgitated during examinations” has contributed to the degeneration of History as a school discipline. Kros & Vadi (as cited in Taylor (ed.) 1993:100) comment: “the dreary procession of facts which masquerades as History in our present textbooks has been to marginalise content; to reduce its significance because it has plagued and misled and traduced and bored us for so long.” Beattie’s view (1987:10) that History’s preoccupation with current issues can distort the past when present-day learners strive to impose their thought patterns on past situations, is equally unhelpful in dealing with real classroom situations on a practical level. As Manyane (1999:8) reminds us: “Many teachers these days face up (and rightly so) to the persistent fact that they have to increasingly relate learning experience to learners’ daily lives.”

The very notion of an impersonal, value-free, objective contemplation of the past is itself subject to doubt. Carr (1990:35-36) has argued that history is influenced by the age of the historian and is also derived from the view someone has of the society they find themselves in. This contention raises the issue of the subjective nature of historical interpretation. Stanford (1994:122) asks why, if history professes to be a science, is true knowledge of the past obtained through “the subjective experience of the scholar.” Jenkins (1991:12) states categorically that subjectivity is a factor that is fundamental to the very nature of History. Tosh (1991:132) expands upon this theme: “Whereas natural events can only be understood from the outside, human events have an essential ‘inside’ dimension composed of the intentions, feelings and mentality of the actors”. Yet, this intimate involvement with the phenomenon of human experience in the past, need not hinder the authentic pursuit of the discipline History.

The approach to truly understanding the past as advanced by the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (DNE 2000:18), informed as it is by the notion of a critical scholarship whereby the past is viewed from different perspectives which alter with the viewer and with time, could be most beneficial bringing about a much-needed solution to the subjective/objective quandary which prevails in History studies at the present time.

### **1.2.2 Historical consciousness**

The past can never be brought back as a tangible reality - its actuality is contingent upon man's mental consciousness of it. But human consciousness relating to time entails far more than the intellectual process of thinking only about the past. In the way it has been defined by the German didactician, J. Rüsen (1993:66), historical consciousness, "functions as a specific orientational mode in actual situations of life in the present: it functions to aid us in comprehending past actuality in order to grasp present actuality." Rüsen (1993:67) adds a further dimension to the function of historical consciousness: in its temporal orientation historical consciousness ties the past to the present in a manner which bestows on present actuality a future perspective. "Hence, stated succinctly, history is a mirror of past actuality into which the present peers in order to learn something about its future."

According to the above portrayal of the function of historical consciousness, which has been adopted for purposes of this study, the latter can thus be conceived as an act of cognition which gives life a temporal frame and "a conception of the 'course of time' flowing through the mundane affairs of daily life" (Rüsen 1993:66). Yet, consciousness of this nexus between

past, present and future still remains incomplete unless accompanied by an active engagement in “experiencing time to be meaningful, acquiring the competency to attach meaning to time, and developing this competency” (Rüsen 1993:85).

Laville & Martineau (as quoted in Levesque 2001:1) have argued that historical consciousness contributes greatly to a number of civic competencies for democracy which are not necessarily developed in other disciplines. Among these are a sense of perspective, and the development of empathy, individual autonomy and identity. Historical consciousness must, of course, be based on historical content; Kan (1999:92) has correctly noted that without the prior internalisation of historic knowledge the formation of historical consciousness would not be possible. The concept “historical consciousness” is gaining increasing international significance in the field of History studies at the present time (De Keyser 1999:Internet). Important in this regard is the fact that many History educationists in Europe, America and Canada no longer identify the term “history” merely with the past. Rather, history is conceived as a process that embraces and comprehends present and future. With this new perception, the development of historical consciousness functions as the primary element in determining the education value of the subject History (Poulsen 2001:Internet).

### **1.2.3 Teaching and History teaching**

Akinpelu (1981:190) defines the concept of “teaching” as: “the conscious and deliberate effort by a mature or experienced person to impart information, knowledge and skills ... to an immature or less experienced person, with the intention that the latter will learn or come to

believe what he/she is taught on good grounds". Gunter (1980:10), in turn, defines teaching as "an activity by which a human being, usually, but not necessarily a child or youth ... is taught by another person, as a rule ... an adult to know certain things." A combination of these two viewpoints defines the authentic nature of teaching: the teaching act comprises two activities, namely, instruction and learning, which are inseparably linked to one another. Teaching is not a one-sided activity in which only the teacher is active while the learner remains passive; both teacher and learner are actively involved (Fraser, Loubser & Van Rooy 1991:27-28). Yet, while it is generally conceded that good instruction enhances learning, the importance of proper learning procedures is not always acknowledged; Van der Stoep (1972:24) emphasises the fact that there is, indeed, much more to learning than instruction, and because this so, it is incumbent upon the teacher to pay special regard to the psychological aspects of learning, and to the possible ways that effective learning can take place in the classroom.

Peters (1966:25) argues that teaching should not be confused with education. Education is a normative term, that is to say, a word that "lays down criteria to which activities or processes must conform" if they are to rank as educational. These "worth-while" activities, in which both teacher and learner participate, include the inculcation of the traditional liberal values of justice, freedom, respect for persons, consideration of the interests of others, without which no civilized community could continue to exist. Teaching, on the other hand, as the transmission of knowledge and skills, may be morally neutral or even pernicious, something education could never be. This viewpoint has been adopted by Griessel (1987:17) who maintains that, whereas education has a moral base, teaching pertains more directly to the aspect of the learner's becoming more intellectually mature.

Derbolav (as quoted in Fraser *et al* 1991:20) sees the fundamental didactic problem as the antinomy between education as the development of the conscience on the one hand, and teaching as the inculcation of knowledge on the other. Working within the dialectical tradition, he states the present problem as one in which a reconciliation must be found between thesis (education) and antithesis (teaching) by means of the creation of a synthesis (educational teaching). In this manner teaching becomes an indispensable means of education.

No teaching is neutral: it contributes to the development of the learner's personality and his/her attitude to life and to the world. Teaching has a formative influence and to this end it has become increasingly important to educationists that over-emphasis of the intellect should be stringently avoided and a positive directional guidance encouraged which might indicate to the learner the significance of his/her being human-in-the-world (Van Vuuren 1976:350).

History teaching is an appropriate vehicle for the fulfillment of the above ideal. The first value of Historical study does, of course, lie in its basis of solid facts. Yet, both teachers and learners need to be constantly conscious of the question – “What is this knowledge for?” For History teaching to retain its honoured place in education, teachers must demonstrate that History imparts more lasting values and attitudes than factual knowledge alone. In this regard Silberman (1970:135-156) insists that when selecting subject matter the teacher should first attempt to determine its intrinsic “meaningfulness” in terms of personality and character development, and only then its meaning for the learner in terms of knowledge, proficiency and skill.

The concept “History teaching” identifies two components, namely, “History” and “teaching”. Two scientific fields are thus involved: on the one hand, the science which occupies itself with the discipline, History, and on the other, Didactics – the science which studies teaching and learning (Stuart & Pretorius 1985:1). Fraser *et al* (1991:3) point out that as a science, didactics, like all other sciences, attempts to arrive at “valid, well-founded and verified conclusions” concerning all facets of learning and teaching, and it does so by its own methods of investigation. Because teaching and learning form an important part of a person’s existence, he/she as a didactician “will not only observe and experience these aspects, but also explain them in terms of their origins, nature, essential characteristics and meaning”.

In addition to Didactics, the particular subject didactics, which can be seen as specific disciplines of Didactics, play an indispensable role. Fraser *et al* (1991:7) explain further that when teaching and learning are studied in so far as they have a bearing on a particular subject, the subject didactics of that particular subject is in question:

Each subject didactics is practiced against the background of general didactic theory, which forms a frame of reference. However, general didactic aspects are interpreted, particularised and implemented in terms of the unique appeal that each subject makes to the participants in the teaching-learning activities that form part of the subject.



#### **1.2.4 Development**

The concept “development” in this thesis means, essentially, an “unfolding” of the natural cognitive and affective faculties of the learner. This is in accordance with Duminy & Söhne (1987:13-16), who regard any instructional system in which learning is seen as causal-mechanistic as undidactic because it reduces man to “a mere ... cog in a machine and very little remains of his unique qualities such as personality, freedom, will, imagination and faith.” Govender (1992:64) states that the aim of assisting the learner towards adulthood can only be fulfilled if education is based on the didactical principal of learning. In the forming activity every faculty of the human being’s existence is affected. This includes the whole process involving the physical, intellectual and the spiritual development of the learner.

The intellectual development of the learner accelerates during his/her secondary school years (Gordon 1975:322-325). During this period he/she arrives at conceptual thought, an ability which opens up a whole new world. The act of thinking becomes more purposeful and he/she is engaged more often and for longer periods in the act of thinking and handles abstractions with purpose and assurance (Van Aswegen 1976:19). The secondary school learner not only discovers and comes to a fuller understanding of the world in which he/she lives, but he/she also discovers that life has meaning. He/she questions and reasons about the values, norms and attitudes of the society of which he/she forms a part and becomes aware of his/her own responsibilities and task in life (Dreyer & Duminy 1983:64).

In developing historical consciousness the learner employs an ever-burgeoning range of specifically intellectual skills which relate to, among others, the development or unfolding of several personal qualities, such as curiosity; the willingness to explore personal values and attitudes and to relate these to other peoples; openness to the possibility of change in values and attitudes; and interest in human affairs. Stewart (1975:62) emphasizes that imagination and empathy must, however, play a primary role in this process; he reiterates that for teaching to be humane it must strive to harmonise the intellectual and the emotional.

### **1.2.5 South African schools**

During the National Party government's term of office (1948-1994), education had, in accordance with the latter's apartheid ideology, been provided along racial lines. In terms of the *Population Registration Act* (30 of 1950) the entire population was classified into one of four racial groups, namely, Whites, Coloureds, Africans and Indians. Consequently, in order to further enforce segregation, the government created special systems of education for each of these groups. With the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the separate system notion has been abolished in favour of a single education system for all racial groups throughout the country (DNE 2002a.:4).

In accordance with the *South African Schools Act* (84 of 1996) which promotes access to quality education without discrimination, the government provides two types of schools – public schools and independent schools. In the realm of the public schools two models, the Model B and the Model C systems of schools are provided, and both are funded by the state in

equal measure. In a Model B system the school is the sole responsibility of the government and state funding is utilised partly for staff salaries and partly for operations and administration. All staff is appointed by the Department of Education; the building maintenance is the responsibility of the state; the Minister of Education determines the learner's admission; and school fees are not compulsory and not enforceable. In a Model C system, however, the funding is ear-marked entirely for staff salaries. Here all staff is selected and appointed by the governing body, a parent teacher association which is elected by parents with representatives of teachers and learners also being members. The school determines the learner admissions policy and school fees are legally enforceable, but no learner under the age of sixteen can be removed for non-payment of fees (DNE 1996b.: 6, 24, 38-45, 73-83).

In addition to these public schools, private education in South Africa has established a network of independent schools, the majority of which seek justification for their existence on religio-cultural grounds, while at the same time maintaining a non-racial ethos (MacKenzie 1993:287). The home school is another recent innovation introduced into the school system, which allows, under certain circumstances, for learners to receive instruction in their parental or any other home (Ministry of Education 1999:33).

The desire on the part of the government for the gradual integration of learners of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds into a unitary school system, has to a large degree been attained in the public multi-cultural schools that have been established mainly in the urban areas of the country where the integration of the various ethnic groups is most feasible. This ideal has been less successfully attained in the rural areas of the country. In an assessment of

the situation in these schools the Ministry of Education reported, in 1999, that a progressive and durable basis for improvements in the quality of learning were not yet accessible to the majority of poor people. It stated: “inequality is still writ large in the educational system, and too many families are on the receiving end of an unacceptably low standard of educational delivery (Ministry of Education 1999:68).

Much has been said in praise of the universal public school. The words of the American educationist, Brubacher (1962:142-143), for example, are of particular pertinence when considering the present situation of public schools in South Africa. He declared: “By getting the youth of various races ... religious faiths, political convictions, and economic circumstances together in the same school, where they can rub cultural elbows, we have one of the best assurances for keeping open the highways of social intercommunication.” At the same time Brubacher (1962:142-143) asks whether it is not part of the birthright of freedom for minority groups dissatisfied with the shortcomings of the public school to set up independent schools of their own “to form the kind of curriculum from the social heritage which they peculiarly want for their children.”

Whatever the type or model, it is well to remember that the school is an institution established and maintained by the community. A particular community gives the school a mandate to educate and teach its children according to its norms, values, religious beliefs and standards. As such the school does not function in isolation from society, but maintains, in all its activities, a close relationship with other social institutions such as the church, synagogue or mosque, the family home and the state. The activities at the school thus link very closely with

the life and world views, national solidarity and national aspirations of the community to which the learners of the school and their parents belong (Fraser *et al* 1991:13). Van Schalkwyk (1986:178) maintains that when, in a multi-racial society like South Africa, schools begin to assume a more heterogeneous and multi-cultural character, it is still essential for school and family to be in agreement regarding “the broad and **general** spirit and character of the community.” The school will then be more concerned with instruction and learning “in the sense of general community values”, while the family will have to be responsible for education “in the **particular** values” it wishes to inculcate.

The Ministry of Education in South Africa is aware of the importance of schools as centres of communal life. Minister K. Asmal’s Call to Action in July 1999, in which he promoted a plan known as *Tirisano* – a Sotho word meaning “walking together”, reflects the contention that:

an education system of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century cannot be built by a small group of people or even by the government. It calls for a massive social mobilisation of parents, learners, educators, communal leaders, NGO’s, the private sector and the international community, motivated by a shared vision (Ministry of Education 2001:24).

Presently, the South African public school system consists of two basic bands, namely, General Education and Training Band and Further Education and Training Band. The General Education and Training Band comprises four phases, namely, the Receptive phase (R), the Foundation phase (Grades 1 to 3), the Intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6) and the Senior phase

(Grades 7 to 9). The Further Education and Training Band comprises Grades 10, 11 and 12 (DNE 1997b.:30).

### **1.2.6 Outcomes-based Education (OBE)**

In its efforts to replace the apartheid education system, which operated in South Africa for several decades, the South African government's Department of Education proposed Outcomes-based Education (OBE) as the "new paradigm" to achieve this goal (DNE 2001:1, 2). Reflecting the values and principles of South Africa's new democratic society, OBE strives to guarantee success for all; to empower learners in a learner-centred ethos; and make schools more accountable and responsible in trying to ensure success. Its primary aim emphasizes the development of critical, investigative, creative, problem-solving, communicative future-oriented citizens (DNE 1997b.:10). It is the desire of the Department of Education that the OBE approach be gradually implemented, through, among other measures, a new curriculum (*Curriculum 2005*) in all schools throughout South Africa. In practical terms the DNE (2001:14) defines OBE as, "a process and achievement-oriented, activity-based and learner-centred" educational approach.

An examination of the official documents relating to the locally designed OBE paradigm will reveal its most basic characteristics. Several of these are listed briefly below:

- OBE places considerable emphasis on learning outcomes. The concept of "learning outcomes" is succinctly formulated in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002a:14) as follows: "A learning outcome ... is a description of what (knowledge, skills

and values) learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training Band”.

- The concept of ‘based’ in outcomes-based means, “to define, direct, derive, determine, focus and organise what we do according to the substance and nature of the learning result that we want to happen at the end of the learning process” (DNE 1996a.:24).
- OBE is oriented towards social transformation. The priority of the OBE approach is the future role that learners will play after completing their formal school education. In formulating the learning outcomes that should be demonstrated by the learners, the economic, social and political needs of the country are included. In this way learners are, “empowered through the internalisation of competencies to contribute to the development of the country” (DNE 1997b.:8); and in so doing, “to articulate, activate and energise rigorously, the South African perspective of transformation” (DNE 1996a.:17).
- An OBE approach argues against the content-based education approach of the past which often neglected the needs of the learner, the community and the business sector (ANC 1995:18). It argues in favour of the empowering and emancipation of learners through the acquisition of critical skills and attitudes, that will enable them to construct their own meanings and knowledge as well as assist them in becoming competent citizens (DNE 2002a.:12).
- An OBE approach places the role of learners rather than that of teachers in the central position, teachers becoming organisers and facilitators in the learning experiences of learners (DNE 2002a.:9).
- An OBE approach questions any assessment system that is based mainly on written and memory-work, preferring the measurement of the learner’s progress in terms of the

practical and useful abilities which can be applied by him/her as a result of learning, and not against the performance of other learners. Assessment should also “help students to make judgements about their own performance, set goals for progress and improve further learning” (DNE 2002b:18).

OBE is currently being hotly debated by educationists throughout the world. Schoeman & Manyane (2002:177) have pointed out that, even among specialists in the field there is little agreement with respect to the precise meaning of how the system is to be conceptualized. There is also the conception among teachers of a “traditional” bent that OBE polarises the teaching and learning activities and marginalises the role of teachers whom, it is thought, should play the primary role in the provision of the necessary stimulation for creativity and critical thought (Manyane 1999:16-17). Schoeman & Manyane (2002:177) mention, further, the great concern and even fear that exists within the History teaching profession, as to whether teachers will be able to master the new OBE approach to History teaching and handle it successfully in their classrooms. This concern arises particularly at a time when learner support material is lacking, and in-service teacher training is inadequate and inconsistent.

Malan (2000:28), while not unaware of OBE’s shortcomings, having expressed the view that “only time will reveal the true value of OBE”, nevertheless finds many positive sides to the new system as its transformational approach indicates. He states:

It brings about a rational focus on education as a means to an end and not an end in itself. It faces uncoordinated and *laissez-faire* educational planning,



managing and teaching practices into the background and introduces strategic educational planning that is aimed at achieving results

He concludes that educational practitioners, learners and parents would, of course, all have to play their particular roles to ensure that OBE works.

### **1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Rüsen (1993:188) regards History didactics as an integral and important part of History studies both on the university and school levels. Mainly due to his efforts, History didactics has established itself in Germany as a special discipline with its own questions, theoretical conceptions and methodological operations. Some of these questions deal with the broader issues with which History didactics is involved, namely: how does one think about history; what are history's origins in human nature; and what are its uses for human life. Rüsen reminds us that before the institutionalization and professionalization of history, the well-known saying, *historia vitae magistra* (history is the teacher of life), which defined the task of Western historiography from antiquity to the last decades of the eighteenth century, was "rooted in the social need to orient life within the framework of time" (Rüsen 1993:188).

Several pilot empirical explorations of the development of historical consciousness among children, adolescents and adults, which were largely informed by the work of Rüsen, have been conducted in Europe and Asia in recent years. Noteworthy in this regard was the major cross-cultural research project called "Youth and History: The Comparative European Project on Historical Consciousness Among Teenagers" which was carried out in nine European countries

in 1994 and 1995 under the direction of M. Anvik and B. Von Borries (Kapp 1998:105). Aware of the indisputable fact that “historical consciousness is culturally variable at the surface level (in respect to knowledge and interest)”, Von Borries set out in this project to explore a *terra incognita*, namely, “the cultural variability of the deep structure i.e. the changing relationships between interpretations of the past, perceptions of the present, and expectations of the future.” His research resulted in two highly significant hypotheses being proved, namely, that “national cultures of history construct images of the past in very different, highly specific ways, depending on their perspective, situation, interests and orientations” and that “historical images serve to **stabilize mental balances** and to **maintain a positive self-concept**” (Von Borries 1992:47-48). Smaller studies of a similar nature were conducted in Hong Kong (Kan 1999:92-100) and Latvia (Oispuu 1999:114-118).

In investigating the historical consciousness of Hong Kong students Kan, utilising typologies devised by Rüsen (see Chapter 4, pp. 160-162), sought to analyse their response as revealed through their awareness of substantive historical events. The study seeks answers to the following fundamental questions: “When students seek to understand the present or predict the future, do they make any reference to the past?” and, “When students interpret the present or future in the light of the past, are there any general ‘frames of reference’ that they use?” As a result of the study, both these questions were answered in the affirmative. Students, it was learned, saw patterns in the past that served as examples to be followed (or avoided) in the present and future; they saw historical events as being the moving force for further change and development; they tended to project the behaviour of historical figures onto themselves and these became references for their own behaviour (Kan 1999:92-99).

In Oispuu's project "Historical consciousness and national identity", carried out in 1995 among the pupils of different nationalities residing in Estonia, several questions pertaining to national belongingness, cultural identity, religion, and about simplicity-complexity of historical thinking were asked. The researcher discovered, however, that in a country such as multi-cultural Estonia, which is at present experiencing dramatic political changes and educational reforms following its release from Russian domination, a major problem is "the teaching about controversial and sensitive historical issues, promoting respect for diversity and differing values" (Oispuu 1999:115, 118).

The results of the above research will certainly be of interest to the South African History teaching fraternity; the need for fundamental change in the subject area of History education is uncontested at the present time (DNE 2001:18). For most teachers and learners this means an innovative approach to History which, as Kallaway (1995:12) expressed it:

will provide a platform for nation-building in the broadest sense ... to recognise the ideological nature of the subject and use it to develop critical capabilities and analytical skills to enable children to make sense of history and of the complex political social and economic changes through which they will live in the "new" South Africa.

## **1.4 PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.4.1 Nature of the problem**

The History/Archaeology Panel of the Values in Education Initiative (2000), in its critical analysis of the quality of the teaching of History as a school subject in South African public schools, while acknowledging the removal from the curriculum of all such white supremacist grand narratives which predominated during the apartheid era, still continue to express a sense of dissatisfaction at the direction which History has taken in the new educational situation. Having, among others, been inserted into a general Social Sciences learning area, History has been de-emphasized and diluted in schools; in consequence, many experienced teachers have been made redundant. Some schools have even come to regard History as a subject for less able learners or those with a low IQ; in consequence, History enrolments at schools and universities have taken a huge drop, and in many secondary schools steps have been taken to remove it from the curriculum altogether (DNE 2000:7).

What makes this state of affairs all the more alarming is that it is precisely the nurturing of historical consciousness, especially among the youth, which is so urgent an undertaking in South Africa at the present time. In this regard, the History/Archaeology Panel make reference in its Report to the need for the strengthening of History, because of its importance not only in itself but also because a knowledge of the past is crucial to an understanding of the present

(DNE 2000:7). The History/Archaeology Panel asserts that unless one knows something of the past, one has no informal criteria by which to assess and judge the present. This is because:

contemporary problems and complexities, like the workings of race, class and gender, have to be seen within the context of their development in time ... we live in a society in which contemporary issues are continually understood and judged within the powerful context of a past which has bequeathed a violent legacy of conquest, colonialism and apartheid.

The History/Archaeology Panel cautions against the manner in which History is presently being given scant attention as an independent school subject in schools, and where, as a result, learners are prevented from gaining a critical historical awareness of themselves and their society: “Should the formal study of history be ignored in the present, one may well run the risk of ‘robbing’ future generations of the essential knowledge and skills to contribute to sustaining an open, equable and tolerant society” (DNE 2000:8)

#### **1.4.2 Origin of the problem**

One of the major causes of the dismal state in which History as a school subject finds itself at the present time has been, among others, the overemphasis of the so-called traditional approach in the teaching of History in the past. However, the “chalk and talk” method; rote learning and memorization; lack of learner involvement; overuse of the textbook; overuse of the narrative and note-taking; and the “regurgitation” of facts, continue to plague classroom procedure today (DNE 2000:12-13). The South African system of education has, from its earliest beginnings, tended towards the glorification of the intellect and the veneration of mechanistic working

habits in which the teacher does all the thinking and the learner follows him/her. According to Peters (as cited in Baven & Hobson 1974:353) this conception is erroneous, particularly in History teaching where independent critical thinking and civic responsibility should be cultivated, and where the function of the teacher should be to act as a guide in helping learners “to explore and share a public world whose contours have been marked out by generations which have preceded both of them”.

Most History teachers are not being taught to understand themselves as “creative bearers of historical knowledge, with the potential to shape historical imagination” (DNE 2000:15). Even where teachers have the capacity to engage learners in meaningful discussion, the syllabus is usually too extensive to be effectively handled in the time allocated, with the result that insufficient time is spent ensuring that meaningful learning has taken place. Under such conditions it is easier for teachers to compel learners to learn material by rote and reproduce it in examinations (DNE 2000:14-15). This has a disastrous effect on the teaching of History.

As Owen (1991:11) points out:

Most pupils who are able to commit to memory sufficient to pass an examination, forget most of what they learn soon after the event. At best, “good” students of school history show that they have an excellent memory and at worst, they opt not to study because they are too easily bored by it.

Over the years there has also been a decline in the importance which society as a whole assigns to historic scholarship. History has come to be judged as being irrelevant and meaningless to the furtherance of the collective social aspirations of the present and is also seen to be lacking

in utilitarian purpose. In a market-driven, materialistic world its study appears to promise nothing in the way of financial inducement or career advancement (Hamerow 1987:3-4). The History/Archaeology Panel states accordingly in its Report:

While students ... would generally acknowledge that history is 'interesting' ... they would not perceive any connection between the history learned in schools and the significance of current affairs programmes, contemporary political events or even news of the economy ... . There is also an influential perception among parents ... that studying history is 'not relevant' for serving the future careers of children, unlike commerce or mathematics. (DNE 2000:13)

The utilisation of History by South Africa's previous government as an ideological tool to strengthen its hold over its citizens, has likewise impugned the legitimacy of History in the school curriculum (Taylor 1993:92). Under the guise of Christian National Education, the History syllabus during the apartheid era stressed the conflict between the different races in the region, giving rise to the belief that integration was impossible because history proved that the different peoples were incompatible (Owen 1991:9-10). In many schools teachers who have been trained in the apartheid history remain reluctant to discard old historical themes. Old textbooks often continue to be used for want of a lack of new materials (DNE 2000:16). Bam & Visser (1996:61-62) describe at length the anxiety which even highly professional History teachers experience when being challenged by the response of their learners, who come from formerly oppressed groups, to the painful and sensitive subjects which they naturally want to learn about in the classroom. This anxiety is compounded when teachers who are teaching the apartheid period are not prepared to deal with the challenge of their learners' responses and

“lack the necessary grounding to foster debate and judicious reflection because of their own limited grasp of the topic at hand” (Department of Education 2000:16).

History teaching, under the imperative of economic austerity, has also suffered from the corrosive effects of rationalisation and teacher redeployment policies. The History/Archaeology Panel reports: "Mathematics and the sciences are given protective priority and humanities subjects such as History are elbowed aside" (DNE 2000:13). The educational environment which emerges, primarily as a result of inadequate funding, is not conducive to good History teaching. There is a chronic shortage in many schools of libraries, textbooks, photocopiers, and other essential resources, sometimes even including paper (DNE 2000:16).

### **1.4.3 Statement of the problem**

Having identified the major problem areas subsumed within the nature and origin of the main problem, it is necessary at this point to formulate the actual problem of the study: The combination of factors which has given rise to the marginalisation of the subject History in South African public schools has had a negative impact on the cognitive and affective development of learners in South African public schools. Consequently, the question which this study poses at the very outset is:

**CAN THE ADOPTION OF A NEW APPROACH TO HISTORY STUDIES, NAMELY, THE APPROACH WHICH PLACES THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL**



**CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE CENTRE OF THE EDUCATIONAL TASK, RESTORE TO THE SUBJECT THE RESPECT AND DIGNITY IT FORMERLY POSSESSED; CULTIVATE AN ABILITY IN LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO OVERCOME PRESENT IMPEDIMENTS WHICH OBSTRUCT THEIR WAY TOWARDS AN AUTHENTIC KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST, AND, AT THE SAME TIME EMPOWER THEM TO CONTRIBUTE EFFECTIVELY TO THE FORMATION OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND A COMMON CITIZENSHIP BOTH IN THE PRESENT AND IN THE FUTURE?**

## **1.5 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

The researcher has for many years grappled with the meaning of the concept “historical consciousness”. At first glance it seems to signify a rare form of mental process or activity whereby the past, surely not a tangible entity accessible to the senses, becomes a reality. But this notion had little relevance to the researcher: merely contemplating historical facts without relating them to the present situation and interpreting them and their moral content in respect to imagining the future was a futile activity.

While yet an undergraduate, the researcher happened upon the following statement of Brubacher (1962:38) discussing time as an inescapable dimension of the educational process, which made an indelible impression:

The flow of time not only affects the stream of learning now, but learning has the quality it has not because of the circumstances which conditioned it a

moment or hours or even years ago ... . But if this is true of past time, it is equally true of future time ... . If the educator is to consider the past and future as current dimensions of the educative process, it will be necessary to regard the present not just as a razor-edged slice of time that is constantly being replaced but as an accordionlike span, which expands and contracts with variable portions of the past and future to suit the occasion.

All this appeared to be in harmony with the Jewish perspective on time which the researcher had imbibed from his childhood, namely, that history moves in a straight line towards a specific end which constitutes the ultimate goal of all actions and events. In the ancient Israelite tradition which was inherited by the Jewish people, past, present and future are a continuum, beginning with Creation, continuing with events occurring in history, all of which are regarded as the consequences of constant Divine intervention, and pointing to a fixed point to be reached in the future – the Messianic era (see Chapter 2, pp. 58-60).

The discovery of Rüsen's monumental work in which historical consciousness is conceived as an act of cognition which functions to aid us "in comprehending past actuality in order to grasp present actuality" (Rüsen 1993:66); which ties the past to the present in a manner which bestows on present actuality a future perspective (Rüsen 1993:67); and which contributes to "acquiring the competency to attach meaning to time" (Rüsen 1993:85), transformed and enriched the researcher's perspective upon history and the dimensions of time. But, as an educationist, the researcher had yet to establish this unique conception within the framework of didactics and subject didactics studies.

The researcher followed with interest the various initiatives towards a “new” South African History which had been implemented since the early 1990s (see Chapter 2, pp. 102-107); these efforts to change not only previous educational structures but also attitudes, values, concepts and approaches to learning could not but be greeted with approval. It was, however, the researcher’s feeling at the time that the striving to make up for past wrongs in historiography carried with it several latent dangers. These disquieting thoughts coincided with those of Bundy (as quoted in Dean & Siebörger 1995:35-36) who argued against three possible models for future History textbooks that had to be avoided at all costs if South Africa was to survive as a democracy:

- Afrocentric model: This model represents a backlash against the distortion and neglect of African history under apartheid education; it aims to establish black heroes of the past, in opposition to and to the exclusion of the white leaders who dominated the History textbooks of the past. This approach could clearly not serve the demands of a democratic, multi-cultural society.
- Conservative pluralism model: This model acknowledges the right of all ethnic groups for their own history to be treated with respect, and also urges consensus between different racial groups on a general, broad-based curriculum. Such an approach could all too easily lead to the existence of several separate “pigeonholed” histories of different regionalised or ethnic communities, each an end in itself, rather than part of an integrated South African historical whole.
- Multicultural nation-building model: This model emphasises nation-building as a most desirable aim of History education. This approach creates a tension between the political

aim of nation-building and the educational aim of teaching learners to think historically; the focusing on “nationhood” could well lead to indoctrination in the schools.

The major concern of the researcher in embarking on this study is to find an approach to the teaching of History as a subject in South African public schools that will obviate all these dangers. It is anticipated that an informed and human historical consciousness will strengthen personal and collective identity; encourage civic responsibility; and play a substantive role in fostering values of democracy and general respect for human rights.

Pragmatically, it seems plausible to assume that the data gleaned from a study of this nature will be of significance to those concerned with the teaching of History in multi-cultural schools, to whom a study of the past can serve a range of enriching social, political and cultural functions. Bam & Visser (1996:59) have reminded us that the South African public school classroom is in effect, a microcosm of the society at large in which:

all the prejudices and problems of that society, all the baggage of the past and the hopes and fears about the future are brought together. Unfortunately, however, there is no handy guide telling us how to cope with the challenges that now face us as teachers in this new history classroom.

It is hoped that this study might provide such a guide as well as induce History teachers to think more deeply about the value of a deeper understanding of the historical consciousness of those in their charge and thereby equip themselves to deal with the manifold problems (many of which have been listed in this chapter) with which they are confronted on a daily basis.

## **1.6 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The main aims of this study are:

- To document the nature, functions, changing modes and historical role of historical consciousness in the writing and teaching of History in South Africa.
- To cultivate an interest in the adoption of an outcomes-based approach to the teaching of History in South African public schools with special regard to the selection of subject methodology and syllabus content, assessment procedures and textbook construction.
- To encourage an historical consciousness approach to the teaching of History so that learners might gain a new perspective on how the society of which they are an integral part has come to be what it is, and in so doing gain a new sense of tolerance, reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect.
- To propose that the abovementioned outcomes-based approach to the teaching of History serve as a framework in which to foster historical consciousness in learners in Grades 10, 11 and 12 in South African public schools.

The study will, it is hoped, be seen to be of some significance by the curriculum developers and educational administrators in whose hands the reconstruction of History as a school subject has been entrusted.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHOD AND DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF RESEARCH**

Although the nature of this study is didactical-theoretical in conception, and constitutes an investigation of the literature rather than an empirical case study, it is nevertheless seen to be imperative that the research be carried out in accordance with the most stringent scientific criteria. The basic-scientific research method has been found appropriate for the study. The researcher adhered to the following basic steps of this method:

- Choice of a suitable topic

The topic, “The development of historical consciousness in the teaching of History in South African schools” was chosen after careful consideration of the educational value of researching such a topic. After a general overview of the available History-educational literature it was found that relatively little attention is being given to the didactics of historical consciousness at the present time. This is particularly the case in South Africa where the very concept is virtually unknown. Research into this area of didactics would, it was assumed, be of a “ground-breaking” nature and would thus make a valuable contribution to the advancement of History studies in this country.

- Literature study and interpretation of data

At the outset, it was deemed necessary for the researcher to steep himself in all the available primary and secondary source-literature dealing with the topic under investigation. Much of this specialized material was to be found in German sources. As the study progressed, a more extensive investigation into related themes (History study; outcomes-based education; subject didactics) produced an abundant yield of data all of which was critically analysed, and from

which all relevant information pertaining to the research problem was selected. The resultant conclusions arising out of this data were largely the fruits of the researcher's independent reflection upon the problem.

- Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were then formulated to guide the research process:

- In a period of profound educational change in South African public schools it is imperative that if the sense of collective identity; the preservation of traditional values; the appreciation of cultural heritage; the recognition of civic responsibility and the values of democracy; and the respect for human rights of learners are to be maintained, the best route to take in the cultivation of History studies is the path afforded by the concept historical consciousness.
- Historical consciousness as the primary element of History study, can be developed in learners within the context of the newly adopted outcomes-based approach to education, because the basic principles of outcomes-based education and History study are consonant with the highest didactical criteria, and are largely compatible with one another.

- Demarcation of the field of research

When setting out to formulate a didactical methodology to advance the development of historical consciousness in learners in South African public schools, it was decided that the scope of the investigation be limited to the Further Education and Training phase (Grades 10, 11 and 12) of the school system, because the historical consciousness approach to History study can best be implemented at a level on which learners have the greatest intellectual and emotional maturity to appreciate it. It was also found necessary, in the absence of relevant

source material on the main theme of this study, to engage in thinking which arrived at conclusions which have yet to be researched empirically to determine their validity.

## **1.8 CHAPTER DIVISIONS**

- Chapter 2 investigates the nature and functions of historical consciousness and reviews its changing modes and historical role in the writing and teaching of History in South Africa.
- Chapter 3 proposes an outcomes-based approach to the teaching of History as a framework in which to foster historical consciousness in learners in the Further Education and Training phase (schools).
- Chapter 4 proposes ways in which historical consciousness in learners might be advanced through History studies in the Further Education and Training phase (schools) and constructs an outcomes-based History learning programme to determine and assess the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools.
- Chapter 5 sets out a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. The latter could also serve as a basis for the nurturing of historical consciousness in the South African public schools using the so-called historical consciousness approach to History as a school subject.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: ITS NATURE, FUNCTIONS, CHANGING MODES AND HISTORICAL ROLE IN THE WRITING AND TEACHING OF HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

The concept “historical consciousness” appears frequently in scholarly debate about the teaching and learning of History. The assertion of the History/Archaeology Panel Report (DNE 2000:6) that “reconciliation and reciprocal respect of a meaningful kind” can be promoted “through the creative nurturing of historical consciousness”, as well as the similar affirmation in the statement by the South African Historical Society on the implications of Curriculum 2005 for History teaching in the schools that “an informed and human historical consciousness is a vital ingredient in a democratic society” (Legassick 1998:6), are but two examples of the widespread usage of the concept in South African educational circles. However, as Kapp (1998:108) has indicated, the concept remains vague in the minds of many educationists. Allen (2001:Internet) points to the fact that “historical consciousness” is often replaced by “historical awareness” or some similar term, the lack of agreement on a precise definition of this concept being “directly connected to the differences that psychologists experience when trying to pin down the concept ‘consciousness’”.

In the following section of this chapter the qualities of consciousness and historical consciousness will be more closely examined; an operational definition of the concept “historical consciousness” will be formulated; and an analysis of some basic functions of historical consciousness delineated. The ever-changing modes of historical consciousness will then be placed in historical context. Finally, an overview of History teaching in South Africa with special reference to the historical consciousness and perspectives of the various population groups involved, will be presented.

## **2.2 THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

An attempt will be made in this section to gain a rudimentary understanding of the basic essence of historical consciousness and the several functions it may perform. Initially, an enquiry will be made into the meaning and nature of “consciousness” and “collective and historical memory”. An operational definition of the concept “historical consciousness” will then be indicated, which will serve in this thesis to identify its various manifestations throughout history as a unique and conspicuous human phenomenon.

### **2.2.2 The meaning and nature of consciousness**

The concept “consciousness” has been defined by Colman (2001:160) as follows: “Consciousness – the normal mental condition of the waking state of humans, characterized by

the experience of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, awareness of the external world and self-awareness". Van Den Aardweg & Van Den Aardweg (1988:51) broaden this definition of "consciousness" by referring to a significant characteristic of this mental phenomenon, namely, its intentionality:

Consciousness pre-supposes an awareness of others, objects and one's self through thought. Consciousness is only such when it is intentionally directed. It is therefore an active quality with a directedness, a purposefulness, which is expressed as intentionality which ultimately can lead to understanding.

Meyer (1967:38) likewise stresses the fact that consciousness is not a passive orientation but is only consciousness when it directs itself to an object. Intentionality then, "concerns the directedness, purposiveness, intentional tendency of the consciousness on the object of its attention". Rao (2001:353) maintains that it is, indeed, the capacity which conscious functions have for intentional action and volitional freedom that distinguish conscious activity from the activity of machines which, however well designed, are entirely constrained to operate in a predictive pattern.

There is much controversy among philosophers and psychologists as to whether consciousness is purely a mental activity in which the human mind becomes aware of persons, situations, events, things without any question of whether the activity is introspectively conscious, or whether to be conscious is both to think and to be able to reflect on one's thought (Lormand 1998:582). Marcus (1980:191), following the latter view, has pointed out that a person apprehends his/her being in at least two ways: as an organism, and as a conscious mind. The first way entails the biological categories of awareness such as instincts, urges, felt needs, that

pertain to the material order and to being as an organic entity. The second way has two referents. They are, firstly, existence as a conscious goal-seeking individual endowed with the psychological drives necessary to perceive his/her world, formulate his/her needs intentionally, and adjust to his/her environment; secondly, existence as a self-conscious person endowed with the ability for reflective self-enquiry and understanding, and with the capacity for hope, and moral sensibility, which pertain to the existential experience of man. Man is thus able to undertake a deliberate enquiry into his/her own states of thought and feeling.

Durant (1961:267) contributes to the discourse on the nature of consciousness by discussing its constitutive function. He writes:

The mind of man is not passive wax upon which experience and sensation write their absolute and yet whimsical will; nor is it a mere abstract name for the series or group of mental states: it is an active organ which moulds and coordinates sensations into ideas, an organ which transforms the chaotic multiplicity of experience into an ordered unity of thought.

According to this point of view consciousness involves a great deal more than the mere functioning of the sense organs. It also involves the processes through which one gives meaning to the information received through the senses. These processes have been explored by psychologists who study perception. Perception, as Feldman (1987:110, 112), for example, describes it, is the attempt by the conscious mind to simplify the complex stimuli presented to it by the environment. He concludes: If we did not reduce the complex into something understandable the world would present too much of a challenge for us to function, and –

unless we lived as hermits in drab, colourless, silent caves – we would spend all our time just sorting through its myriad stimuli.

In addition, Barlow (1992:Internet) attributes a significant social role to consciousness. He states that the fact that we can report our plans and associated subjective experiences makes all the difference to our social behaviour, for this is how we establish links with one another, with our past, and with our future. Each culture conditions the culture of its members: it shapes the way they perceive the world and conceive of their own identity within it.

Gleitman, Fridlund & Reisberg (1999:261) see memory as also playing an equally prominent role in the organization of the world:

Whereas perception concerns the organization of current stimuli, memory ... concerns the organization of past ideas and events ... . Without memory there would be no then but only now ... we would be condemned to live in a narrowly circumscribed present, but this present would not even seem to be our own, for there can be no sense of self without memory of the events that shaped our lives.

Memory remains crucial to one's sense of personal and group identity and significance. If a person had no memory, he/she never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects which constitute the self of the person (Southgate 1996:37).

McClay (2003:Internet) clearly asserts that without the aid of memory, “one cannot learn, use language, pass on knowledge, raise offspring, or even dwell in society ... . A culture without memory will necessarily be barbarous”.

### 2.2.3 Collective memory and historical memory

G.W.F. Hegel, in his *Verlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (1927:97-98), states that without memory of the past there can be no history in the sense of experienced events which are meaningful to the collective that is aware of them. Without collective memory there are no laws and no justice, no political structures, and no collective purposes.

This view has been adopted with conviction by Funkenstein (1993:4-5) who, while conceding that consciousness and memory can be attributed only to individuals who act, are aware, and remember, insists too that “collective memory” is by no means a mistaken term, because “no memory, not even the most intimate and personal, can be isolated from the social context, from the language and the symbolic system, moulded by the society over centuries”. This view of the social structuredness of any memory was given great prominence early in the twentieth century by Halbwachs (1925:172-173; 188), who insisted that people acquire or construct memory not as individuals but as members of society, and they recall their memories in society. According to this view, memories are not immune to the passage of time and thus changeless. Indeed, rearranging the past, the deformation of recollection, might be a deliberate societal intention. Halbwachs (1925:188) wrote: “Depending on its circumstances and point in time, society represents the past to itself in different ways: it modifies its conventions”. Hutton (1993:17-18) explains that, according to Halbwachs:

we do not evolve an objective past; we place its remembered imagery within the many social conditions of our present world ... . Such an approach ... is

characterized by its relativity. What matters are present circumstances and the groups to which we give our allegiance.

Weissberg (1995:15) similarly holds the view that events can only be recalled if they fit within a framework of contemporary interests. Memories are, therefore, not immune to the passage of time and thus changeless. Rather: “Collective memory adjusts to and reshapes a system of present-day beliefs”.

Funkenstein (1993:81) contrasts collective memory with historical memory – that is, with the reconstruction of the past by historians which is rooted in scientific research. He writes:

The historian demands that we ignore the present and its meaning as much as possible, that we avoid anachronisms and the tendency to project our concepts on the conditions of the past. Collective memory, by contrast, is insensitive to the differences between periods ... its time is monochromatic ... . People, events, and historic institutions of the past serve as prototypes for the collective memory.

Blight (2003:Internet) writes in similar vein that, while history is secular and belongs to everyone, “memory is often treated as a sacred set of absolute meanings and stories possessed as the heritage or identity of a community”.

Yet, despite the above differentiation, Funkenstein (1993:11) finds a strong bond between collective memory and historical memory. The modern historian seldom abandons the horizon of his/her collective memory altogether. The historian’s writing reflects the past images shared

by his/her larger community: “images he embellishes and endows with scholarly respectability”.

In like manner Katriel (1999:100-101) maintains that the categories of “history” and “memory” are dialectically related, co-existing as part of our cultural consciousness and each contributing to our experience of both past and present. He points out that although historiographical research addresses issues relating to the representation of the past, in the context of history, from a cultural perspective, an interest in the role played by the past in the present from a cultural perspective, must:

take us beyond the context of official history writing and explore other social contexts in which the past is reinvoked or represented ... . Heritage museums and sites which have become a ubiquitous feature of contemporary Western societies might serve as real environments in which collective recollection of the past can take place.

Holtorf (2003:Internet) defines history culture as comprising all occasions where the past is “presenced” in everyday social life; it is the practical articulation of historical consciousness in the life of a society. This includes heritage sites, museums, exhibitions, historical novels, television documentaries, narrated folktales, guided tours to ancient monuments and other sites of memory. He writes:

In so many diverse contexts, interpretations of the past do not always follow academic habits and conventions ... . In our history culture there is no



fundamental split between **memory and history, past and present** are united, and exact dating is of little relevance.

#### **2.2.4 An operational definition of the concept “historical consciousness”**

The concept “historical consciousness” has long been part of the lexicon of historians, yet there is no unanimity among them as to how it, or its exact function, should be defined. When, in 1994/1995, a project was undertaken simultaneously in 26 European countries to measure the role of historical consciousness in the life-orientation of adolescents, the representatives of the 26 different educational systems, ethnic groups and cultural manifestations involved in the setting up of the survey, agreed amongst themselves not to attempt to reach a consensus on what historical consciousness is or does, but opted, instead, to work with an operational rather than a theoretical definition of the concept. Kapp (1998:108) clarifies the reason for this general compliance as follows:

In reading the national representatives comments on the national data of the 26 countries, it becomes apparent that they do not emphasise the same things. In some cases historical consciousness is almost directly associated with political or religious awareness, in other cases with political socialisation and in some with social psychology and group behaviour.

What the group did agree upon was:

that historical consciousness is characterised by a complex correlation between interpretation of the past on the one hand, perception of present reality and

future expectations on the other hand, and that this correlation is constantly changing (Anvik & Von Barries as quoted in Kapp 1998:109).

This operational definition was based on that devised by the German didactician and philosopher of History, J. Rüsen (1993), who, while recognising the fact that the past is entirely contingent upon man's mental consciousness of it, points out that human consciousness relating to time entails far more than the mere intellectual process of reflecting about the past. As content of historical consciousness, history, he asserts, is a relationship between the present and future which appears with and in the remembered past (see Chapter 1, pp. 7-8). In this context historical consciousness is obligatory, "it is the balancing act of man on the tightrope of time, that is strung between that which is 'no more' and which is 'not yet' and on which the concrete and real human life of the present is achieved (Rüsen as quoted in Wilschut 2003:Internet).

According to Rüsen's portrayal of the function of historical consciousness, the latter can thus be conceived as an act of cognition which gives life "a conception of the 'course of time' flowing through the mundane affairs of daily life" (Rüsen 1993:66). Yet consciousness of this nexus between past, present and future still remains incomplete unless accompanied by an active engagement in "experiencing time to be meaningful, acquiring the competency to attach meaning to time, and developing this competency" (Rüsen 1993:85).

In the key note address which he delivered to the South African Society for History Teaching in 1990, Rüsen (1990:135-137) clarified the concept of historical consciousness as follows:

Historical consciousness is defined by the fact that it is a consciousness, an awareness, a presentation of the past ... it is the procedure and the entire system of mental operations, by which the past is memorized. But memorizing the past means to relate it to present day life, to combine both of them with each other. Historical memory directs, so to speak, the past to present day life situations ... . The past plays a role in our consciousness, constituting history as a cultural factor of our lives in order to solve present day life problems.

In a world of accelerating change, historical consciousness is thus an invaluable aid in solving “those problems which have to do with the experience of temporal change and the necessity of adjusting human activity to this experience”.

Marcus (1980:192) explains that it is by virtue of people’s potentiality for self-reflection that they come to the realization of the inherent temporality of their worldly presence. He writes:

Self-consciousness depends on the capacity of the mind for the awareness of time, and for some form of temporal ordering. Only the sense of continuum enables the mind to become conscious of the unity of the self from one moment to another, through the succession of ever-changing experiences and concerns. By means of his temporal sense the individual links his present state to his recollection of past events and situations, as well as to his future objectives.

Marcus (1980:192-193) concludes that man’s unique consciousness of history thus arises from his/her power to project this temporal organization of his/her own experiences to the ordering of the collective life of the community:

It entails the transposition of the sense of his own ongoing identity amid change to the continuity and discontinuity of nations, institutions, values, knowledge, traditions, etc. The basic temporal dimensions of historical thought – origins and development, growth and decline, rise and fall, stasis and process, being and becoming – are all extrapolations from this self-reflection and personal memory.

## **2.2.5 An analysis of some basic functions of historical consciousness**

On the basis of the above elucidations regarding the nature of historical consciousness, one might, for purposes of this study, attempt to outline in greater detail some basic functions which historical consciousness may be seen to fulfill.

### **2.2.5.1 The perception of the inter-relatedness between past and present**

Rüsen's (1993:66-67, 85) conception of historical consciousness suggests that although the past is conventionally regarded as the most dominant component of history, one of the major functions of historical consciousness is to discern not only those past events which are merely a series of chronologically consecutive moments occurring in time, but, more significantly, also those past events which have a relevance for the present as well. According to this perception, the present becomes a dimension of history, being in reality the fulfillment of the past, and, as a component of history, the present serves to reflect the value a person attaches to the past.

Several philosophers and historians have contributed greatly to the clarification of the aforementioned concept. Jaspers (1953:271), for example, writes:

A universal view of history and consciousness of one's present situation mutually sustain one another ... . The deeper the foundations I acquire in the past, the more outstanding my participation in the present course of events ... . The depth of the Now becomes manifest only hand in hand with past and future, with memory, and with the idea of that toward which I am living.

The inborn historical consciousness in almost every individual serves to arouse curiosity and a sense of wonder about the past; an awareness, as Trevelyan (as quoted in Marwick 1970:14) has expressed it, of "the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth ... walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing after another ...".

Lowenthal (1985:185) affirms the view that one cannot forget the past: "The past surrounds and saturates us; every scene, every statement, every action retains residual content from earlier times. All present awareness is grounded on past perceptions and acts." As such, pastness becomes an integral part of man's being, "pervading not only artifacts and culture but the very cells of our bodies" (Bergson 1922:20).

Best (2001:Internet) maintains that history begins only "when human beings first differentiated 'now' from 'then' ... when they realize they have a past that is useful to know, interpret, relate, study and preserve ...". The so-called postmodern rejection of history has, according to Best

(2001:Internet), led to the decline of historical knowledge, historical consciousness and imagination and “a deteriorating ability to situate the present within a larger system of historical references and to envisage an alternative future.”

Giroux (as quoted in Bam 2000:Internet) expresses his disquiet at the contemporary loss of interest in history both among students and the public at large which he terms “a deplorable social phenomenon” and “a crisis in historical consciousness”. Historical consciousness, he maintains, is of the essence, because it is through historical consciousness that people who study the past are enabled to question those economic, political and social structures that shape their daily lives in the present. Tosh (1991:29) similarly emphasizes the purpose of studying the past as providing “a much-needed historical perspective on some of the most pressing problems of our time”.

### **2.2.5.2 The attribution of meaning and orientation to life**

Vrey (1979:15) asserts that a person continually constitutes his/her life-world by using his/her genetic potential; psychological abilities; and culturally-derived norms and values, “all constituted as one dynamic, interacting whole in which he is involved and to which he assigns meaning.” Although the understanding of meaning pre-supposes a certain cognitive structure, a person is involved as a totality in the relations which he/she finds meaningful. In this regard Piaget (1954:145) remarks:

Consciousness is essentially a system of meanings that may be cognitive (perceptual, conceptual, etc.) or affective (values with a connative factor being

implied here). These two (cognitive and affective) aspects of meaning go together; they cannot exist independently ... .

A major function of historical consciousness is to ascribe meaning and significance to man's temporal existence. Southgate (1996:53) maintains that man, uncomfortable with the chaos of a meaningless past, imposes a meaningful pattern upon it: "What matters is that there is something which, looking back, gives our life some point – that there is something which serves, at least in part, to confirm our sense of a personal and purposeful identity". Reeves (2002:8) believes that the current individual search for "roots" with its enthusiastic recording of oral reminiscences before they are lost, testifies to this instinct for saving the past and thus preserving one's self-identity. Mandler (2002:28) speaks about the great imaginative power that an awareness of history affords us, to convey our modern selves into alien past situations which allow us to highlight our own values and assumptions and thus give them meaning. He writes: "In this aspect history asks us not to lose ourselves in the past but to view the past from our own standpoint and to help us to define it more clearly".

Marcus (1980:10), in answering the question, "How do we give meaning to our understanding of the historical process", argues that history may be given meaning by being viewed as "the conscious perpetuation of man's moral sensibility." Consequently, "it is by a person's realization that he is participating in the transmission and preservation of moral concern that he can transcend his finitude." It is the sense of this responsibility for maintaining the presence of moral sensibility in the world that provides man "with a temporal form of 'immortality' or, more accurately, of immortalization" (Marcus 1980:10). McClay (2003:Internet) likewise

asserts that without historical consciousness there are no viable rules of conduct, no standard of justice or basis for restraining passions and sensing the consequence of one's actions. Study of the past should cause us to recognize the ways that the past has authority over us. Historical consciousness, he reiterates, "is cultivation of respect ... for the ... formative agents and foundational principles that, although no longer tangible, have made possible what is worthy in our own day".

Rüsen (1993:68) has commented that "by means of historical identity, the human self expands its temporal extension beyond the limits of birth and death, beyond mere mortality." Marwick (1970:14) writes in like manner: "There exists in the human imagination an instinctive wish to break down the barriers of time and mortality and so to extend the limits of human consciousness beyond the span of a single life." According to Rüsen (1993:68), a familiar example of such "temporal immortality" is national identity. "Nations often locate their wellsprings in a hoary and ancient past, and project an unlimited future perspective embodying national self-assertion and development".

### **2.2.5.3 The nurturing of a sense of future-orientation**

Jaspers (1953:141) maintained that: "A conception of history intended to cover the totality of human affairs must take in the future ... . For to renounce the future is to render the historical picture of the past final and complete and hence to falsify it." A history that deals merely with that which is past and remains withdrawn from the struggle of the day is no longer appropriate. Jaspers (1953:141) concludes, "it is as crucially necessary to look at the present



from the viewpoint of the future as from that of the past. The ideas we have of the future guide the manner in which we look into the past and the present”. Carr (1990:121) supports this view:

The absolute in history is not something in the past from which we start; it is not something in the present, since all present thinking is necessarily relative. It is something still incomplete and in the process of becoming – something in the future towards which we move, which begins to take shape only as we move towards it, and in the light of which, as we move forward, we gradually shape our interpretation of the past.

Riggs (2001:Internet) contributes to this debate. He opines that apart from enabling us to understand the present, historical consciousness projects “a vision of our relationship as groups sharing this earth into the future”. Without historical consciousness Riggs (2001:Internet) claims: “we deny the dynamic of historical transformation and we inhibit our ability to be intentional moral agents, to be subjects rather than pawns of history”.

Heller (1993:50-55) sees the constant drive towards the transcendent future, the regulative and constitutive principle in European history: “Hope is a historical principle; moreover, it is the principle of history ... future oriented histories are all guided, if sometimes unconsciously, by this principle” (Heller 1993:51).

Although man can recall the events of the past, what will transpire either in the near or remote future is unpredictable. The future, as Du Plooy & Kilian (1990:148) have described it, “is featurized by openness: anything may occur at any moment and in a certain place.” Despite

this uncertainty man plans for the future. Activities in the present are directed toward making life more meaningful later on. In so doing he/she meets a challenge which proves advantageous: “It is indeed good for man to meet a *mysterious* future: his spirit remains alert and active to solve possible problems in terms of experience gained now and in the past” (Du Plooy & Killian 1990:148). According to Van Zyl (1977:271) faith in the meaning of the unknown, even threatening mystery, impels man to persevere in carrying out his/her life-task.

Bohannan (1995:192) points out that people look at the future through “visions” and “scenarios”. A “vision” he defines as “a mental image produced by the imagination that may even have a mystical or supernatural dimension.” He also acknowledges that the word “vision” in today’s political world is also used to indicate a clearly communicated set of goals for the future. A “scenario,” on the other hand, Bohannan (1995:192) defines as “a model of an expected sequence of events.” “Visions”, then, are based on hope; “scenarios” are based on knowledge of cultural process.

De Vries, Basson & Steyn (1982:112) speak of two approaches to the future which yield, respectively, predictive and prescriptive knowledge. Predictive knowledge regarding the future, they maintain, derives from both the present and the past; through an analysis of trends, certain predictions can be hazarded as to the likely course of development in future. Prescriptive knowledge of the future derives from a previously adopted position or view as to what the future should be. Verster (1986:117) lends clarification to this view:

If the future is to be ‘different’ then the current situation must be changed in the sense that the current course of events must be stopped and reversed, which

inevitably means that existing values and moral principles will have to be jettisoned and new ones set up in their place.

Rüsen (1993:66) has continuously emphasised that one of the major functions of historical consciousness is to tie the past to the present in a manner which bestows on present actuality a future perspective:

The historical interpretation of the present must enable us to act – that is, it must facilitate the direction of our intentions within a temporal matrix ... . Historical consciousness has a practical function: it bestows upon actuality a temporal direction, an orientation which can guide action intentionally by the agency of historical memory. This function can be termed ‘temporal orientation’.

Although the above-mentioned functions of historical consciousness are basic and common to all humans, they manifest themselves in different ways over time. A well-developed sense of a meaningful nexus between past-present-future has, for most of human history, remained elusive, as the following section will illustrate.

## **2.3 MODES OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

Time is a universal phenomenon with which all man's intellectual and emotional experiences are interwoven; everything that happens to man, whether as an active initiator of events or as a passive participant therein, occurs within the framework of time; man is thus rightly described as being an inextricable part of temporal reality (Verster 1986:94). Yet, man's consciousness of the past, in contrast to his/her sense of time, is not identical at all times and in every place. According to Marcus (1980:37), historical consciousness presupposes "the development of a particular rationale of history and of a distinct *Weltanschauung*", which are particularly affected by the material and moral circumstances of the age and society in which this consciousness is exercised. In this section a brief survey will be made of the several levels of historical consciousness which have been manifest at different periods in history.

### **2.3.2 A brief survey of the several variant modes of historical consciousness at different periods in history**

In this section the following periods of history will be examined to determine the level of historical consciousness which appears to have prevailed during each period: the pre-literate age (before approx. 2000 BCE); the age of the ancient Israelites and the Hebrew prophets (approx. 1200-586 BCE); the age of Greek antiquity (approx. 800-338 BCE); the age of Imperial Rome (approx. 200 BCE-410 CE); the age of Christian antiquity (approx. to 500 CE);

the Middle Ages (approx. 500-1500 CE); the Renaissance and its aftermath (approx. 1400-1700 CE); The Enlightenment and its aftermath; and the Twentieth Century.

### **2.3.2.1 The pre-literate age (before approx. 3000 BCE)**

In pre-literate societies people experienced time as an all-pervading, albeit mysterious, power, which influenced every aspect of their lives. The repetitive natural events which they regularly encountered and which impacted upon them (the day and night cycle; the annual cycle of the seasons; the phases of the moon), served as orientation points as regards their experience and measurement of time, leading them, subsequently, to perceive time as moving in an everlasting cycle or circle (NEB 1987:653). Gilderhus (1987:Internet) maintains that, for ancient peoples, these familiar and predictable patterns of nature became a way of organizing the unfamiliar and unpredictable happenings in the human world.

The thesis that pre-historic societies had no sense of the past held sway in historical circles for many years: Jaspers (1953:49), for example, argued that during prehistory, due to lack of written documents, awareness of origins and the factual knowledge of historic events, the past was necessarily unknown. Vogt (as quoted in Holtorf 2003:Internet) stated similarly that history only commenced with the invention of writing and the perusal of proper sources; prehistory was “the childhood of humanity and only when people learn to write did they leave a state of naiveté and gain a higher form of historical consciousness.”

This view has been discredited by modern-day anthropologists such as Bradley (1991:209-219), who have inferred on the basis of comprehensive ethnologic material, the existence of a sense of history as a universal human phenomenon in an age long before the calendar was devised. It has been surmised that it was common practice even among the most primitive societies to conjure up the past by telling stories of bygone days. These stories were always linked to certain people, and frequently to places where the events took place, and when primitive man entered these locations “the memory was revised like a piece of wood catching fire” (Kölbl & Straub 2001:Internet). Landmarks were often set up as memorials of noteworthy incidents that occurred in the past and these served as “a temporal topography from which a community derived its orientation and identity” (Kölbl & Straub 2001:Internet).

Gosden & Lock (1998:2-12) support this view and argue that all prehistoric societies oriented their actions in the present with either a genealogical or mythical past in mind. The re-uses, during the Bronze and Iron Age, of locales in the landscape that had been used continuously and discontinuously over a long period of time points to “a significance of the ancestors and mythical beings that were associated with these places”. Yet, as Cohen (1961:9) has maintained, although such activities were carried out by almost all pre-literate societies to strengthen and extend the meaning of past events, few had a consciousness of history, that is, “a conception or picture of the whole course of human events as a continuous unitary play in which successive generations or eras play distinctive parts.” Cohen (1961:9) further indicated that these peoples were unable to see any significance in the changes which time wrought in the patterns of human life; despite the passage of time their general perspective of the human scene remained unaltered.

In recent years historians and others have emphasized that historical consciousness is much more than merely a strong feeling of belonging to a particular culture with its own ancient traditions (Holtorf 2001:Internet). Kölbl & Straub (2001:Internet) insist that historical consciousness “is initially linked to that consciousness of historicity which is expressed as an awareness of contingency in a world constituted by change”. They aver that it would indeed be naïve to understand historical consciousness as merely a kind of general consciousness of time and narrative competence. To Kölbl & Straub (2001:Internet), historical consciousness is “a conscious and reflective act ... linked to a specific conception of reality, which radically temporalises and dynamises all ‘being’”.

#### **2.3.2.2. The age of the ancient Israelites and the Hebrew prophets (approx. 1200-586 BCE)**

The ancient Israelites had come to perceive God not only in Nature but also in the destinies of man. Indeed, the Israelites were the only people of antiquity who had the supreme religious duty of remembering the past because their traditional histories commemorated the working of God’s plan for His chosen people (NEB 1987:20, 623). Hertz (1971:295) has pointed out that it was not without reason that, in the first of the Ten Commandments, God is designated as the One who liberated Israel from Egypt: “He had revealed Himself to Israel in a great historic deed ... the God who saved Israel from slavery had a moral claim, as their Benefactor and Redeemer, on their gratitude and obedience”. Hertz (1971:935-936) also draws one’s attention to the fact that of all the peoples of antiquity, only Israel conceived the whole human scene on

earth as a unity, from its very beginning till the end of time. Thus Scripture begins not with the Exodus, but with the Creation of the world and the birth of man.

According to Berdyaev (1934:28) the consciousness of history, the feeling for the full reality and significance of temporal events, found its fullest expression in the Hebraic heritage of civilization. He wrote: “An authentic conception of history was foreign to Hellenic consciousness. Its origin must be sought rather in the consciousness and spirit of ancient Israel. It was the Jews who contributed the concept of ‘historical’ to world history”.

The ancient Israelites did not adopt the cyclical idea of time because the Hebraic mind did not think of history as a series of cycles without ultimate meaning. As Hyatt (1947:89) maintained: “History was linear: the past itself showed purpose, and the past contained promises which could be fulfilled only in the future.” The Hebrew prophet also played a primary role in raising the historical consciousness of the Jews. The prophet was pre-eminently the interpreter of the past in which he found revealed the Divine will, judgement and redemptive purpose; in addition, the prophet looked forward to the Messianic age: “in the prophetic vision, time is primarily future: past and present take on significance in terms of that to which they are directed” (Cohen as quoted in Herberg 1951:194).

The Old Testament is, *inter alia*, the principal source for the study of the history of the ancient Israelites from their particular perspective. In a searching analysis of the biblical record, Soggin (1989) has demonstrated that in outlining their history the ancient Israelites went far beyond a mere chronicle which narrates facts as such. Soggin (1989:41-42) concludes: “Israel



begins from its present situation and seeks the cause of that in the past, chooses only those events and those figures which it considers relevant ... in this way a consciousness developed which has few parallels in antiquity.

Irwin (2003:Internet), likewise calls attention to the fact that in the Old Testament one meets, for the first time, history on a world scope:

the tenth chapter of Genesis is ... an astonishing document revealing the writer's knowledge of the world of his time, and even more remarkable, his recognition of the essential unity of the entire human process. And this was ages before the notion of universal history dawned on the West.

Irwin (2003:Internet) asserts that the authors of the Old Testament, writing frankly from an assumed point of view, had avowed that history has meaning:

Their history fulfilled the *sine qua non* of great historiography, that it must be written against a great background – an epic theme as it were – And for their history that theme was of cosmic scope and scale – nothing less, in fact, than man's being in a world of incalculable power and mystery.

### **2.3.2.3 The age of Greek antiquity (approx. 800-338 BCE)**

In contrast to the ancient Israelites, the ancient Greek concept of time involved a cosmic cycle of which the eternal cycle of nature and the universe served as a model. This belief in the cyclical nature of the universe found its apotheosis in the concept of the Great Year, the idea propounded by the Stoics in late antiquity that, when the heavenly bodies return at fixed

intervals of time to the same relative positions as they had at the beginning of the world, everything would be restored just as it was before and the entire cycle would be renewed in every detail (Whitrow 1988:43).

The notion that the ancient Greeks were lacking in historical consciousness has appeared in the works of several scholars, such as Carr (1990); Collingwood (1956); Herberg (1951) and Tillich (1936). Tillich (1936:244) opined, for instance, that as long as Greek thought viewed history as “governed by the symbol of the circle that returns upon itself,” there could be no question of historical consciousness. Herberg (1951:193) wrote in similar fashion:

The Greeks had their historians, and great ones too. But none of them showed any sign of believing that the doings of men in time were really important, were somehow significant for the destiny of mankind. The strivings and doings of men, their enterprises, conflicts and achievements, led nowhere. All would be swallowed up in the cycle of eternal recurrence that was the law of the cosmos.

Carr (1990:102-103), likewise found little concern among classical Greek historians with the future as with the past:

Thucydides believed that nothing significant had happened in time before the events which he described, and that nothing significant was likely to happen thereafter ... . Poetic visions of a brighter future took the form of visions of a return to a golden age of the past – a cyclical view which assimilated the processes of history to the processes of nature.

In addition to the above-mentioned fatality of the recurrent cycle which gripped everyone, Herberg (1951:194) placed a great deal of the onus for the failure of the Greeks to develop a true historical consciousness on the “strong strain of idealism, which led the Platonist to devalue the empirical and mutable in comparison with the timeless, and the Aristotelian to brush aside the particular and individual as merely ‘accidental’”. Collingwood (1956:42) has likewise surmised that the chief defect of Greek historiography was its basis in the metaphysical system of substantialism which implied a theory of knowledge according to which only what is unchanging is knowable: “But what is unchanging is not historical. What is historical is the transitory event ... .” Hence the attempt to think historically and the attempt to think in terms of substance were incompatible.

The view that the ancient Greeks did not develop a historical consciousness has not been universally accepted. Funkenstein (1993:11), who perceives historical consciousness as being chiefly characterized by reflective thinking, has, for example, lauded both Hebrew and Greek culture for having developed historiography into a high, reflexive art in which “meaning” is present in both:

Meaning in the biblical sense is the work of providence in history; in the Greek sense, it is the uncovering of those mechanisms of human society that are always the same as human nature is always the same. What Greek historiography ... articulated for the first time is the ability to stand aside and observe without overtly taking sides.

Gilderhus (1987:Internet), likewise reminds us that, despite the non-historically minded climate in which they worked, Herodotus and Thucydides brought about an intellectual revolution in Greece by virtue of their search for the rational explanation and understanding of historical phenomena. Both historians attempted (with varying degrees of success) to explain events in secular terms as the product of human wills. Thucydides intended his history to have instructional importance as a guide to action in the future. Gilderhus (1987:Internet) explains: “he anticipated ... that the consciousness of history would bestow many benefits. All leaders should learn from the mistakes of the past”.

Pomeroy, Donlan, Burstein & Roberts (1999:260-261) have reminded us that it was Herodotus (born 484 BCE) who first used the Greek word “*historia*” (inquiry) to describe his quest for understanding, and it was this word which has given English and numerous Romance languages their word for the investigation and analysis of the past: “history”. According to Pomeroy *et al* (1999:261): “Herodotus ... sought to undermine knee-jerk assumptions he saw in the world around him – assumptions about the insignificance of non-Greek cultures and the low intellects of women”. He set forth the results of his inquiry in the opening sentence of his work *History of the Persian Wars*, “so that the actions of people shall not fade with time, so that the great and admirable monuments produced by both Greeks and barbarians shall not go unrenowned, and among other things, to set forth the reasons why they waged war on each other” (Herodotus 1987:1.1).

Waters (1985:Internet) regards the fact that Herodotus did not work from a purely Hellenic standpoint as reflecting a high level of historical consciousness, and refers to Herodotus’

research as demonstrating “a diversity of subject matter and almost encyclopaedic scope” not hitherto encountered in the Greek world. Thucydides (460-400 BCE; 1910:11) gave a reason for writing his book *The Peloponnesian War*:

The absence of romance from my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest, but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an excellent knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of things it must resemble, if not reflect it, I shall be content.

Lewis (2003:Internet) interprets Thucydides’ reason for writing his book to mean that human history is causal and that “events are likely to repeat if the same causes occur again. Understanding long-range causes is a guide to the future as well as the past”.

#### **2.3.2.4 The age of Imperial Rome (200 BCE-410 CE)**

The Romans appear to have acquired a well-developed sense of the past. Collingwood (1956:34) wrote that history for the Romans meant “the inheritance from the past of institutions scrupulously preserved in the form in which they were received; the moulding of life according to the pattern of ancestral custom”. He continued: “The Romans, acutely conscious of their own continuity with the past were careful to preserve memorials of the past ... they preserve ancient traditions of their own corporate history to an extent unknown to the Greeks”. This deep devotion to the past is echoed in the well-known aphorism of the Roman orator and statesman, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE; as quoted in Kelly 1991:77): “To be ignorant of what has happened before your birth is to remain always a child. For what is the meaning of

man's life unless it is intertwined with that of our ancestors by history". Mellor (1998:1) explains:

Cicero provides an important reminder that for the Romans the past was a validation of their present greatness; it had to be preserved to give meaning to the present ... by linking the present with the past, history would illuminate the contemporary state of society and provide both moral and practical guidance.

Coleman (1992:47) elucidates further:

The poet-orator of Cicero talks in terms of contemporary plausibilities, possibilities, and thereby elicits a didactic message from the past to teach a present generation to imitate what is taken to be the essential meaning of an ancestral past ... . The reconstructed past persuades and instructs in the present.

The Romans were also adept at using the past to set out their essential right to rule. As Huskinson (2000:11-12) has observed, divine or heroic ancestry, for instance, was often claimed, thereby "interweaving Rome's past, present and future to create the idea of a given role and identity".

The Roman historian, Livy (59 BCE–7 CE; 1809:14), was the first to assemble the traditional records of early Roman history and weld them together into a single continuous narrative – *The History of Rome*. His reasons for doing so are made clear in his "Preface": he wanted, so he said, to hold up for his readers the moral example of the early days when Roman society was simple and uncorrupted and to demonstrate to them how the many perils and trials which their

ancestors had overcome had made them physically and morally capable of the leadership of the world. Marincola (1997:29) likewise alleged that Livy wrote history “to admire and enshrine the great deeds of the men who had made Rome mistress of the Mediterranean”. According to Grant (1970:222), however, there is reason to believe that Livy used his recounting of the past as a therapeutic measure to take people’s minds off contemporary problems. In the above-mentioned “Preface” to his work Livy also notes how, by concentrating on the earlier republican virtues of Rome he had been enabled to withdraw his eyes “from beholding the raging wickedness of the times”. If, indeed, it is true that Roman historians such as Livy, used the past merely to escape present difficulties, then a well-developed historical consciousness (in contrast to a historical sense), as defined in this thesis, was alien to them.

A brief perusal of Imperial Roman history allows for the drawing of some tentative conclusions in this regard. The age of the Roman Empire was not an age of progressive thought, let alone of serious self-reflection. H.G. Wells (1866-1046; 1962:146) wrote about the Romans during the first two centuries of the Common Era as follows:

The free will and the free mind were nowhere to be found ... . The great roads, the ruins of splendid buildings, the tradition of law and power ... must not conceal from us that all its outer splendour was built upon thwarted wills, stifled intelligence, and crippled and perverted desires... . Art and literature, science and philosophy, which are the fruits of free and happy minds, waned in that atmosphere.

### **2.3.2.5 The age of Christian antiquity (approx. to 500 CE)**

The early Christians had little historical consciousness; they held that this world was evil and full of misery and was not destined to endure for long, a gloomy conception which Palmer & Colton (1992:15) link to the abject material conditions which they endured during the early centuries of their existence, living as they did as a people “who had the least to delight in or to hope for in the existing world”.

By the third century, the Roman government added to their misery when, with the Empire falling into turmoil, it had blamed the social disorder on the Christians and subjected them to wholesale persecution (Palmer & Colton 1992:15). In consequence, the end of the earthly world with all its travail dominated Christian expectations, and the future held more significance than the past (Gilderhus 1987:Internet). As Fisher (1966:117) asserted: “Time (to the early Christians) was a brief course of passing moments created by God and destined at God’s pleasure in the twinkling of an eye to pass away and to give place to eternity”. Smalley (1974:30) saw this limited time-scheme as one which discouraged optimism and ruled out progress: “The individual Christian could grow in virtue by God’s grace and merit salvation. There was no hope that mankind would ever improve in the mass”.

However, once the Christians undertook missionary work into the world of the Gentiles, they felt increasingly bound to confront historical problems. As Gilderhus (1987:Internet) explains:

Having decided to retain the Old Testament as Holy Scripture, they had to formulate an explanation of the proper relationship between the past, the



present and the future. Ultimately they conceived of the whole of the Old Testament as an anticipation of Christ and prepared for him.

Nicoll (2003:Internet) expands on this theme. To the early Christians, Hebrew history, as narrated in the Old Testament served as a very important substantiation of their contention that the Messiah had at last come: “By means of allegoric interpretation the most casual episodes of a remote past could be given a vivid and essential relation to the present”.

The work of St. Augustine (354-430 CE), *Confessions* had important implications for the philosophy of history during this period. As a dedicated Christian he eschewed the cyclical view of history because, as Gilderhus (1987:Internet) has maintained, such pointless repetitions of events would, to his mind, have rendered history meaningless and constituted in effect a nullification of divine influence and purpose. Rather, he thought of history as moving along a line with a clear beginning, marked by the Creation, a middle and an end. This end would mark “the transcendence of believers beyond history into the realm of the eternal” (Gilderhus 1987:Internet). As St. Augustine himself declared (as quoted in Whitrow 1988:63): “It is only through the sound doctrine of a rectilinear course that we can escape from I know not what false cycles discovered by false and deceitful sages”.

None found it easy to resist the all-pervasive influence of St. Augustine’s *City of God*, a work of Christian apologetics portraying the history of the world as the long unfolding of God’s will (Marwick 1970:27). According to Smith (1997:525), it was within that divine plan for the world that the Church proceeded “like a pilgrim through history to its eschatological

consummation”, entirely oblivious to secular history which it regarded as a matter of little significance.

### **2.3.2.6 The Middle Ages (approx. 500-1500 CE)**

In the Middle Ages historical tradition was, according to Marwick (1970:26), left exclusively in the hands of monkish chronicles – whose annalistic accounts “lack the elements of reflection or analysis which would make them history” (Marwick 1970:26). Medieval Christian historians found it difficult to distinguish clearly between sacred and profane matters: “They accepted in full the sanctions of tradition, and, since they believed in divine intervention they were inhibited in their analysis of historical causation” (Marwick 1970:27). This led, inevitably, to an abstract and one-sided theocentric view of history. As Collingwood (1956:55) commented:

The work of Providence in history is recognized, but recognized in a way which leaves nothing for man to do ... consequently the actual detail of human actions became for them relatively unimportant, and they neglected that prime duty of the historian, a willingness to bestow infinite pains on discovering what actually happened.

The most eminent historical scholar to emerge in England during the Middle Ages was the Venerable Bede (673-735 CE), who is seen to have paid special attention to chronology, enumerated his written sources, and made some effort to evaluate oral traditions (Marwick 1970:27). Yet on reading his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, it soon becomes

apparent that his interpretation of events places his work squarely within the category of “providential” history, which reached its climax during the Middle Ages (Bede 1958:25, 27, 28-31, 120, 122-124). Southgate (1996:41-42) describes Bede’s historical writing thus:

In particular, God’s hand is seen as constantly intervening to further the cause of Christianity in England; what we read in Bede’s history is nothing less than the unfolding story of a providential plan ... miraculous events are recorded throughout Bede’s history. Ships are saved from storms; the blind have their eyesight restored, and withered limbs grow healthy; fires are quenched and Christian armies triumph with divine assistance.

Yet, despite the above-mentioned pre-occupation with the supernatural, medieval historiography displayed one significant quality that was absent in its Greco-Roman counterpart. Appleby, Hunt & Jacob (1994:56-57) note that whereas for the Greeks and Romans, history did not exhibit overarching meanings or patterns, medieval historians wished “to link all previous history to one universal story informed by their faith.”

A limited number of secular histories made their appearance in Western Europe during the eighth and ninth centuries. New forms of historical writing such as annals, biographies and epic poems came on to the scene, all of which offered essential contemporary comment on the events of the day. McKitterick (1995:10) observes that this history maintained a delicate balance between:

a profoundly ... ideological sense of the past and an understanding of contemporary history which necessitated a temporary suspension of judgement

in order to allow critical and constructive comment on policies or to explain setbacks.

### **2.3.2.7 The Renaissance and its aftermath (approx. 1400-1700 CE)**

Bronowski & Mazlish (1960:22, 29) discern two separate phases of the Renaissance: the aristocratic and idealistic Renaissance with, for example, its reading of the Greeks and Romans in manuscript; and a more popular scientific-empirical, forward-looking Renaissance which followed it and represented a transition “from a worship of past humanism to a fierce belief in the human present”.

During the first phase of the Renaissance several significant changes took place in historical studies. In turning to the example of the classical historians such as Thucydides, Polybius and Livy, early Renaissance writers brought a rational, secular approach to bear on matters held during the preceding age to be part of the divine mystery. As Collingwood (1956:57) puts it: “Historical thought once more placed man in the center of its picture” thus signifying a break with medieval historiography. An eminent historian of the period, Petrarch (1304-1374 CE), made a noteworthy contribution to the establishment of this new, secular interpretation: in his search to recover the traditions of Rome, which he recorded in his history of that city, he “set forth an alternative vision of human beings and their world in which real events had more than just symbolic importance” (Gilderhus 1987:Internet).

During the early Renaissance period, artists often portrayed scenes from ancient times – the Bible, Greece, Rome – with their subjects dressed like Italians of the fifteenth century. Apparently there was little sense of how different the past was from the present. In the course of time, however, Renaissance historians became acutely aware of the process of historic change, when, in an effort to understand the ancient writers they became aware of the need to place them in their correct historical setting (Smith 1997:105-116). Humanists thus began to acquire an accurate knowledge of classical times which enabled historians to distinguish one historical period from another (Lockyer 1996:48).

The sense of the novelty and excellence of their achievements and the belief in the progressive nature of their own age were striking characteristics of the men of the later Renaissance. Heller (1978:191-192) writes in this regard:

However past-directed the thinking of Renaissance man may have been in some respects, in practice he lived entirely **in and for the present**. The past was the ideal, but keeping pace with the present was the true – and dynamic – motive of action. There have been few periods of history in which men gave themselves over so unconditionally to the present as they did during the Renaissance.

The humanists of the Renaissance tended to regard the millennium between the collapse of the Roman Empire and the fifteenth century as an era of prolonged decline; the concept of the “Middle Ages” was thus introduced for this intervening period. Indeed, the Renaissance, a French word meaning “rebirth”, first received its name from those who thought of the Middle Ages as “a dark time from which the human spirit had to be awakened” (EA 2001:53). Petrarch

gave voice to this tendency when he, according to EA (2001:55), wrote: “For once there was, and yet will be more joyful days. But in this middle age time’s dregs sweep around us, and we bend beneath a heavy load of vice (Epistolae metricae 3:33)”.

The seventeenth century, as Wells (1962:212) described it, provided ideal conditions for an optimistic orientation toward the future: “Trade was reviving; cities were recovering ease and safety; the standard of education was rising ... and spreading among laymen”. With the invention of printing the intellectual life of the world entered upon a new and far more vigorous phase: “It ceased to be a little trickle from mind to mind; it became a broad flood, in which thousands ... of minds participated”. This intellectual ferment could not but engender confidence that men would transcend their predecessors’ achievements; new additions to mankind’s stock of knowledge seemed to make progress inevitable (Wells 1962:215).

The advent of a scientific spirit in Western Europe during the seventeenth century ultimately led to the conviction held by many scholars that contemporary observations and experiments must supplant past knowledge (Bronowski & Mazlish 1960:133-153). The great intellectual figure Pascal (1623-1662), for example, (as quoted in Lowenthal 1985:89) asserted:

Those whom we call the ancients, really lived in the youth of the world, and the infancy of mankind; and as we have added to their knowledge the experience of the succeeding centuries, it is in ourselves that is to be found the antiquity we venerate in them.

As Hazard (1935:29-30), has observed, it was as a result of this newly aggressive confidence which flourished during the seventeenth century that European scholars completely dropped the cult of antiquity and turned their back on the past as “nothing to be proud of but, on the contrary, an intolerable burden ... ” which contributed nothing to their forward-looking outlook.

This discovery that there was an unbridgeable gap between the classical age and their own did, however, bring about a new and fundamental orientation in time. As Appleby *et al* (1994:59-60) maintain, it was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that Europeans began to develop a mature historical consciousness – “that is, an appreciation of how the passage of time changes institutions and renders past societies strikingly different from contemporary ones”. With the emergence of this new perception, the Christian scheme of history steadily lost credibility, eventually giving way to a secular, linear periodisation of ancient, medieval and modern, by means of which progress in this world replaced salvation in the next as the goal of human participation in time (Appleby *et al* 1994:60-61).

#### **2.3.2.8 The Enlightenment and its aftermath**

The scientific spirit, ushered in during the seventeenth century, gathered momentum during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the advent of the age of Enlightenment, with its optimistic faith in the supremacy of reason which it placed at the center of the human enterprise. The phrase “Enlightenment” (lit. “to shine a light on”) was frequently used by writers of the period itself, who were convinced that they were “emerging from centuries of

darkness and ignorance into a new age enlightened by reason, science, and a respect for humanity” (Simkins 2003:Internet).

The belief held exclusively in the Western world that it is possible to discern in the course of human history some general scheme or design, some overall purpose or pattern, had its origins among the ancient Israelites and early Christians in sources that were chiefly theological; yet, the development of historical speculation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was marked by a tendency to reject theological and providential interpretations. In this new world the astounding expansion of natural science and technology fostered the notion that human welfare was simply a question of increasing economic productivity and industrial power. In this spirit the greatest of the Enlightenment historians, Gibbon (1737-1794) (as quoted in Carr 1990:105), recorded what he called “the pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race”.

During this period, *The Principia* of the renowned scientist, Isaac Newton (1642-1727), made accessible a new scientific understanding of nature as mathematical and mechanical, “a separate, autonomous and supposedly value-free realm of knowledge” (Appleby *et al* 1994:17-18). The new devotion to this progressive model of science was to have a profound and lasting effect upon the historical consciousness of its adherents: the modernisation of history now rested on a new conception of time drawn from Newtonian science, according to which time was made universal and evolutionary, and Western historians “arrayed all the peoples,



structures and institutions in every epoch along its line, labelling each people and era in terms of its level of development” (Appleby *et al* 1994:53).

It was during the nineteenth century that the cultural phenomenon of Modernism emerged, the key feature of which was, according to Hitchcock (2003:Internet), “precisely the clear sense that people have of their separation from the past ... . Everything new and ‘modern’ is automatically assumed to be superior to the old and change is thought to promise greater wisdom and freedom”.

In the early nineteenth century the prevailing scientific approach was used to justify the establishment of Historical study as a reputable academic discipline at university level; in the context of the prevailing “scientific” model, historians now contended for an “objective” truth which could ultimately be reached through proper critical techniques and methodological procedures. This new devotion to an objective and dispassionate examination of the “facts” of history, without any intrusion of the past on the present or the future, was to all intents and purposes confined to those academics who pursued the study of History as a professional discipline (Southgate 1996:22-24). Rempel (2003:Internet) states that Enlightenment historians had rescued history from antiquarianism: to get at the reliable and incontrovertible facts of history through the examination of the human record was for them “not a point of departure but an end in itself”. In addition, the idea of progress “made a conceptual mastery of the chaotic and meaningless facts of history”.

One of the earliest champions of an explicitly scientific history was the German professor,

L. von Ranke (1795-1886) who, in his book, *Histories of the Latin and Germanic nations, 1404-1514* (as quoted in Nadel 1964:315) stated: “To history has been assigned the office of judging the past, of instructing the present for the benefit of future ages. To such high office this work does not aspire: it wants only to show what actually happened”.

Marwick (1970:35-38) while acknowledging the contribution of Von Ranke and his followers to the new tradition of critical methods and techniques in Historical studies, nevertheless sees them as being guilty of “a sorry failure of imagination ... which did much to bring history into disrepute”. He continues: “Yet the issue is crucial: the historian may judge, must, if only implicitly, instruct – but before all else it is important that he **understand**”. Iggers (1997:23) has stressed that, despite their aspirations to objectify the past, the university professionals could not, as custodians of that past, function in isolation from the broader society:

The new historical profession served definite public needs and political aims that made it important to communicate the results of its research to a public whose historical consciousness it sought to shape and who turned to the historian in search of its own identity.

There is no gainsaying the fact that, during this period, historical data did not remain solely in the hands of the academics. Bann (1995:4-6) has hypothesised that it was during the so-called Romantic period (from the late eighteenth century onwards, reaching its peak in most countries in the two decades following the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815) that a high degree of historical consciousness was generated among the public masses that was quantitatively different from what had gone before. Bann (1995:4) observed:

The 'historical novel' set the pace for the novelists ... . The 'historical genre' forced its way into the traditional modes of painting ... the representation of history became the practice of new, intense modes of popular spectacle like the diorama and new types of educational display like the historical museum.

Southgate (1996:119-120) has maintained that the aforementioned 'desire for history' was in fact, generated by a rejection of the scientific tradition in historiography – because, to the public as a whole, historical understanding requires something more than the application of mere reason; to enter the 'reality' of the past necessitated “not so much orderly steps of rational analysis, but rather an imaginative leap.” This need was satisfied by the inundation into mass society “of literary, visual and spectacular forms of expression with a historical flavour”.

### **2.3.2.9 The Twentieth Century**

Marcus (1980:31) maintains that after the First World War (1914-1918), people began to lose hope in 'historical progress' and faith in man's potential goodness; the tremendous upheavals of the War led to the collapse of the sense of meaning in history. He wrote: “In a culture that had generally come to view the destiny of humanity as the fulfillment of a process through historical time, the sense of the meaningless of history left a dizzying ideological void.” But this void was not to remain unfilled for long; twentieth century totalitarian movements such as Communism, Nazism and Fascism, were quick to utilise the once vaunted messianic historicity (of the nineteenth century) to achieve their own nefarious aims. Marcus (1980:29) comments:

“The totalitarian claim to incarnate a new Manifest Destiny, whether in a classless society or in a Thousand Year Reich, was based on a purported discovery of the ‘true meaning’ of history.”

After the Second World War (1939-1945) science and technology had unleashed seemingly uncontrollable powers, and belief in the stability and security of European civilization, with its expectation that reason would usher in an age of continuing progress, appeared to be an illusion (Perry 1997:569). The well-known historian, G. Barraclough (TLS 1956:6 January), wrote despondently in the fifties: “We should be better off if we could scrap our history of Europe and free our minds from their myopic concentration on the West ... the past we look back upon ... is totally different from the smooth expanse we saw stretching behind us before 1939”.

According to Southgate (2000:5) the ideal of the objective and dispassionate study of the past purely “on its own terms”, without any intrusion of the past on the present or the future, has been rejected in recent times as meaningless; historians may once have claimed an Olympian detachment when revealing the truth about the past, but man is more conscious now than ever before that such objectivity is unattainable since no one can extricate himself/herself from the work in which he/she is involved. Marwick (1970:19-20) has noted too that since history is particularly affected by the material and moral circumstances of the age in which it is written, it becomes inevitable that the historian while dealing with past event will betray his/her personal political loyalties and commitments. All this leads to the accusation on the part of the so-called postmodernists, who decry all attempts to use the methods of natural science in the study of history, that history is plagued by relativism and that the study of the past provides no ready guide to how one can conduct oneself in the present and the future (Postan 1971:ix). Patterson

(1999:181,) in like manner, has argued that neither truth nor memory have objective foundations since they are both culturally conditional constructs which are contingent and arbitrary. Jenkins (1997:7) appears to have encapsulated the present postmodern position when he bluntly stated: “we can forget history completely”.

In this new environment, when the whole point of history is under question, it is not surprising that historical ignorance has become rampant. Lipsitz (1990:36) observes:

The crisis in historical thinking is certainly real. The dislocations of the past two centuries, the propaganda apparatuses of totalitarian powers, disillusionment with the paradigms of the Enlightenment, and popular culture itself have all served to make the search for a precious and communicable past one of the most pressing problems of our time.

Rüsen (1993:228) has similarly reacted to the challenge postmodernism presents to historiography. He asks:

Is the dream of reason – embarked upon by historical consciousness at the very latest starting with the Enlightenment, and in which modern historiography was developed – now finally at an end? Has it soured into a nightmare ... leading to a situation in which the heedless trek forward down and the path of previous progress can only end in catastrophe?

Side by side with the seeming rejection of the past on the part of postmodernists has been a resurgent popular interest in history in recent times. Laville (2003:Internet) attributes this new awakening mainly to the world-wide economic crisis which began in the seventies and which

seemed to call into question the march of progress itself. He writes: “With no clear future before them, people are falling back upon the present, and in searching for the roots of the present, and in seeking to give it legitimacy, they look to their past, individual and collective.” Related to this interest in general history has been the unprecedented present-day expansion of a variety of autobiographical practices among ordinary people which Platt (2003:Internet) also discerns as being related to a shift in historical consciousness stemming from the political and economic convulsions of the age. He writes:

It is precisely when we feel that our present has changed irreconcilably that we feel the urge ... to narrate the connection between our past and present ... for the act of narration requires us to see a coherent self moving through time, retaining its essential identity even as its surroundings change irreparably.

An attempt has been made in this section of the chapter to trace the various modes in which historical consciousness has manifested itself as a mental construct from the earliest period of human history until present times. In the following section the spotlight will be focused on the different modes of historical consciousness and historical perspectives of a small segment of that broader humanity – the people of South Africa.

## **2.4 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE VARIOUS MODES OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS MANIFEST IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

Van Jaarsveld (1989:21) has commented that, since no historiography is possible without a philosophy of life and world-view which is invariably bound to specific groups, it is small wonder that in multi-ethnic societies, where a variety of groups and cultures co-exist, the common past will be differently interpreted; as a result, a collection of historical images will find expression alongside of one another and, more often than not, in opposition to one another.

Van Jaarsveld (1989:21), elaborates on this phenomenon with special reference to historical consciousness in the following way:

The time structure of historical consciousness shows a complicated and changing relationship of anticipation of the future, interpretation of the past and an understanding of the present. It fulfills functions like justification, orientation and discovery of identity. One can therefore expect the common past to be differently interpreted, according to divergent premises and visions. The perspective of the future that a group has will determine its interpretations of the past and its concept of the present. Thus controversiality, moulding of images and changing views of the past will exist.

Phillips (1996:32) argues that although objectivity is the ideal towards which historians strive, the pursuit of history can never be purely objective. A case should be made for a

“perspectivism” which aims for a qualified objectivity based on the idea “that historical studies are different complementing perspectives on a past which we have no means of seeing ‘face to face’ but can only hope to reconstruct from evidence which is both incomplete and unrepresentative”.

There is no better example of a community of people forming such a wide variety of groups and cultures than that of South Africa. The small country has, from the start, been racked by racial conflict and dissension, and this state of affairs has given rise to controversial and widely differing perspectives on the past. In this section an attempt will be made to trace the modes of historical consciousness which have become discernable in South Africa from the earliest period of settlement until the present time, and to determine, wherever possible, their impact on the teaching of History in South African schools.

#### **2.4.2 The British, Afrikaner and Black consciousness of the past, and its influence on the teaching of History before the advent of democracy in South Africa**

The section begins with an analysis of the manner in which the major population groups residing in South Africa, before the advent of democracy in 1994, viewed the past, and how these divergent modes of historical awareness created an irreparable political, cultural and social breach which left its mark on the education system, making a common orientation towards the future impossible.



### 2.4.2.1 The British historical consciousness

During their earliest period of settlement in South Africa, beginning with the first British occupation of the Cape in 1795, the “English Community” never viewed themselves as a separate people with an “own history” but rather as part of the wider world of the British empire; their vision of the British as an imperial power and their justification of British expansion in South Africa on the grounds of humanity, Christianity, civilization and progress has been well represented in the historiography of South Africa (Smith 1988:18-52; Verbeeck 2000:388).

Van Jaarsveld (1964:23) points out, that this view of Empire was part of a world-wide phenomenon: “In the period of colonisation and imperialism Whites had things very much their own way. Proud colonial and imperial histories sang their praises.” Smith (1988:25), similarly, indicates how, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, when the concept of the New Imperialism became a matter of consequence to the European powers, the quest for empire being inextricably linked to each nation’s prestige, “this was also tied up with Europe’s civilising and Christianising mission. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was to write of ‘the white man’s burden’, the French were to speak of ‘*mission civilisatrice*’”. This acclamation of European power and glory would, as will be demonstrated below, have a profound effect upon the self-image of the early British settlers who colonized South Africa, and subsequently upon their way of looking at the past.

The British regime (1902-1905) which came to power under A. Milner (1854-1925) in the Transvaal and Orange Free State after the defeat of the Boers during the South African War (1899-1902), was committed to a policy of anglicization through education that would intentionally raise children's consciousness of "the greatness of the English Imperial Idea" and thus bring about the denationalization and anglicization of the Afrikaner child through the medium of schools (Mulholland 1981:123-124). Teachers were constantly reminded that the political attitude of the next generation would be determined by History teaching, that "history is politics taught by examples" and that History teaching "must be consciously moulded by the thought that students would be the future bearers of a primarily English civilization" (Mulholland 1981:124-125). According to Headlam (as cited in Mulholland 1981:125) Milner had himself articulated the view that "everything that cramps and confines the child's views to South Africa only makes for further Afrikanerdom and further discord". It is small wonder, therefore, that the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools was severely restricted: the inculcation of the perception of British glory in the past and present, and of expectations for its perpetuation into the future, made for a one-sided history which ignored the realities of the present, denying an independent identity to South Africa. No authentic history of South Africa could emerge so long as the sub-continent was regarded as merely a small part of an all-embracing British empire and ethnic and racial groups other than of British provenance were treated with contempt (Chernis 1991:17-18).

One of the most well-known representatives of the so-called "settler" school of South African historiography during the early decades of the twentieth century was G.M. Theal (1837-1919), whose *History of South Africa* (11 volumes) was to remain for many decades the foundation

and point of departure for the study of South African History, especially in the public schools (SESA 1972:530). He wrote from the point of view of his White contemporaries against the “barbarism” of the Bantu which had to retreat before the “civilization” of the European settlers. Theal did little to conceal his contempt for the indigenous “Hottentots” about whom he wrote: “Like all savages these people are incapable of prolonged thought. Even the slightest exertion of the mind ... is foreign to their nature” (Theal 1919:55). He showed a measure of sympathy towards the “Kaffirs” (Bantu) whose culture he found exceedingly rich, and which, until a few years before, had, to his mind, “breathed the sentiments, the religious ideas, the hopes and the fears” of this people, but which were losing their attraction now that they were adopting European ideas (Theal 1919:122). Theal also used his writing of history to help reconcile Afrikaner and Briton. He explicitly acknowledged that his goal was to promote the emergence of one White South African nation through a common history (Saunders 1988:24). Kissack (1997:221) saw this endeavour as a reflection of Theal’s conception of “the superiority of the civilized European order and the necessity for European unity in the pursuit of this order”. The English-speaking “settler” historian G. Cory (1862-1935) leaned heavily on Theal’s historical work and shared his views about Blacks. In addition, he had a particular sympathy for the Afrikaner, declaring: “Surely a people who live in constant fear of being murdered by savages ... deserve some consideration and sympathy” (Cory 1921:vii-viii).

When the imperialist-colonial phase of expansion decreased, about the time of the First World War (1914-1918), the wholly White-centred eurocentric historiography of the past gave way in English circles to a type of analytical socio-economic historiography in which a generally more “liberal” approach to historical writing was introduced (Verbeeck 2000:388). The historians

W.M. Macmillan (1885-1974) and C.W. de Kiewiet (b.1902), for example, were the first to move away from racial categories, and to look at the significance of the Blacks in the economic development of South Africa and to advance the theory that the making of South African history is the collective effort of all its peoples (Saunders 1988:65-75). Macmillan was the first historian to challenge the dominant White-centred view of South African history as presented by Theal (Smith 1990:159). He also displayed a deep concern for the common people. Macmillan (as quoted in Macmillan & Marks 1989:31-32) wrote: “The South African history which is really imperative is that which tells us about the everyday life of people, how they lived, what they thought and what they worked at ... and the whole of their social organization”. De Kiewiet (1941:v) wrote likewise that, in social and economic history “the infinitesimal events of the daily round of eating, working and resting become significant happenings and the total life of a community is seen to depend upon numberless men and women who lived obscure lives and lie in unremembered graves”.

Despite their seemingly radical socio-economic views, Macmillan and De Kiewiet did not stray from the belief, which continued to predominate among the British at the time, that the arrival of British colonialism and the spread of capitalism were essentially good (Verbeeck 2000:389). Furthermore, indigenous people continued to be largely omitted in their work, unless mentioning them highlighted something about the British or Boers (Bam & Visser 1996:14). Yet, notwithstanding these facts, it has been argued by Verbeeck (2000:388-389) that the potential for a more developed historical consciousness did emerge during this period. The distinct undertone of a new South African patriotism of consensus could be heard in the work of these first liberal historians.

With the decolonisation of Africa and the establishment of independent, self-governing states such as Ghana (1957); Nigeria (1960); Uganda (1962); Malawi (1964); and Zambia (1964) after the Second World War (1939-1945), the old type of colonial-imperial, White-centred (European) interpretation of history in South Africa was discredited and the history of Black (African, Indian and Coloured) societies was presented in their own right as elsewhere in Africa. *The Oxford History of South Africa* (1969) edited by M. Wilson and L. Thompson, and published in 1969, represented the summation of liberal thinking about South Africa at the end of the 1960s. Smith (1988:139) defined the main motive of the *Oxford History of South Africa* as follows:

More attention was given to showing that Africans could and did respond to the challenges presented by the appearance of colonialism, that they were not simply passive ... that their responses were every bit as important in the making of South African history as were the actions of Whites.

This new approach might have led to a broader historical awareness. However, the *Oxford History of South Africa* antagonised many English-speaking conservatives, who criticized it on the grounds that it relegated the history of the Whites to the sidelines (Smith 1988:145).

During the apartheid regime (1948-1994) the paradigm of South African history taught in 'English' schools, corresponded closely to the interpretation of history propagated by the ruling Afrikaner Nationalist power-elite (Evans 1990:137). Here the History textbook, which played a dominant role as a source of learning in all South African public schools, now had to be approved by education departments under National Party control. As Van den Berg (1987:32) commented: "The red pen is applied liberally to manuscripts of history textbooks with the

insistence that 'correct' historical interpretations be applied". "Correct", in this context, meant in accordance with apartheid thought which dominated the "school book version" of history. The vast majority of English teachers found such undue emphasis on patriotism repugnant, aware as they were "of the racial arrogance of nations which claim to have a God given mission to fulfill" (Boyce 1966:51).

When South Africa became a republic in 1961 the White population of English descent attained a greater measure of self-awareness than ever before. Van Jaarsveld (1972:541) attributes this phenomenon to the fact that they were now cut off from Britain and, living within an Afrikaner republic and being a minority, they felt "that their identity might well be at hazard". A deep interest in the 1820 settlers was evoked at the time, as English-speaking South Africans sought to discover "their origins, their formative period and their contribution to the building of the country". Thus was a new sense of historical consciousness engendered among the English-speaking section of the population. Yet, this new-founded national awareness does not appear to have endured. Paton (1987:117-118) relates how his parents who had never been outside South Africa had always referred to Britain as "home", because during the early decades of the twentieth century British national feeling was very strong. Yet, as time passed, there was no longer any single historical bond that could draw people of English descent together:

To them history means something quite different from what it means to the Afrikaner ... they just do not have the urge – which for the Afrikaner seems to be an historical necessity – to find an identity ... . The British nationalism of the English-speaking South African exists no more (Paton 1987:118).

#### **2.4.2.2 The Afrikaner historical consciousness**

Van Jaarsveld (1989:26-28) observes that from their earliest settlement in South Africa (1652) the Dutch-Afrikaners saw themselves both as the victims of British imperialism as well as the heroic defenders of South African soil and civilization against Black ‘savagery’. Ultimately, this “world view” was “built into their mentality as a people, which influenced their self-comprehension and self-image, and thus also determined their historical consciousness”.

Smith (1988:59) dates the growth of the Afrikaner’s awareness of himself in terms of his national calling, and hence the development of his historical consciousness, with the assertion of the imperial factor from the period 1868-1881; during this period the British were drawn to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal as a result of the discovery of diamonds and gold. Van Jaarsveld (1964:33-34) likewise asserts that before this time the national consciousness of the Afrikaner was in a dormant state. “In short, they had not become ‘nationally’ minded ... . They had few interests, political realisation, solidarity and the concept of a common cause.” It was, he maintained, the British imperialistic threat to the freedom and right to the independent existence of the Republicans, which changed this state of affairs, resulting in the constituent elements of the Afrikaner people in the Cape, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal ‘discovering’ one another, and becoming united in spirit and sentiment.

It was with the birth of this new-found sense of national-mindedness, and the awareness on the part of the Afrikaners that they had a history of their own that a Nationalistic Afrikaner historiography took root (Van Jaarsveld 1964:35). Verbeeck (2000:389) writes:

This type of historiography, which went against the liberal trend of integrating different population groups into one national image of history, consciously created a separate Afrikaner history and culture, with its own national heroes as shining examples.

It was, indeed, this nationalistic image of history which would become the political mythology supporting the ideology of apartheid (Thompson 1962:125-141).

The education system in the Afrikaner republics of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal was modeled along the lines of the Calvinist system which had been introduced into the Netherlands, as directed by the National Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619. According to this system the parent was responsible for his child's education; the Church provided open schools; teachers had to profess the Dutch Reform Church religion; and the state oversaw all activities in the interests of Protestant doctrine (Eby 1964:121-122). Coetsee (1957:145) outlined the so-called Afrikaner Christian National Education system as follows: "The CNE system demanded from the beginning that all subjects should ... serve religious instruction, and that the national spirit be the rightful foundations for the education system."

As stated above, the education system adopted by the Afrikaners gave expression to their incipient national feelings. In the late 1870s a writer to the newspaper, *Die Patriot* (*Patriot*, *Die* 30.3.1877) commented: "What builds a people most, is it not a godly acquaintance and sympathy of a people for their own history?" (trans:G.M.); while another stated a year later (*Patriot*, *Die* 9.8.1878): "Print thousands of your history books so that every true Afrikaner may possess one, that they may know what South Africa has cost their forefathers"



(trans:G.M.). The education system of the Afrikaners demanded, from the outset, therefore, that all subjects taught in their schools be subordinate to Calvinistic religious instruction, and that in History education “the history must be seen as the fulfillment of God’s plan for the state” (Mulholland 1981:12). After the South African War (1899-1902) the leaders of the Afrikaners, now more afraid of identity-loss than ever before, embarked on a campaign to build and support their own private schools. Mulholland (1981:143) has correctly observed:

In neither the Afrikaner nor the English system was History being used as a subject with intrinsic value, a subject about which more than one opinion is permissible. The syllabus laid down reflected each party’s political preoccupations and attempted to formulate the opinions and win the child’s allegiance during its formative years.

The need for conciliation in both politics and education was strongly felt after the Union of South Africa in 1910. Educational authorities persisted in stressing the view that the forging of a common citizenship shared by the White groups of the country constituted the most important objective of the subject History, which should be compulsory in every school (Chernis 1991:18). In an address by the Director of the Department of Education to teachers in 1912, the school was described as, “the incarnation and expression of moral and religious truth, with teaching of history being an interpretation of the past by the present” (Mulholland 1981:204). However, on the subject of History feelings generally continued to run high, and the opinion was often expressed that “the outlook of the teacher must be that of the parents, whose children attend his school”. It was argued that only the single-medium school which provided an

exclusive education for each of the two White sections of the population would allow the teacher to teach History as subjectively as possible (Mulholland 1981:204).

Both the Great Trek (1835-1842) and the South African War (1899-1902) were great historical crises that reached to the depths of the Afrikaner people's existence, and all further events were influenced by these two occurrences. Van Jaarsveld (1964:74) wrote: "Both the occurrences ... were popular events that produced leaders of eminence ... both were essentially dramatic and romantic and their content of valiant deeds, sorrow and suffering gripped the imagination of the people". It is for these reasons that Afrikaner biographers found most of their heroes among the political and military leaders who figured in these two great crises, those founders of separate and national identity and pioneers of civilization whose "sacrosanct" memory they wished to preserve.

One of the most successful biographies to be written after the South African War (1899-1902) was G. Preller's *Piet Retief* which conveyed a message of hope to the Afrikaner people. In the Great Trek, Preller (1930:348) saw, "the emergent history of our nation, and rooted within it the problems and vital questions that confront us daily". To Preller the Great Trek was "a national movement" the purpose of which was "freedom from the oppressor"; he was adamant too that world history offered "no greater spectacle of human sacrifice and perseverance, of suffering and of heroism than that displayed by the Voortrekkers ... " (Preller 1930:148, 290). Preller's conviction that national consciousness can only be rooted in history and tradition is once again reflected in his *Diary of Louis Trichardt, 1836-1838* in which he described

Trichardt's trek as a "reconnaissance of the Afrikaner in search of Freedom ...", and also saw in it the freely chosen destiny of his nation (Preller 1917:cxxvi-cxxix).

During the 1930s, academic Afrikaner historians schooled in scientific methodology appeared on the South African scene. Yet, unlike other historians of their ilk, they continued to base their image of the past on traditional historical perceptions. Smith (1988:70) elucidated: "As Afrikaners, the academic historians largely shared the same interests as the amateur historians. Political history was dominant ... . In particular the Great Trek and the two Anglo-Boer wars received most of the attention". Among such historians, "the past was pragmatically approached to justify, orientate and find an own identity in reaction to injustices suffered" (Van Jaarsveld 1989:28). An example of such a tendency was set by D.W. Kruger (1938:34), who in 1938 called for an end to the neglect of the internal history of South Africa which had, for too long, been examined from "outside", as if it was more or less an insignificant sub-division of "British Colonial History". South African history, he claimed, was "our own Afrikaner view of history" and he called upon his Afrikaner kinsmen "to live in the past of our own nation, standing on Afrikaner ground in the midst of our people".

In 1948 an intensely nationalistic, all-Afrikaner government assumed power in South Africa whose declared objective was the separation of the races (apartheid); any education for Black persons would be designed solely to "anchor the native to his national characteristics" (Mulholland 1981:289). To this end the establishment of separate educational institutions became one of the main cornerstones of National Party government policy. The policy statement of the Institute for Christian National Education (ICNE) in 1948 includes a

significant reference to the value of History in the new curriculum which would find its place in South African public schools:

We believe that history must be taught in the light of the Divine revelation and must be seen as the fulfillment of God's plan for the world and man ... . We believe that youth can faithfully take over the task and mission of the older generation ... only if youth, in the teaching of history, obtains a true vision of the origin of the nation and of the nation's cultural heritage ... we believe that ... the national history of the people is the great means of cultivation of love of one's own (Boyce 1966:46-47).

Thus were the tenets of Christian National Education to permeate both the aims and content of the History syllabus in South African schools throughout the period of National Party government rule.

In 1967, the *National Education Policy Act*, 39 of 1967, came before parliament, proposing to make Christian National Education, the system most suited and preferred by the Afrikaner community, the uniform policy for the whole country. This proposal aroused a storm of protest from the opposition, to whom the Calvinist-nationalist viewpoint of the Afrikaner, with its emphasis on, among others, a Divine plan; "mission"; separate development; unique identity of separate nations; and racial purity, had no place. Nevertheless, the Afrikaner Nationalists had their way (Malherbe 1977:147-148). In consequence, the attitude to teaching History in the public schools remained divergent, the Afrikaner teaching body urging that History be taught "from the point of view of the Afrikaner nation", whilst the English teaching body was insistent that the purpose of History teaching was not the inculcation of attitudes but the

discovery of truth (Mulholland 1981:265). The latter had little say in the final outcome: the content of the various History syllabi taught in South African public schools was largely dictated throughout this period by the political interests of those in power through their appointed agents within the educational hierarchy.

During the seventies and eighties a generation of Afrikaner reformist historians came to the fore; prominent among these is H. Giliomee who has raised critical objections against the use of history in the Afrikaner political culture and represents a more pluralistic approach in the academic writing of South African history (Verbeeck 2000:390). Yet, despite this academic shift taking place within the ranks of “enlightened” Afrikaner intellectuals, the use of History teaching continued to be actuated, not by the desire to impose harmony upon the different groups in society, but through the stressing of differences, separation, and the superiority of one group over the others. In this system of History education there could be no place for the historical experience of the non-White population group. Ironically, the children of Africans, Coloureds and Asians were compelled to study the same history, mainly that of a European western civilization and the minority White group in South Africa, as did their White counterparts, no matter how inappropriate it was to their own background (Bam & Visser 1996:15-22).

In such a constrained educational environment the nurturing of a mature historical consciousness in learners was stifled; yet not wholly so. As Dean & Siebörger (1995:32) noted: “There were always cracks in the edifice and opportunities within classrooms for those

who were prepared to resist the dominant ideology”. Kallaway (1995:11), for example, tells of his own experience of History teaching at the height of the apartheid era in the sixties:

The majority of the kids in that broadly ‘liberal’ middle class, urban English language context were sufficiently aware of the world to understand very quickly that the text books were highly suspect in their interpretations of the past ... and I was confident enough ... to make it my daily business to demythologise the history curriculum ... in the *handboek* of those times ... . As a consequence, it paved the way for critical thinking!

This attempt to present a more adequate version of the past to “allow it to square with the common sense of the students” undoubtedly opened the way to a more developed (albeit clandestine) sense of historical consciousness in a small group of learners. Kallaway (1995:11) was not alone in his efforts. The authors of the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000:7) pay tribute to “the small band of innovative and determined teachers of history, black and white, who fought against the apartheid history syllabus for many years”.

The Afrikaner perception of history became irrelevant at the dawn of a new political era in 1994: the decolonisation in Africa; internal resistance; world pressure; the advent of a new liberal radical historiography; all created a vital need for a reinterpretation of the past that would impinge positively on one’s understanding of the present and allow a new perspective of the future. Grundlingh (1984:25) wrote in 1984:

The relevance of nineteenth century republican values ... have declined in an urbanized materialistic environment, and Afrikaners have yet to create a ‘history’ which can serve their present political need ... . For too long the

Afrikaner past has been depicted as an unrelenting struggle against foreign domination with little room for real compromise.

### **2.4.2.3 Black historical perception and consciousness**

Just as Afrikaner historiography was largely a reaction to suffering under the British, so were the perceptions of the past of the Black people in South Africa determined by the racial prejudice and discriminatory legislation which they suffered under White government, especially the Afrikaner National Party government after 1948. Similarly, the Black nationalistic interpretation of the past, and their “own” history, which they devised in reaction to the 1948 apartheid legislation, became a weapon in their struggle for freedom. Referring to the Black armed liberation which began in 1961, Van Jaarsveld (1989:30-31) observes:

it is clear that Blacks in their struggle against the Whites developed a historical perception, which had as a future perspective a Black majority government.

From this view the past was interpreted as a ‘Black’ past and the present was understood as a struggle to attain the future goal.

The “new” future would, naturally, require a “new” History which would radically transform the traditional White image to an “alternative” vision of the past in which the history of Black societies would be given a rightful place “as fellow players on the historical stage” (Van Jaarsveld 1989:35).

Grundlingh (1984:23) has indicated how difficult it was for Blacks during the apartheid regime, to gain a sense of direction and to take their bearings from a coherent and meaningful

past which might serve to prevent a sense of social alienation and disillusionment. The past was throughout this period unable to function as a personally stabilising agency because many Blacks had been severed from their roots; the past often represented only harassment and dislocation; and Blacks constantly had to adjust to an ever-threatening present. In consequence, it was not surprising this may well lead to a disdain of the past and an inability to appreciate the importance of history.

The framework of values supporting White supremacy in which Blacks were required to consider the 'white' past as exemplary and the 'black' past as paltry and objectionable, was openly rejected by the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s and the assertion of a black past became a significant feature of Black cultural resistance. In this regard the Black Consciousness Movement stressed that much attention had to be paid to history if Blacks desired to aid each other in coming into consciousness: "We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate a historical evolution of the modern Black man" (Grundlingh 1984:24).

In his work on Black historical consciousness in South Africa, Gebhard (1991:204) consulted a large number of sources which, as a body, cannot be considered as "scientific" historic writing because of their highly subjective and personalized interpretations of the past; they serve, nevertheless, a significant purpose. Gebhard (1991:204) explains:

The writers had to advance the views they did because they believed that they were speaking and articulating the views of a specific constituency. Their primary concern was ... to motivate and justify current ideological trends in terms of the past.



Gebhard (1991:204) has demonstrated how modern Black writers, particularly during the apartheid era, have sought to look back at the past with pride in order to be able to deal with the present and future with confidence. Thus, Mphahlele (as quoted in Gebhard 1991:50) stated that Blacks must seek to re-establish their “African personality” by establishing a “dialogue between two streams of consciousness: the present and the past.” Similarly, Ka I Seme (as quoted in Gebhard 1991:50) spoke about the echo of the past as a leavening ferment that would “raise the anxious and aspiring mass to the level of their ancient glory.” Gebhard (1991:212) has shown, too, how many of these modern Black writers have turned to leaders of the past and particularly to those “who had the wisdom to see that resistance to subjugation was the only alternative to dispossession.” This creation of heroes was essential to a people who had deliberately been presented with an image of the past denuded of heroes.

A matter of great significance is the manner in which the afore-mentioned writers have rejected any attempt on the part of historians to evaluate the past in terms of what they believe to be universally applicable and immutable Western-oriented norms. Implicit in this rejection is that, “Blacks must not evaluate themselves and their past in terms of alien values. Similarly goals for the future must be based on values that do not pander to the sensibilities of those who imposed exotic values in the first place, the Whites” (Gebhard 1991:210). Nkosi (as quoted in Gebhard 1991:210) has warned however that the replacement of one set of values with another has not always been advantageous unless the new standards have been well considered. The historical consciousness which emerged after 1948 was then a limited one which saw history essentially from the point of view of the subordinate sections of society and which had its roots in the growing Black resistance to the then South African government.

In contrast to the radical approach to history, in which freedom from White rule was the central issue, an attempt was made, in the 1960s, by a body of White academics, living mainly in the United Kingdom, to move away from the traditional type of history with its heavy concentration on political and national history and, as Smith (1988:164-165) describes their approach, to concern themselves with “the commonplace events of life, with the lives of ordinary people caught up in patterns of change, and social and historical processes”. This new writing of history “from below”, which generally came to be known as “people’s history” was a total approach to the past which was designed to bring history to the notice of the “ordinary” man and woman (Smith 1988:165).

Similar efforts were made at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg between 1978 and 1987 when Four History Workshops were held at which great stress was laid on the motive of “empowering the dispossessed” by restoring to them their “lost or distorted historical traditions” and in so doing, giving them “a sense of their contribution to society” (Bozzoli as quoted in Bam 1993:15).

This new tradition of “social history” with its focus upon “history from below”, and the writing about topics on the experiences of ordinary men and women thus “enlarged the map of historical knowledge, opening up new topics for enquiry, new kinds of evidence, new questions and new approaches” (Bundy 1986:3). Methodologies in this approach emphasised the use of oral testimony: the University of the Witwatersrand was the first to launch an Oral History Project in 1979, and, by early 1987, had collected some 500 tapes and transcripts of oral testimony (Smith (1988:166-167). Verbeeck (2000:393) indicates that according to this new

trend in South African historiography the past was no longer studied on its own, but as a network of “stories” through which people gave meaning to their existence.

### **2.4.3 Initiatives towards a “new” South African History during the late-apartheid era (1985-1993)**

In 1985 the formation of the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee (SPCC) led to the call “People’s Education for People’s Power” and to the demand that learners, parents, teachers and workers have a voice in what kind of education should be provided and how this should be done. In order to achieve this goal the SPCC called a Consultative Conference out of which the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed in March 1986 (Bam 1993:26). A History Commission was set up in June 1986, “to help students and teachers to present the syllabi in different ways” and to produce resources “to help the community to run their own ‘alternative’ programmes outside of the school structure” (Kruss as quoted in Bam 1993:26).

An early endeavour to enable learners to perceive the distortions of school History during this period was the *What is History? A new approach to History for Students, Workers, and Communities*, published by the National Educational Crisis Committee (NECC) in 1987 to provide material to supplement gaps in the official syllabus or to provide a complete alternative History syllabus. The aim of the project was reflected in the following statement made by its initiators:

History – properly taught – should not just tell of the deeds and sayings of people in authority; it should recover and comprehend the doings and thoughts

of ordinary men and women. It should identify the historical sources of dispossession, oppression and exploitation, and examine the ways in which these were resisted (NECC 1987:1).

The book was criticized for presenting the view that South African history is little more than a series of conflicting opinions, it being argued that the key issue in the teaching of History is that students learn that “there is more than one view of the past,” and that the views which exist “take account of each other, and inform and react against each other” (Dean & Siebörger 1995:33). Bam (1993:25-26) has pointed to another criticism of the NECC initiative, namely, that its emphasis was on “content change” and that the development of critical skills was viewed as “a mere vehicle towards comprehending the past in full.”

Between 1988 and 1991, the Education Research Programme of the HSRC (Human Sciences Research Council) initiated an investigation into History education; the full account of which is to be found in its published report, *The Teaching of History in the RSA* (1992). Although emphasising the need to make the envisioned new History more concerned with the history of ordinary men and women, it recommended a more analytical and critical History that would provide skills that would enable learners to reflect on, evaluate and apply their knowledge. However, the question of redress in the area of History education was largely neglected, since the democratisation of curriculum development procedures in History education was, as yet, outside the brief of the HSRC. It became apparent however to participants that clarity about the structures of democratic decision-making in curriculum development would be central to the operation of a new educational mode (Kallaway 1995:15).

The central initiative to formulate an educational policy that is appropriate for a democratic society was that of the National Educational Policy Investigation (NEPI), in 1992, a project of the NECC. Here the issue of equity applied to resource provision; redress of current inequalities; and the issue of democratic policy-making procedures, was given a major emphasis. With specific regard to the field of History the NEPI argued for the retention of the subject in a national curriculum on the following grounds:

- An alternative History curriculum could allow for the redress of past wrongs in the interpretation of History and could restore the history of the oppressed people as part of the common (heritage). Rather than being an exercise in the avoidance of past conflicts and disagreements, this could be an important aspect of the construction of a new set of common values and identities.
- History teaches valuable skills such as the analysis and comparison of sources and the ability to conceive of different interpretations of the past. Thus it provides the basis for working with both commonality and diversity.
- The development of historical insights into the way things are and the way they have been in both South Africa and the rest of the world is an important dimension of general education and also offers a perspective on the changing world of work (NEPI 1992:163).

Other initiatives made to resist the dominant ideology in History as a school subject, and to introduce content previously neglected in textbooks (dispossession of land; family history; integration of the San into the wider South African political context) from the point of view of African learners, found expression in E. Potenza's *The Broken String: An integrated approach to southern Africa History* (1992) and E. Potenza and D. Favis' *Hands-on History* (1994).

The introduction of Integrated Studies (IS) at Sacred Heart College, Johannesburg was unique in South Africa in that it was a real attempt by a traditional secondary school institution to respond adequately to the education crisis that had beset South Africa (Rees & Lowry 1990:73). The main point of IS was to teach learners how to use skills, the development of which would be based on the learners' own life experiences. Since traditional History as taught in most South African schools was a content, rather than skills-based subject, and the syllabus was very Eurocentric and, as such, remote from the world of the learner, IS offered the opportunity to include history which was much more topical and relevant to the South African situation (Rees & Lowry 1990:75-76).

Bam & Visser's *A new history for a new South Africa* (1996), reflects the authors' belief that the History classroom is the place where the "initial burden of shaping transformation" emerges, and that History teachers have a key role to play in enabling the new South Africa to come to terms with its past in a positive and appropriate way (Bam & Visser 1996:cii). Harris (1997:180) pays tribute to the authors of the above book for their endeavour to claim a more prominent and meaningful position for History in the South African school curriculum. Politicians concerned with educational matters should, to his mind, take heed of the indispensable role History has to play. He concludes: "After all, we cannot afford to have a situation where, after decades of the apartheid regime presenting a biased and distorted school history, the new government offers no history at all".

At the present time the question of historical consciousness seems to be widely discussed in Europe, no doubt as a consequence of European unification. Laville (2003:Internet) cites a

statement of J. Rüsen to the effect that, in addition to the Euro, what European unification now needs in order to succeed is a common historical consciousness which Rüsen likens to a common cultural currency that could help the European nations and their citizens to identify culturally in the already existent economic area, so that they can treat it as their own.

There is little debate in South Africa on this issue. Indeed there are several indications that historical consciousness has remained at a very low level of development until the present day. Bam (2000:Internet) attributes this phenomenon to the struggle on the part of South Africans to find a place in the global economy while at the same time facing the task of nation building and reconciliation: “This often leads to denial of conflict and its concomitant promotion of what one can perhaps term tunnel-vision consensus”. The studies of The Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000:13) support the view that:

amongst many educational administrators, there is a general and pervasive discrediting of the value of history as a subject ... history is no longer seen as a core schooling subject. A large part of what lies behind this is the perception, based on a very narrow definition of vocational education, that history has no obvious relevance to the needs and pressures of the contemporary world.

Kapp (1998:3) recommends that South Africa enter a “constructive confrontation” with the past which, on both the public and professional level should be free of political agendas. He writes: “In a transitional period in which many things out of the past are condemned, and in which positive stability and certainty are sought, so that the present might be anchored and the future stabilized, history has a key role to play”. (Translation:G.M.) Kapp (1998:3)

enumerates a number of conditions that have to be satisfied for a constructive dialogue between past, present and future to become a possibility. Among these he stresses the importance of research “to ensure that the imperfect story of the past is filled with greater content”, and the striving towards the goal of ensuring that the broad society’s historical consciousness is constructed and developed “with the end of reaching a necessary degree of sophistication and refinement”. (Translation:G.M.) Kapp (1998:3) maintains that a balanced insight into, and a nuanced conception of, the complexity of the past is imperative:

The tendency to simplify the past by means of such terms as good and bad, heroes and rogues, the one and only truth that explains everything must be shunned. A one-dimensional historical perspective must be replaced by a multi-dimensional one. (Translation:G.M.)

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The general aim of this chapter has been to present a basic understanding of the nature and functions of historical consciousness and has presented a brief survey of the various modes of historical consciousness as these have manifested themselves at different periods in world history, and more specifically, within a South African historical context. Some indication of how these modes have impacted on the teaching of History as a subject in South Africa has also been presented. In the following chapter an attempt will be made to suggest in both theoretical and practical terms the manner in which historical consciousness might be effectively developed within the context of the current education system in South Africa.



## CHAPTER 3

### AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF HISTORY AS A FRAMEWORK IN WHICH TO FOSTER HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN LEARNERS IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PHASE (SCHOOLS)

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Curriculum reforms initiated by South Africa's democratically elected government since 1994 have resulted in the launching, during 1997, of *Curriculum 2005*. *Curriculum 2005*, in its original form, has been reviewed several times to meet the expectations of all role-players in education and to streamline OBE in South Africa. Ultimately, the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* was accepted in 2002. Life-long learning and OBE remain at the center of the new streamlined approach. The vision is to create an education system that liberates human potential and enables South African citizens to take their rightful place in all spheres of life, particularly the economic, social and political, with confidence derived from a complete education (The Teacher/ The Mail & Guardian, 3 August 2002:3). In this chapter the basic theoretical principles of OBE will be analysed and the teaching of History as a school subject within the context of OBE as a means to foster historical consciousness will be considered.

## 3.2 BASIC THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

### 3.2.1 Introduction

Although education is essentially a matter of practice in which the mastery of techniques of instruction plays, among others, a prominent role, the theoretical basis upon which such practice rests is of crucial importance (Fraser *et al* 1991:18). As Phillips (2002:3) has emphasized, in order to progress as professionals, “teachers need to be able to conceptualize and this ... involves a degree of theorizing”. This view is similarly expressed by Flores (2001:146), who maintains that teaching is, “a process that goes beyond the mere application of a set of acquired techniques and skills ... but it also encompasses the construction of knowledge and meaning in an ongoing and challenging dialogue with the practice”. It is therefore of utmost significance that OBE be thought of as having its roots in a theory of education that embodies a specific set of beliefs and assumptions about learning and teaching that may only be translated into practical action after a great deal of mature reflection (Killen 2000:1). In this section, several basic theoretical principles intrinsic to an outcomes-based approach to education will be discussed. These are: the distinctive features of OBE; nature and types of outcomes; outcomes-based programming; and authentic assessment. In the course of the discussion, several issues related to didactic theory and bearing directly upon OBE will also be investigated. These are, *inter alia*: the principle of individuality and learner-centredness; the integration of knowledge, skills and values; relevancy; activity; and participative and co-operative learning.

## 3.2.2 The distinctive features of OBE

### 3.2.2.1 Introductory remarks

A lucid articulation of the general theory underpinning OBE is given in Spady (1994:1) as follows:

Outcomes-Based Education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens.

Spady (1994:2) specifically defines outcomes as, “clear learning results that we want learners to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences ... and ... are actions and performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas, and tools successfully”. Following this line of thought, Deacon & Parker (1999:61) identify an “outcome” as appearing usually in the form of “a clear and unambiguous statement containing a performative verb”. Examples of such outcomes would thus be:

- The learner is able to **demonstrate** a critical understanding of how South African society has changed and developed.
- The learner is able to **perform** as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities (as listed in SAQA 1997:58). (Emphasis:G.M.)

Killen (2000:1) explains this emphasis on learner behaviour as due to the fact that, whereas in the traditional system of education, the achievement of learners was indicated by test and examination results, the type of outcome required by OBE “is usually expressed in terms of what students know, are able to do, or are like as a result of their education”.

Among the several approaches to OBE, Spady (1994:18) favours what he terms transformational OBE in which outcomes are “high quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context”. Killen (2000:2) explains that learning is not significant unless the outcomes reflect the complexities of real life and give prominence to the life-roles that learners will face after they have finished their formal education.

The notion of transformational OBE has been in the forefront of the South African government’s educational policy ever since its inception (DNE 1998:17). With the transition to a democratic society in 1994 many were disillusioned with the existing educational system and curriculum which were seen to impede the development of a new society because of their failure to meet the needs of learners to participate competently in that society. The Department of Education (DNE 1998:17) stated:

This situation arises most commonly when there has been, or is a demand for, rapid social change ... . There is a sense that the educational system should be transformed in order to produce learners who can contribute to the vision of a transformed society. Thus, in transformational OBE the important question is, ‘What sort of quality – both as workers and as human beings – do we want our citizens to have’.

The principle of orienting education to the future needs of learners is likewise the underlying principle of the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:12) which affirms:

The South African version of outcomes based education is aimed at stimulating the minds of young people so that they are able to participate fully in economic and social life. It is intended to ensure that all learners are able to develop and achieve to their maximum ability and are equipped for life-long learning.

### **3.2.2.2 Nature and types of outcomes**

When formulating future outcomes of learning there is always the danger, while stressing what is quantitatively measurable rather than more qualitative outcomes of learning, of ignoring long-term goals which are of crucial importance. As Lubisi, Parker & Wedekind (1998:9) have commented, the focus on outcomes, if too narrowly applied, could be reduced to a narrow statement of measurable behaviour and lead to fragmented learning programmes. To prevent this eventuality and encourage the development of flexible and relevant programmes, the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002) specifies two types of outcomes, namely, critical and developmental outcomes and learning outcomes, which should find full expression in curriculum design.

#### **a) Critical and developmental outcomes**

These are broad, generic, cross-curricular outcomes, rooted in the South African Constitution of 1996, which lie at the heart of all educational endeavour in South Africa. The critical outcomes listed in the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002:11), describe the kind of

citizen the education and training system should aim to create. The critical outcomes envisage learners who will be able to:

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
- Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization or community.
- Organize and manage themselves and their activities respectfully and effectively.
- Collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information.
- Communicate effectively using visual symbols and/or language skills in various modes.
- Use science and technology effectively and critically showing respect towards the environment and the health of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

The developmental outcomes envisage learners who are also able to:

- Reflect on and explain the variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
- Participate as respectful citizens in the life of local, national and global communities.
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of contexts.
- Explore educational and career opportunities.
- Develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

The clear formulation of an intelligible set of overall goals/outcomes has long been recognized as a basic didactical principle since “true” education is always purposeful. According to Thomson (1961:458): “seeing the goal more clearly is an aid to organization resulting in better perception of relationships, clearer insight and superior meaningfulness”.

It will be emphasized, however, that critical and developmental outcomes are empty without contexts that give them substance and specificity (Deacon & Parker 1999:61). This function is served by learning outcomes.

#### **b) Learning outcomes**

The *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:19-28) defines eight learning areas for South African public schools. These are: Language; Mathematics; Natural Sciences; Technology; Social Sciences; Arts and Culture; Life Orientation; and Economics and Management Sciences. Each of the above-mentioned learning areas presupposes knowledge, specific skills, attitudes and values that a learner needs to acquire in order to be allowed to progress to higher phases of learning (DNE 1997c.:21-28). This necessitates the formulation of a set of learning outcomes for each learning area which would provide a guide for the choice of knowledge focus areas and for the selection of materials and procedures to be employed in the learning/teaching process. A few examples of learning outcomes formulated as guidelines for the assessment of achievement in the specific areas of learning are listed here for purposes of clarification:

- **Mathematics:** The learner is able to recognize, describe and represent numbers and their relationships and can count, estimate, calculate and check with competence and confidence in solving problems.
- **Natural Sciences:** Learners are able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between science and technology, society and the environment.

- Life Orientation: The learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities and show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions (DNE 2002a.:21, 23, 26).

Bligh, David & David (1980:5) put forward a number of reasons why the clarification of objectives/learning outcomes is crucial in the instructional process. Some of these are:

- Learner assessment: If a teacher has no clear idea as to what he/she expects learners to achieve, he/she cannot assess whether they have achieved it.
- Learner motivation: Learners are more likely to strive towards a goal if they know what that goal is.
- Learner self-monitoring: Knowing the objectives/learning outcomes of a programme of study, learners can monitor their own progress as well as determine what goals remain to be accomplished.

Malan (2000:24) warns against seeing critical and developmental outcomes and learning outcomes in isolation to one another; the framework of OBE is holistic in its outcome focus and although the learning outcomes are aimed at grass-roots level, “attaining learning objectives is ... not an end in itself; it provides building blocks for achieving higher-level outcomes”.



### 3.2.2.3 Learning programmes – some general principles

#### a) Introductory remarks

A clarification of the function of learning programmes is provided by *The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002:15) as follows: “Learning programmes are structured and systematic arrangements of activities that promote the attainment of learning outcomes and assessment standards”. Learning programmes also contain work schedules that provide the pace and sequencing of these activities each year as well as exemplars of classroom activities to be implemented in any given period. The underlying principles and values of the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002) also underpin the learning programmes.

Learning programmes have been defined by Killen (2000:6) as, “sets of plans that guide individual teachers in their selection of lesson outcomes, content, teaching strategies, resources and assessment procedures”. In developing such OBE-driven programmes Killen (2000:6) suggests that the following principles need to be considered:

- Deciding on the outcomes (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) that learners are expected to achieve.
- Deciding how best to assist learners to achieve these outcomes. This involves decisions about learning content, teaching strategies and activities, and resources.
- Deciding how to determine when, and to what extent, learners have achieved the outcomes. This requires decisions about assessment; and recording and reporting procedures. The above-mentioned decisions are made by teachers, for the most part from their perspective as a subject specialist (e.g. as a facilitator of Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, etc).

However, the OBE system recommends that learners achieve broader outcomes, and to this end learning programmes will have to be organized in an integrated way which draws on elements of more than one learning area.

When developing learning programmes it seems self-evident that teachers/facilitators and/or curriculum developers first determine and understand the philosophical underpinning of the curriculum they intend to implement (Geyser 2000:31). Boschee & Baron (1993:3); Geysers (2000:31); and Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:7) maintain that OBE is committed to the following basic philosophic assumptions:

- All learners can learn successfully. OBE strengthens the commitment to the high expectations for successful learning for all learners, regardless of their background, age, learning style, previous achievement, or other factors.
- Success results in further success. OBE encourages the common vision that every success experienced by a learner builds self-esteem and the willingness to strive for further success.
- Schools create and control the conditions under which learners succeed. OBE fortifies the belief that schools are responsible for learner success by the way they set priorities and provide for their learners.
- The community, educators, learners and parents share in the responsibility for learning. OBE establishes partnerships which treat all stakeholders as significant resources for every learner's success.

When developing learning programmes several teaching-learning principles should be considered in order to ensure that OBE theory is adhered to. These principles are briefly dealt with in the ensuing sub-sections.

**b) The principle of individuality**

When developing and implementing learning programmes, account must be taken of individual characteristics and general development of learners. *The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:8) commits itself to the primary aim of *Curriculum 2005*, namely, “to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa”. This aspiration may, according to Erickson (1974:2), be justified in accordance with the strictest didactical principles. Teachers on the secondary level of education and instruction are often guilty of treating learners as a “class” rather than as a wide range of unique individuals; yet, each learner brings with him/her distinctive resources for transforming what he/she studies into knowledge with personal meaning.

Killen (2000:14) maintains that teachers need to familiarise themselves with the characteristics of the learners in their charge as they pass through the various phases of their learning careers and recognize that learners differ from one another in numerous respects – physically, mentally, emotionally and volitionally. According to Crow & Crow (1963:8) and Hendrikz (1986:62-67) this is of particular importance during the so-called senior secondary phase (Grades 10, 11 and 12), when some of these changes can be of a dramatic nature:

- Learners from the age of 16 to 18 years (late puberty) have entered a stage of rapid physical and sexual development. These give rise to many personal problems in which the

individual's physical needs and his/her changing attitudes towards his/her own physical growth are engaged.

- Learners have attained a high level of mental growth and development. They are able to engage in abstract thought and higher-level cognitive skills and make sensible judgements on the basis of analysis of relevant circumstances. The willingness to be imaginatively and creatively original increases.
- Learners experience a strong sense of awareness, and a sense of belonging, spending an increasing amount of time in the company of their peers.
- Learners' real emotional experiences can be more readily appraised as they grow in ability to convey their inner feelings to others. The learners' total reaction is affected by their appreciation of values, desires and ideals, and by their interest in and reaction to persons, institutions, points of view, and ideals of others.

Du Plooy (1978:7) has drawn attention to the fact that although teachers teach a number of learners under the same conditions and by the same method:

they respond differently, think differently, listen in their own way ... . Their learning achievements differ. There are differences in their rate of learning and studying, their methods of approach to their subject-matter and in the interest they take in the field of study. There are also differences in their objectives and motivation.

By teaching and training the masses, there is a real danger that the desires and interests of the individual learner will be ignored. Because the OBE system is aware of the differences that

are known to exist in learners' ability, motivation and learning styles, it acknowledges the fact that variations in the amount that learners will learn in a fixed time period are inevitable. For this reason programmes are constructed in such a way as to give all learners an equal opportunity to achieve each outcome by providing additional learning opportunities for those learners who are in need of them (Killen 2000:7, 8).

### **c) Learner-centredness**

OBE programming attempts to focus clearly and deliberately on learners and learning rather than primarily on content-based and teacher-centred instruction. In OBE, learning programmes are constructed to give all learners an equal opportunity to achieve each outcome; thus Killen (2000:9) states: "The most important feature of OBE is that all learners are expected to be successful". The emphasis on learning also changes the definition of teaching. Killen (2000:10) again points out:

Teaching is no longer defined as the transmission of knowledge; instead, it is defined as the process of helping students to understand information and to transform it into their own personal knowledge. Teachers become facilitators of learning instead of transmitters of knowledge.

McCown, Driscoll & Roop (as cited in Van Der Horst & McDonald 1997:111) suggest that opportunities for self-empowerment be offered learners by means of learner-oriented class environments: although not given absolute freedom in determining learning outcomes, learners should be conferred with to clarify outcomes, discuss action plans for attaining these outcomes and judge the extent of their own progress towards outcomes attainment. Dean (1996:31)

likewise maintains that learners need to feel that they have control over events, and this means involving them from time to time in planning programmes and outcomes and in assessing their own work and that of their peers. All this increases independence, fosters self-confidence and increases interest. It is significant that OBE has a policy for equal opportunities and that a sense of equality be nurtured in learners. To stereotype learners of different races, gender and social background is to destroy their dignity. As Hargreaves (1982:17) describes it:

To have dignity means to have a sense of being worthy of possessing creative, inventive and critical capacities, of having power to achieve personal and social change. When dignity is damaged, one's deepest experience is of being inferior, unable and powerless.

Killen (2000:14) maintains that in a learner-centred approach to teaching, the teacher, while setting the learning agenda, is no longer “the filter through which all information must pass before reaching the learners”. Ultimately, learners need to accept the responsibility for their own learning and in order to do this it will be necessary:

- For the goals to seem reasonable to the learners.
- For achievement of the goals to result in an outcome that is desirable to the learners.
- For the learners to have a high level of self-confidence, and a record of prior success.
- For the teacher to organize the learning environment so that learners work relatively independently.

Learner-centred classrooms in no way make the teacher redundant. Indeed, *The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:9,12) well recognizes the particularly important role that teachers have to play; it envisions “teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated

and caring,” and looks to them to be, among many other things, able mediators of learning; interpreters and designers of learning programmes; assessors; and learning area specialists. It acknowledges, too, that the outcomes and assessment standards “leave considerable room for creativity and innovation on teachers in interpreting what and how to teach”. This implies that a learner-centred system of education far from wresting control from teachers, actually makes them more accountable for the progress of learners (Malcolm 1999:84).

**d) The integration of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes**

In its definition of learning outcomes, *The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:14) indicates knowledge, skills, values and attitudes as constituting what “learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training Band or the Further Education and Training Band. Landsberg & Burden (1999:30) similarly define learning outcomes as “the result of learning processes that find expression in the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which learners should apply and demonstrate in particular contexts”. Since the OBE approach attempts to effect a shift away from the content-based approach of the past, its primary aim is not only to increase the general knowledge of the learner, but to develop their skills, critical thinking, attitudes and values as well. Schoeman (2003:5) avers that, although knowledge of content remains of importance, more significance is now attributed to how learners utilize the knowledge acquired in the classroom than to whether they know all the facts off by heart: “Content is still important, but is only of value if it can be used to develop the skills and values of learners ... needed for success after they leave school or have completed their training”.

Tomlinson (1995:96) defines knowledge as, “a more or less lasting representation of reality. Humans may possess it in a variety of forms (e.g. visual, verbal, concrete, symbolic). When it is knowledge of processes ‘how things work’, in some domain, we tend to call it understanding”. Fraser *et al* (1991:14) maintains that knowledge gained through meaningful learning content enables the learner to interpret aspects of reality and to establish his/her own perspective on reality; thus, “transfer of knowledge implies more than the transfer of related facts; it involves the acquisition of insight and knowledge in a functional manner”.

According to Dean (1996:62-66), skills (in contrast to knowledge) are more obviously about knowing *how* to do something. If learners are to become independent it is essential that school teaches them the skills of study. These skills include, *inter alia*, planning; making judgements and hypotheses; collecting information from a variety of sources; observation; discussion with other people; making notes; interpretation; evaluation; selection and organization of material; and making and evaluating presentations.

The inculcation of sound values and attitudes is a primary goal of *The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:10) which sees *Curriculum 2005* as playing a vital role in creating an awareness of the relationship between human rights; a healthy environment; social justice and inclusivity; and recommends that “the special educational, social, emotional and physical needs of learners be addressed in the design and development of appropriate Learning Programmes”. The following is a summary of some of the values and attitudes referred to in *Curriculum 2005*:



- The vision of South Africa encompasses a prosperous, truly united democratic and internationally competitive country, with literate, creative and critical citizens, leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice.
- The realization of this vision requires appropriate life-long education, training and development to empower people to participate effectively in the processes of a democratic society and to excel in fields like human and natural resource development.
- Education and training should develop the ability to act in a manner which reflects justice, democratic values, and respect for human dignity.

The above key values and attitudes of the “new” education and training system suggest that one cannot change education and training without changing the society as a whole.

The principle of integration plays an important role in emphasizing the idea of totality in all aspects of teaching and learning. Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes must be integrated if the learner who attains them is to be seen as a whole person. As Duminy (1976:24) asserts: “any attempt to develop the intellect, the emotions and the will as separate faculties should be abandoned as this can only result in the development of an internally disintegrated and unbalanced personality”. *The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:13) recognizes this principle of integrated learning as integral to Outcomes-based Education: “Integration ensures that learners experience the Learning Areas as linked and related. It supports and expands their opportunities to attain skills, acquire knowledge and develop attitudes and values encompassed across the curriculum”.

**e) The principle of relevancy**

Dean (1996:3) emphasizes the fact that much learning needs to be seen to be of relevance to the learners' real-life situations: "The more that students can apply what they are learning in real-life situations, the more they will be motivated to learn". There will, it is true, be much learning in school that may not seem to have immediate relevance to life outside school, "but will be part of the process of developing well-educated adults who will be able to look back on what they learned in school and see its relevance at a much later stage in their lives". Fontana (1994:99) proposes that learners are more likely to be motivated if the work seems relevant and "helps them in some way to make a success of their lives". He includes here not only work which helps learners to prepare for their future careers but also work that will help them to "accept and value themselves as individuals and ultimately to help them see a meaning and purpose in their own and other people's existence".

*The Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:8, 26) envisages the creation of a learner who is "literate, numerate and multi-skilled" and equipped for "meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society". Malcolm (1999:82) remarks on this change: "Industry is now calling for skills it was not demanding fifty years ago when critical thinking, problem solving, team work and self-management were not desired". In the present day of automation and the global economy, industry needs a different kind of worker with different kinds of knowledge and skills.

#### **f) The activity principle**

The teaching-learning principle of activity is seen by didacticians as fundamental because the learner is by nature essentially a dynamic human being who exerts him/herself in the realization of objectives/outcomes (Van der Stoep 1972:9). Harkin, Turner & Dawn (2001:35) criticize the all too frequent tendency in schools for learning to be treated simply as the delivery of a commodity called knowledge which teachers transmit and learners are expected to ingest. In this mode of “learning”, knowledge is seen to be a fixed, written and formal entity, and learners are viewed “merely as receptacles for and disembodied from whatever learning is supposed to be taking place”. In consequence, learners are frequently attributed with passivity, a view which is challenged by Salmon (as cited in Harkin *et al* 2001:36) who, in contrast, considers learners to be, by nature, active participants in life, “engaging with and making enquiries about what interests and motivates them”. Learners, she insists, “must be given the opportunity to make sense of the material for themselves and to find its relevance to their lives. Only then will true understanding emerge”.

#### **g) Participative learning**

According to Vakalisa (2000:3) participative learning occurs when, *inter alia*:

- Each individual learner is given the opportunity to express what he/she understands of the subject content presented to him/her;
- Expression of one’s views does not meet with destructive criticism from teacher or peers;
- The notion that for every question there exists a single “correct” answer is discarded and, instead, uninhibited exploration of all possibilities with regard to learning content is promoted.

One of the ways in which participative learning in the classroom can be introduced is by using co-operative learning which promotes participation. Co-operative learning is defined by Gawe (2000:190) as “a way of teaching in which pupils work together to ensure that all members in their group have learned and assimilated the same content”. He elucidates:

In co-operative learning groups are organized and tasks are structured so that pupils must work together to reach a goal, solve a problem, make a decision, or produce a product. There is a strong emphasis on co-operation and interdependence of group members. However, individual accountability for learning is still stressed.

Co-operative learning is seen, by Arends (1999:111-112), to achieve at least three important instructional goals:

- Academic achievement. It can benefit both low- and high-achieving students who work together on academic tasks. Higher achievers tutor lower achievers, thus providing special help from someone who shares their youth oriented interests and language. In the process high achievers gain academically, because serving as a tutor requires thinking more deeply about the relationship of ideas within a particular subject.
- Acceptance of diversity. It can promote a wider acceptance of people who are different by virtue of their race, culture, social class, ability or disability. Co-operative learning presents opportunities for learners of varying background to work interdependently on common tasks and learn to appreciate each other.

- Social skill development. It can provide an important skill to have in a society in which much adult work is carried out in large, interdependent organizations and in which communities are becoming more culturally diverse.

#### **3.2.2.4 Learning programmes - activities**

When planning learning activities to be implemented in the classroom, teachers must bear in mind the radical shift in emphasis which has transpired as far as OBE teaching methodology is concerned, and which has been highlighted by Luczyn & Pretorius (1998:3-8); Olivier (1997:15-16); Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:27-31). Some of these changes are reiterated here in summary form as follows:

- In OBE, teachers are facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of knowledge.
- In OBE learners build on knowledge and skills already acquired and are allowed to interpret knowledge in the light of prior experience, background and previous knowledge.
- In OBE learners must be able to demonstrate that they are able to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom in real life situations.
- In OBE learners take responsibility for their learning.
- In OBE learners are constantly motivated by feedback and affirmation.
- In OBE learners have a shared accountability.

To construct learning experiences that lead to the mastery of outcomes, teachers have to make informed decisions about the type of activity that should be initiated to achieve the required outcome. Mahaye (2000:210) reiterates that it is imperative that teachers always ensure that classroom teaching-learning activities are brought into alignment with learning outcomes: “All

classroom activities are knitted together by the teaching strategy the teacher uses to help the learners attain the desired learning outcomes”. Mahaye (2000:210) defines a “teaching strategy” as “a broad plan of action for teaching-learning activities with a view to achieve one or more specific outcomes”. A “teaching method” he describes as “a particular technique a teacher uses to help learners gain the knowledge they will need to achieve a desired outcome”.

There are several types of teaching-learning activities in which learners might be engaged and which might be included in a learning programme. Some of these are listed in the ensuing subsections:

**a) Individualised learning activity**

Individualised learning activity places increased responsibility upon the learner for his/her own education and training. A goal of OBE is to stimulate learners to exercise independent judgement and to cultivate skills and attitudes essential to life-long learning, and to this end all learners, irrespective of their capabilities, should be encouraged to spontaneously pursue subjects or learning areas in which they are genuinely interested (Killen 2000:11). The completion of assignments, usually in the form of essays and written reports, are still important elements in individualised learning activity. Mathews, Moodley, Rheeder & Wilkinson (1992:61) suggest that such learning activity should be planned to involve learners in, among others, research in a particular topic that is of special interest to them, and through such training in research skills “they should come to realize the value of the library as a source of information and so break their dependence on the textbook”. Killen (2000:14) advises teachers

to accept that learners will always be at different stages of learning, and, therefore, will be concurrently working towards different short-term outcomes.

It is not unusual that in a class of learners there exists a wide variation in learning ability, motivation, interests, and modes of learning; in such a situation regular classroom teaching and instruction cannot be expected to meet the needs of all learners, and some type of individualised learning must be provided. Gronlund (1974:1-2) defines this function of individualised instruction as “adapting instructional procedures to fit each student’s individual needs so as to maximize his learning and development.”

#### **b) Participative learning activity**

In this form of activity, learners as a class or in groups of varying sizes play a central role in teaching-learning activities. Mursell (1954:142-143) remarks:

No one can seriously doubt that the interplay of minds can have a very remarkable and beneficial effect on thinking and learning. That is why the attack on a difficult problem by a group conference so often leads to a happy solution which might never occur to any of the individuals concerned working alone ... . A co-acting group constitutes a dynamic influence upon the performance of its members by its mere existence and example.

There are several effective participative learning activities which might be included in an OBE teaching-learning programme. These are:

## **i) Discussion**

The foundation of co-operatively achieved success is, to a large measure, based on talk; as Dunne & Bennette (1990:8) assert: “talk is central to social development and cognitive growth and the two are closely intertwined”. In discussion learners “test out ideas ... have to structure their knowledge and find words that will be understood ... (and) make their own opinions known as well as justifying them”. Dillon (1994:7) defines discussion as:

a form of group interaction, people talking back and forth with one another.

What they talk about is an issue, some topic that is in question for them. Their talk consists of advancing and examining different proposals over the issue.

The proposals may be various understandings, facts, suggestions, opinions, perspectives, experiences and the like. These are examined for their contribution towards resolving the issues. As people talk and relate in this way, they begin to form together, new, more satisfying answers to their question. For instance, they come to a better understanding, a new appreciation, a wiser judgement, a firmer resolve.

Dean (1996:67) maintains that learners start to make learning their own when they have put it in words:

In discussion they have to think about what they are learning in order to express their views, and this should make it a good way of learning, providing that the question under discussion is clear and the outcomes are used as building blocks for further learning.



Mahaye (2000:211-214) advises that teachers clearly state the outcomes of the discussion to prevent it from degenerating into mere idle talk and arguments. He states the requirements for effective discussion as follows:

- The topic should be meaningful and relevant to the learners.
- All learners should be given the opportunity to participate fully. Teachers should only guide and direct.
- Each learner should have the right to express his/her personal view. A broad range of viewpoints enriches the discussion and can lead to the development of tolerance and respect.

Patterson (as cited in Dillon 1994:12) describes the state of consciousness of any class in which the conditions for genuine discussion are being met thus:

Participants are consciously intending a common search for meaning. To discuss something is to ask one another, 'What does it mean?' In their exchanges, participants bear witness to the meaning of the subject in their understanding and life, and they invite the others to share this construal of experience, they listen and enter the other's world as it is being articulated over the subject being discussed.

The teacher who is disposed toward discussion, will, as a matter of course, hold democratic sentiments which will incline him/her to a broadly liberal rather than authoritarian posture towards society. Lasker (1949:160) concludes that the main requirement for authentic discussion in the classroom is that "the leader must have faith in democracy".

## **ii) Group work (co-operative learning)**

Working effectively with others in a team, group, organization and community is one of the critical outcomes, rooted in the South African Constitution of 1996, which lie at the heart of all educational endeavour in South Africa (DNE 2002:11). Schoeman (2003:18) lists three main types of group work which are used regularly in the classroom. They are as follows:

- Joint activity in groups with individuals and products (the Delta technique). In this activity ideas and knowledge are shared by the members of the group but the end product consists of individual projects or presentations.
- Individual activity combined into one joint group end product (the Puzzle technique). In this activity individual work is, initially, done by each member of the group. On completion of individual projects the work is then combined to form one joint product.
- Joint activity with one end product (the Snowball technique). This activity consists of the joint activity of group members working on one end product.

Fraser *et al* (1991:75) indicate several advantages which might be gained through the introduction of group work in learning programmes. Some of these advantages are listed here as follows:

- Learners are given the opportunity to work with other learners and come to realize that people may differ in opinion. Therefore they learn to respect and to appreciate the opinion of others.
- Learners are given the opportunity to consult each other and to come to a joint decision or conclusion. Thus the group accepts joint responsibility for a decision.

- Learners in the group develop a sense of responsibility, especially when different tasks are given to members of the same group. The learners realize that the group will be assessed as a whole, and that a member who does not pull his/her weight may cause the group to perform badly.

As regards the composition and size of groups Schoeman (2003:20) proposes the following:

- Groups of learners of mixed ability are preferable to those in which learners of similar ability are placed.
- Learners might, at times, be allowed to choose their own groups, but they must also be seen to learn in any group to which they are allotted.
- Groups should be smaller rather than larger as this allows for the opportunity of greater participation of learners. The ideal size for a group is four members; it is large enough to make the exchange of ideas possible and small enough for members to reach consensus on matters in the group.

Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:127-138) suggest that in order to involve all learners in group work, it is advisable to give each group member a role to fulfill. Some examples of such group roles identified by them are:

- Recorder: He/she records in writing the group's discussions. These notes are, in their final form, agreed upon by all group members.
- Reporter: He/she presents the conclusions of a discussion arrived at by a group to other groups.
- Encourager: He/she encourages the participation of every member of the group.

- Time Keeper: He/she keeps the group aware of time.
- Summariser: He/she draws ideas, suggestions and information together to obtain a consensus.
- Noise monitor: He/she monitors the noise level within the group.

Despite its importance, Schoeman (2003:23) sounds a cautionary note not to overdo group work: “It is important for learners to work and learn individually as it is to learn in groups. Good teaching requires a variety of teaching/learning methods or techniques appropriate to different contexts and needs of learners”.

### **iii) The question and answer method**

According to Mathews *et al* (1992:119), questions in the teaching-learning process might serve several purposes, the most important being:

- To discover, at the beginning of a learning programme, what learners already know about the topic.
- To discover, in the course of the learning programme, if learners are grasping essentials, and if interest is being maintained.
- To encourage learners to reason and make inferences.
- To revise points and test the extent of assimilation of knowledge focus areas at the end of the learning programme.

Morgan & Saxton (1991:7) argue that effective questioning has the “power to generate vivid ideas, spur the imagination and incite both teacher and student into a shared, creative learning experience”. They maintain that, in order to be an effective teaching-learning activity,

questions should be perceived by learners as “a dialogue in which everyone’s thoughts, feeling and actions, are important elements for collective and individual understanding”.

In OBE a wide range of activities is employed to accommodate different learning styles. This range of options “allows educators to provide for slower learners and to provide additional challenges for learners with higher potential. The only condition is that we do not change the outcomes that each learner must achieve” (DNE 1998:1:24). This is a sound didactic practice because learners have varied needs and flourish in different learning environments. If a teacher utilizes the same teaching approach over and over, only those learners who learn well with that teaching approach will succeed. As Gunter, Estes & Schwab (1990:68) maintain: “A teacher who utilizes a variety of instructional approaches is more likely to reach all students in the classroom; moreover, students are encouraged to learn in different ways”. As Vakalisa (2000:3) reiterated:

There are times when the teacher is in the forefront and teacher-talk and activity predominate, and times when learners are in the forefront and learner-talk and activity predominate. Sometimes lively debates occur as both teacher and learner engage in discussion about issues relating to the content of a lesson. Yet at other times learning continues quietly with the teacher supervising learners as they work on individual assignments.

### 3.2.2.5 Learning programmes – learning materials

Learning materials are used extensively in the design of learning programmes. These are mainly in the forms of visuals and may include photographs, diagrams, posters, charts and drawings. Teachers are also making increasing use of displays, slides, overhead transparencies, audiotapes, video and film (Fraser *et al* 1991:153). However, Schoeman (2003:87) cautions teachers, as well as learners who design their own learning materials, not to make use of media in an indiscriminate way: teachers and learners must state clearly, using the correct OBE terminology, which outcomes are to be achieved by using the various learning materials, and should ensure that, apart from having presentation appeal, these materials include outcomes from all of the three outcome domains (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values).

Mathews *et al* (1992:109) suggest that teaching-learning resources be selected and used under the following conditions:

- Teaching resources should always illustrate a point in a lesson and so contribute towards the acquiring of conceptual knowledge or specific information. They thus need to be relevant to the lesson and suitable for the particular class.
- Resources must be in good working order and be visible and audible to the whole class.
- Teachers should not use too many teaching resources in one lesson as this will detract from what is being taught.
- Learners should be guided in the interpretation and analysis of what they see and hear.

Follow-up work is important to ensure that learners gain new skills and insights.

Fraser *et al* (1991:151) specify two major functions of teaching-learning materials:

- Reality is brought into the classroom by means of teaching media. Learners learn mainly through direct experience. Since the direct experience of a phenomenon is not always available in the immediate environment, substitutional experience in the form of slides, videos, transparencies etc. are important.
- Direct observation through the senses improves a learner's perception of content. By means of teaching media the teacher attempts to present abstract concepts to learners in the form of concrete and observable examples.

### **3.2.2.6 Assessment standards and procedures**

Assessment standards are described by the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (DNE 2002a.:14) as being:

standards that describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcome(s) and the ways (depth and breadth) of demonstrating their achievement. They are grade specific and show how conceptual progress will occur in a Learning Area. They embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve learning outcomes.

Killen (2000:17) maintains that it follows logically that a system that plans for the outcomes of education should take measures to consider the extent to which learners achieve these outcomes. This involves a set of good assessment practices. Killen (2000:18) suggests that, to be useful in an OBE system, assessment should conform to the following principles:

- The assessment procedures should be valid – they should actually assess what the facilitator intends them to assess.

- The assessment procedures should be reliable – they should give consistent results.
- The assessment procedures should be fair – they should not be influenced by any irrelevant factors such as the learner’s cultural background.
- Assessment should reflect the knowledge and skills that are most important for learners to learn.
- Assessment should tell teachers and individual learners something that they do not already know. That is, it should stretch learners to the limits of their understanding and ability to apply their knowledge.
- Assessment should be both comprehensive and explicit.
- Assessment should support every learner’s opportunity to learn things that are important.
- Learners are individuals, therefore assessment should allow this individuality to be demonstrated.

Dreyer & Schoeman (2003:89) has dealt exhaustively with the role of the teacher as assessor, and has gone to great lengths to clarify the concept of “assessment” as it is used within OBE. It commences by making a clear distinction between an “assessment”, which is essentially a judgement of performance measured against criteria (outcomes) and answers the question: “Has it been achieved?”; and an “evaluation” which is a value judgement which asks: “How good? How well?” Several types of assessment are listed:

- Diagnostic assessment which determines learning difficulties; it takes place before learning commences and attempts to detect, in advance, the barriers that might impede successful learning.



- Formative assessment which determines the progress of learners towards achieving outcomes; it takes place during the learning process and informs planning of future learning activities.
- Summative assessment which determines the overall achievement of learners and learning success; it takes place at the end of the learning programme or at the end of the learning phase.
- Continuous assessment which takes place at any time during the learning process; it is used to inform the learning process and to provide continuous feedback to learners.

Assessment strategies suggested by the Dreyer & Schoeman (2003:94) are:

- Interviews.
- Conferencing (groups).
- Assessing products (projects, tasks, assignments, portfolios, written work).
- Assessing oral work (feedback, presentations, debates).
- Assessing performances (field work, experiments, research, map-work).
- Assessing tests and examinations.

Dreyer & Schoeman (2003:92) favour an “authentic” assessment of learning outcomes which it describes as “**realistic and relevant** and involves **learner performance in real world situations** or simulation thereof”. This authentic, balanced and fair assessment of the learner takes into account individual learning styles; aptitudes and interests of the learner; involves multiple activities; reflects local values, standards and controls; and supports teaching and learning.

### 3.2.3 Some advantages of OBE

Although OBE has received a fair amount of criticism in South Africa (see Chapter 1, p. 19), many educationists have come to perceive that there are considerable advantages to developing and implementing an OBE curriculum in South African schools. Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:14-16), for example, list seven such advantages which might accrue when implementing an OBE curriculum model:

- Through OBE learners will be aware of what is expected of them, and they will be able to assess their own progress. This is made possible by the stated outcomes and by the assessment criteria. In doing so, learners are provided with the opportunity of taking responsibility for their own learning. Self-assessment is an integral part of OBE.
- OBE provides the learner with greater learning support than in past practices. Co-operative learning techniques, self-and peer-assessment are only a few examples of the learner support that OBE provides and which constitute an integral part of learning.
- OBE eliminates failure because learners who do not achieve the required standard will be granted further opportunities to do so in the future.
- Rote learning is reduced. Understanding of content is more important than the mere reproduction of knowledge.
- The absorption of miscellaneous, discrete facts is eliminated and understanding of the context is emphasized.
- Emphasis is on the knowledge, skills and values of real life situations like those which learners will encounter after school and not on contrived classroom activities.

Steyn & Wilkinson (1998:207) point to the large degree of freedom which OBE affords teachers/facilitators to select content and method through which they will enable learners to achieve the required outcomes. Geysler (2000:40) cautions, however, that OBE should not be regarded as “a magical cure for all the educational ills of the past and the present”. A curriculum is, after all, only as good as the teacher who implements it.

### **3.3 AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH TO HISTORY EDUCATION TO FOSTER, AMONG OTHERS, HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN LEARNERS**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Fraser *et al* (1991:7) have pointed out that although each school subject or learning area in the curriculum is practised against the background of general didactical theory which forms a frame of reference, “every subject-didactic perspective focuses on the distinctive manifestation of the didactic activities relevant to the teaching of the particular subject”. This is due to the fact that every subject or learning area has its own unique axiomatic structures and abstract concepts that will dictate decisions and provide guidelines as to how the subject or learning area should be taught. It is imperative, therefore, that, particularly in the Further Education and Training phase (schools), History as a school subject be accorded the status of an autonomous discipline which differs fundamentally from other disciplines in, among others, its general character, knowledge focus areas, representative ideas and methods of inquiry (Phenix 1964:54). Its outcomes will, of necessity, be rooted in the critical, developmental and learning

outcomes specified by the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002) which places the emphasis on the general knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes that a learner needs to acquire in order to be allowed to progress to higher phases of learning (DNE 2002a.:19-28). It is imperative, however, that these outcomes be formulated as specifically and uniquely “historical”. With this provision in mind, an analysis will be made of historical knowledge and understanding, historical skills, and historical values and attitudes, as outcomes which should direct the teaching and learning of History as a school subject in South African public schools.

### **3.3.2 The construction of historical knowledge and understanding**

One of the essential outcomes of History as a school subject is knowledge of content; committing some information (events, dates, great names, etc.) to memory will always be an important skill in life as well as in school assessment. In this regard Dance (1970:1) has remarked that, “facts must be the foundation of all history, whatever is erected on that foundation”. Teachers must, however, guard against the danger of History becoming (as it was in the past) a subject whose prime objective or outcome is the rote memorization of facts. Haydn, Arthur & Hunt (1997:210-212) caution that, while accepting the need for learners to be able to deploy accurate information, “if this is done without also demonstrating understanding any assessment of learning outcomes is without value”.

Peters (1998:209) has argued that education can only be justified on the grounds that learners acquire through it the value of self-examination, which is necessary to exhibit the virtues of

critical, open-minded disciplinary inquiry: “It is through self-examination that learners develop a capacity to reason, and .... establish logical and relevant connections between different ways of understanding”. Gibbs (as cited in Harkin *et al* 2001:36) has in like manner reflected on the differences between learners who merely try to reproduce subject matter and those who understand and apply knowledge. He concluded that if a learner reduces what is to be learned to the state of unconnected facts to be memorized, then a so-called “surface approach” is adopted; if, on the other hand, a learner attempts to gain a deeper understanding, then a so-called “deep approach” is used. Harkin *et al* (2001:48) comment: “Although a surface approach can lead a student to achieve an outcome, it fails to equip them with a full understanding of a concept, or topic ... or relate new ideas to previous knowledge or to areas outside the subject matter”.

Spady (1994:19) describes the traditional outcome of the construction of knowledge of subject matter as occupying a low level of learner achievement because “these demonstrations are not generalizable across ... other performance contexts; school is the only place where they are typically performed”. The transformational approach to outcomes, that is to say “those demonstrations which require the highest degree of ... functional application of prior learning because they must respond to the complexity of real-life performances”, he places at the highest level.

### 3.3.3 The application of historical skills

There have been a number of undertakings since the late 1960s, particularly in Britain, to devise new methods of teaching History as a school subject. These new methods emphasize the process of how historical knowledge is accumulated and lay stress on the importance of encouraging learners to develop different skills necessary to piece together interpretations of the past. Bam & Visser (1996:97) explain the advantage of the new methodology as follows: “Students learn the analytical and practical skills historians themselves use, instead of only uncritically consuming countless unchallenged facts”.

This trend towards “doing History” through the methodology used by historians has been criticized by those who place the main focus of learning history on learners knowing about the content of history. The *Times Educational Supplement* (as quoted in Brown 1995:5) summed up the controversy as follows:

What stands out is the difference in fundamental objectives between those who see history as a principal ingredient in the formation of a citizen’s concept of his country, past and present, and those who see it as a whetstone on which to sharpen critical faculties and power of reasoning.

The division between content and skills is, however, an artificial one which “does little to elucidate the nature of learning history in the classroom” (Brown 1995:16). Rogers (1979:6-16) suggests that History as a school subject has two main characteristics from which it gains its coherence. Firstly, there is its propositional character or “know that” which is based on narrative or the story of the past and accounts for the argument that learners should “know the

facts”. Secondly, there is its procedural character or “know how” (through the application of skills) which forms a symbiotic relationship with “know that” because “‘to know’ something ... is the outcome of an enquiry which satisfies the procedural criteria ... only ‘know how’ can give ‘the right to be sure’ because it is the only valid basis for claims to ‘know that’”.

Bam & Visser (1996:97-98) note several History skills identified as crucial in developing critical thinking. Some of these are mentioned here as follows:

- Language skills: these skills involve vocabulary acquisition, the improvement of reading skills and the learning of historical terminology and concepts.
- Comprehension: this skill enables the learner to understand content.
- Comparison: this skill helps the learner to compare different interpretations of the same period or event and to identify contradictions and inconsistencies.
- Analysis: this skill enables the learner to identify bias, point of view, attitude or perspective in an account.
- Judgement and evaluation: these skills enables learners to evaluate the merits of different perspectives, and admit doubt in interpreting material.

Out of the multiplicity of historical skills which might profitably be developed in the History classroom, attention will be focused on four high-level cognitive skills which are seen to have particular relevance to the general theme of this thesis. These are: the acquisition of historical concepts; the ability to evaluate and use evidence; and the competence to understand the role of narrative and the textbook in History studies.

### 3.3.3.1 The acquisition of historical concepts

The move away from a largely content-based approach to the teaching of History to a methodology where skills play a more dominant role has had important consequences for the teaching of History as a school subject. Mathews *et al* (1992:20-21) emphasize that this transition should in no way suggest that content becomes irrelevant, but rather that it now be utilized as a vehicle to train learners to become young historians themselves, that is to say, to do “exactly what the historian does but in a far less complex manner”. In this new approach to the teaching of History the skills acquired by learners are founded on reason, and on the attempt to develop a spirit of enquiry. According to Mathews *et al* (1992:21) as a means towards gaining authentic historical knowledge, learners must come to terms with the concepts unique to History as a discipline such as time, causation, change, development and motivation, “so as to transform mere scraps of factual information into historical knowledge”.

Gunning (1978:12) places great emphasis on the idea that History as a school subject, like all disciplines, has its own unique structure, and it is for this reason that:

the central goal of a learner who is ‘doing’ history is to learn the characteristic procedures of a professional historian and to master the central concepts of the historical discipline, like ‘evidence’, ‘source’ and the notion of the tentative, provisional nature of historical judgements.

Booth (1980:246) likewise argues that more consideration should be given to how learners think historically by concentrating more attention upon how historians construct arguments and judgements and by organizing classes in ways that allow learners to discuss, share information



and make decisions together. In this manner learners can think in a genuinely historical way, and “learning history can make a significant contribution to their ability ... to ‘conceptualize’ at relatively sophisticated levels”.

Kapp (1998:3-4) maintains that the conception that learners have of the subject History as an endless collection of facts that need to be memorized is an unfortunate one. Although it cannot be denied that knowledge of facts is the basis and necessary function of all scientific practices that have as their goal the deriving of accurate and dependable generalisations and abstractions; it is the latter, however, which lie at the core of History; it is for this reason that learners in the senior phase of their school careers should be systematically led to higher degrees of generalisation and abstraction, in order to penetrate to the essence of the subject. According to Kapp (1998:4) this does not deny the importance of the particular, the unique or the one-time event in History:

But the teacher that remains fixed in the non-recurring event does the educational development of his learners and the subject itself inestimable damage ... . Neither he nor his learners can benefit thereby from the immense spiritual and cultural wealth which lies locked up in History. (Translation: GM).

### **3.3.3.2 The ability to evaluate and use evidence**

According to Brooks, Aris & Perry (1993:98) the prime consideration in the teaching of History should be the evaluation and use of evidence:

Effective history teaching at all levels must bring pupils into contact with primary evidence, and it is important therefore that, from the outset, the teacher of history forms a clear idea of the important distinction between primary and secondary sources.

Although a distinction can be drawn between History as an academic discipline and History as a school subject, it is clear, as Husbands (1996:13) has pointed out, that both are evidence-processing activities, that is to say, neither can acquire any understanding of the past without first addressing the relics that people in earlier times have left behind through the physical, material and documentary remains available to us. In asking questions about historical evidence, learners in the classroom may thus well be taught to emulate the *modus operandi* of historians. Husbands (1996:13), nevertheless, warns that teachers should keep in mind that there are fundamental differences between the way professional Historians and teachers and learners in the History classroom function. History teachers, unlike professional historians, are largely concerned with the learner's intellectual and personal development.

Brooks *et al* (1993:82-83) acknowledges that learners should be enabled to gain some understanding of what historians do. Since the materials which the historian questions are evidence, it thus behooves the teacher to provide opportunities for learners to examine the widest range of evidence and by using it, "to extract as much information as possible and by asking increasingly complex questions become more able at evaluating its usefulness and its reliability".

The emphasis on the use of primary sources has been criticized by educationists such as McAleavy (1998:12), who discerns what appears to be a tendency towards directing the learner's perception on the source material *per se* rather than on his/her "sense of period and the ability to make connections". Phillips (2002:75, 78-79), while recognizing the methodological and technical aspects of source work, cautions likewise too against being preoccupied with primary sources, thus "losing the wood for the trees and forgetting what history is for". Bombarding learners with too many sources might lead to learner's boredom and discouragement, and encourage a reductionist approach by attempting to debunk the evidence as unreliable or biased, rather than make history more interesting and dynamic.

Kobrin (1996:20-32) suggests the implementation of several classroom activities and techniques which may be used to help learners find their own reasons to study history using primary sources. The purpose of these activities is to evoke interest in learners in how historians work, and to encourage them to work as historians themselves by becoming seriously involved in questions about how to write accurate history. Kobrin (1996:36-37) adds, however, that such involvement cannot be accessed on demand. Learners have to be made to understand that such involvement is in their own self-interest. Involvement activities are in effect designed "to help students see that they could have some of the personal power of being a historian in their own hands and find good reasons of their own to care about the history topic under study".

### **3.3.3.3 The comprehension of the role of narrative and the textbook in History studies**

Narrative (“storied” accounts of the past) has recently been seen to provide a fruitful avenue for historical research and historical thinking. Cooper (1995:50) makes the point that, particularly for learners in schools, the story has a powerful heuristic function in helping them to address more abstract ideas and make sense of a confusing past. Stories, he writes, are important in the cognitive development of learners, “who are called upon to create new worlds through powers of imagination ... . Stories extend first hand experiences of the world ... so extending perceptions of the world”.

Husbands (1996:50-51) cautions that to suggest that story-telling has an important role in the representation of the past is not to say that it may be immediately substituted for the structured past of logic, argument and development: the teacher, as storyteller, still has an obligation of accuracy to what can be derived from historical evidence, as well as a duty of “relating stories to those ‘organizing principles’ – the ideas of causation, continuity, change – of complex historical discourse”.

Kobrin (1996:4-5) has indicated the manner in which the production of textbooks has always been, and remains, susceptible to contemporary pressures. The interpretations and content in History textbooks more often reflect social and cultural factors at the time of writing – factors like current political upheavals, the role of pressure groups, changing school populations and the author’s ideology – than advances in knowledge about the subject. It is, however, because of their tone of authority that learners (and many teachers) regard their textbook as the sole and

accurate account of the past, which everyone should be learning. Poulsen (2001:Internet) maintains that the real challenge for History as a school subject is finding ways of teaching History that are not tied to History textbooks with one or another interpretations of the past. An important part of this challenge is finding a way to integrate history and memories as they are being made and used:

There is ... a differentiation in the concept of history: The one between institutionalized history and history as a subject of everyday life. Treating this difference the challenge is acknowledging the right of children and youth to bring their everyday life shaped consciousness of history and personal memories into the school as part of the curriculum.

In order to achieve this goal, Poulsen (2001:Internet) recommends that learners be given more opportunities to “make their own narratives out of personal memories, collective memories from their respective communities and history, national as well as world history”.

### **3.3.4 Values and attitudes**

For History as a school subject to justify its place in education, its outcomes must go beyond that of the sole stimulation of rational reflection; it must address the affective domain as well, as a vehicle for developing values and attitudes in learning. As Dance (1970:15) expressed it: “our business is to teach not history but students, to give them, not a body of knowledge, but an attitude to life”. Some of the outcomes of History as a school subject which have their roots in affective behaviour are listed below. These are: the awareness of values and the ability to make sound value judgements; and the ability to understand and demonstrate civic

responsibility and democratic values. The nurturing of these attitudes and qualities of thinking and feeling might well commence in the earliest grades; it is however, during the Further Education and Training Phase (schools) that learners are best able to assimilate them for purposes of life-orientation, by dint of their more mature mental and emotional development.

#### **3.3.4.1 The awareness of values and the ability to make sound value judgements**

In the twenty-first century, when values are undergoing a period of fundamental change, History can provide an opportunity to put these into context. In this regard, Fisher (1990:231) explains that the past is after all “an essential part of a child’s cultural knowledge and experience. Only by reflecting on the past can meanings be found from it that will illuminate the present and help plan the future. Only by reference to the past can the present be fully understood”. Jordan & Taylor (as cited in Phillips 2002:146) describe ways in which History can provide “a fuller and deeper contact with the issue of values”, namely:

- Looking at how values emerge from studying a wide range of events in the past.
- Taking into consideration the different interpretations of those events and how these can alter initial perceptions of value judgements.
- Analysing a variety of perspectives from a range of historical sources in order to identify and distinguish motivations behind events, and the subsequent values placed upon them.
- Stressing the need to discuss the validity of information, motivations, and personal opinions in the widest possible sense, in order to explore the essence of what a value judgement is.

### **3.3.4.2 The ability to understand and demonstrate civic responsibility and democratic values**

A major purpose of historical studies is to raise “good citizens”, a value which has been considerably modified during the past few decades. Whereas, in the past, the inculcation of patriotism in History teaching tended to be prejudiced and wholly self-centred, the state is no longer recognized as the only society to which men owe a social and spiritual allegiance. Dance (1970:20) comments, in this regard, that, at the present time, one’s patriotism is wider than it used to be because we are citizens not only of our own country but of the world, “and there are other societies, too, neither political nor national, to which we owe loyalties – our church or religion, perhaps, or our class or profession”. Dean (1996:3) similarly points out, that in a world where what happens in one part of the globe affects what is happening in other parts to an unprecedented degree, learners will, as adults, “be world citizens and need understanding of and sympathy with other people, including those whose lives are very different from their own”.

Schoeman (2003:3) maintains that one of the main purposes of the study of History is to foster “an understanding of identity as a social construct, preparing future citizens for local, regional, national, continental and global citizenship”. She also states that a critical approach to the study of History in a democratic society, apart from promoting the democratic values of the Constitution and encouraging civic responsibility, “should enable people to examine with greater insight and understanding the prejudices such as race, class, gender, ethnicity and xenophobia still existing in our society and which must be confronted and addressed”.

White (1996:1) has put forward the thesis that, “democracy is not to be identified with any particular procedure, as it sometimes is – for instance with majority rule”, but will best be realized “by the most appropriate embodiment of the values of freedom, justice and respect for personal autonomy in that context”. White (1996:1) recognizes the fact that citizens need a very great array of knowledge and skills for life in a democracy, “but they also need to be *disposed* to use their knowledge and skills democratically. They need democratic dispositions”. Schoeman (2000:182-183) lists several such ‘civic dispositions’, i.e. traits of private and public characters essential to the maintenance and improvement of constitutional democracy. These include traits of private character such as moral responsibility; self-discipline; and respect for the worth and human dignity of every individual; and traits of public character such as public spiritedness; respect for the rule of law; critical mindedness; and willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

The general aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate how historical consciousness, as a primary element of History study, might be developed in the learners in the Further Education and Training Phase (schools) within the context of the new outcomes-based approach to education which has been adopted in South African public schools. The basic principles of both OBE and History study have been investigated, and have been found to be in consonance with the highest didactical criteria, as well as largely compatible with one another. In the following chapter strategies towards the advancement of historical consciousness in the Further



Education and Training Phase in South African public schools are outlined, discussed and illustrated.

## CHAPTER 4

# TOWARD THE ADVANCEMENT OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PHASE IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

According to several scholars (De Keyser 1999; Kapp 1998; Poulson 2002) the concept “historical consciousness” is gaining increasing international significance in the field of History studies. De Keyser (1999:Internet) explains the reason for this present surge of interest as follows:

The ‘development of historical consciousness’ functions as the first element in determining the educating value of the subject ... . Historical consciousness arises and grows by means of a long and consistent process of learning in which, on the one hand, historical insights, skills and attitudes come into being and in which there is, on the other hand, a permanent dialogue between historical and contemporary reality. This process of learning is called history education leading up to historical consciousness.

Poulsen (2001:Internet) likewise states: “the best possible way to go now, is to pursue the path laid out by the concept of **historical consciousness** ... . It is important to note ... that the term ‘history’ no longer is identified with the past. Rather, history is conceived as a process that encompasses the past, present and future”.

South African History educationists, like their counterparts in other countries, have also become aware of the vital functions that historical consciousness serve in promoting the enrichment of their subject. Kapp (1998:105), for example, sees the development of a historical consciousness as representing a shift away from the traditional association of didactics with teaching methods to a new focus on the role of history in society in general and in education in particular. Central to this re-evaluation of history is its functions as a social and intellectual manifestation, its role in giving direction to individuals and societies, and in the identification of the determinants that shape these functions and purposes.

The overarching assertion of the History/Archaeology Panel Report (DNE 2000:5-7) on the state of the teaching of History as a subject in South African public schools, is the crucial need to promote the importance of History within school education, because the formal study of this area of knowledge “assists in the formation of a conscious historical consciousness which has an essential role to play in building the dignity of human values within an informed awareness of the legacy and meaning of the past”. The History/Archaeology Panel Report (DNE 2000:7) concludes:

Unless one knows something of the past, then one has no informed criteria by which to assess and judge the present ... contemporary problems and complexities ... have to be seen within the context of their development in time.

The South African Historical Society, in its *Statement on the implications of Curriculum 2005 for History teaching in the schools*, issued in June 2001, likewise describes the discipline of History as consisting of “an integrated study of past human experience concentrating on the

nature of change and continuity through time ... on ways of explaining the past from the vantage point of the present, and on debating different perspectives". It concludes:

An informed and human historical consciousness is a vital ingredient in a democratic society, encouraging civic responsibility and critical thinking. Historical consciousness can play a substantive role in fostering values of democracy, anti-racism, anti-sexism and general respect for human rights. (Legassick 1998:6)

In this chapter an attempt will be made to investigate the unique didactical role which historical consciousness might fulfil in the development of History as a school subject in South African public schools. Suggestions will then be made as to how historical consciousness might be intensified and advanced through History studies so as to give direction to learners in determining the shape of their present and future. As a way forward, an example of an outcomes-based History learning programme is provided to assist History teachers to determine and assess the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools. The didactical theory of J. Rüsen regarding historical consciousness has been of particular relevance in lending focus to the present investigation. A discussion of this theory has, therefore, been included in the chapter, and it is against the backdrop of this theory that the argument in the chapter must be interpreted.

## **4.2 HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS A NEW ORIENTATION IN THE DIDACTICS OF HISTORY, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE THEORY OF J. RÜSEN**

Contemporary developments in the Didactics of History in Germany, America and Canada display a new sense of direction in which, *inter alia*, the general analysis of the nature and importance of historical consciousness plays a major role (Laville 2003:Internet; see Chapter 2, pp. 44-47). In this regard the work of the noted German didactician, J. Rüsen (1993), has made a significant contribution to the fertile and varied debate concerning the Didactics of History.

Rüsen has worked assiduously on the theory and methodology of Historical studies and its practical and didactical implications. In a series of articles published between 1984 and 1989, mainly in the journals *History and Theory* and *History and Memory* (which have since been compiled and edited by P. Duvenage in a book entitled *Studies in Metahistory*, 1993), Rüsen laid the foundation for his unique exposition of the task of historical consciousness in orientating human beings in time, by presenting a general typology of historical consciousness. According to Rüsen (1993:7, 71-85, 91), there are four basic modes of historical consciousness, each of which requires adequate development if the History Didactic enterprise is to succeed. These models, he termed the traditional, the exemplary, the critical and the genetic. He expounded as follows:

- The traditional mode of historical consciousness. In this mode of historical consciousness traditions are emphasised as being indispensable elements of orientation within practical life without which people would lose the ground beneath their feet. Historical

consciousness functions, in part, to keep such traditions alive; by furnishing people with traditions, it provides them with remembrances of concrete factual occurrences which demonstrate the validity and binding quality of values and value systems. Such traditions also define the “togetherness” of social groups or whole societies in the terms of a sense of common origin, as well as shape personal identity formation as “a process in which roles are assumed and played out” (Rüsen 1993:7, 71).

- The exemplary mode of historical consciousness. The type of orientation realized by this mode of historical consciousness is rule-focused: it entails the application of historically derived and proven rules to actual situations in the present. Historical memory, in this conception, is viewed not as the remembrance of the infinite number of events in the past, since they do not possess any significance in themselves, but only in relation to “an **abstract idea of temporal change and human conduct** valid for all times” (Rüsen 1993:72).
- The critical mode of historical consciousness. In this mode historical consciousness mobilizes a specific kind of experience of the past: deviations which render problematic present value systems and life-patterns. It undermines the ideal of temporal totality and continuity and challenges morality based on age-old traditions (Rüsen 1993:78). Yet, Rüsen (1993:81) contends, this mode of orientation, while negative, affords us an opportunity “to define ourselves unentangled by role determinations and prescribed, predefined patterns of self-understanding and establishes value criticism and ideology critique as important strategies of moral discourse”.
- The genetic mode of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness in this mode represents experience of past actuality as “transformational events in which alien cultural

and life-patterns evolve into more positive modern configurations” (Rüsen 1993:75). The dominant historical signification here is that of development: “We define ourselves as being a cross-point, an interface of time and events, permanently in transition ... . Our identity lies in our ceaseless changing” (Rüsen 1993:75).

Rüsen (1993:77) arrays these modes in a logical and structural sequence ordered by what he refers to as the “principle of precondition”. In this arrangement the traditional mode is primary and constitutes the condition for all other modes. It is “the font, the beginning of historical consciousness.” The logical sequence of modes, each the precondition for the next, is as follows: traditional, exemplary, critical, genetic. This sequence constitutes, in essence, a framework which provides for the development of historical consciousness. Rüsen (1993:78) asserts that History education is essential in developing historical consciousness from the traditional into the genetic stage, that is to say from a spontaneous and uneducated awareness of the past which is shaped by tradition, stories, legends and myths, to an educated historical awareness rooted in a critical and systematic, academic way of thinking about the past, the present and the future. Thus in moving through the typological series one notices a growing complexity in relation to historical identity. Rüsen (1993:78) explains: “It begins with the unquestioned form of historical understanding imprinted by tradition and extends on to the fragile balance engendered by multidimensional, multiperspectival genetic forms”.

Consequently, Rüsen (1993:85) defines “historical learning” as “human consciousness relating to time, experiencing time to be meaningful, acquiring the competency to attach meaning to time, and developing this competency.” This broad definition covers the whole area in which:

historical consciousness plays an active and influential role; through memory the past becomes present so that the present is understood and perspectives on the future can be formed: One's own present is seen, interpreted and acted out as an ongoing process within memory's close relationship with future expectation (Rüsen 1993:85).

Rüsen (1993:90) divides the aforementioned competence concerned with "making sense of the past" into three principle abilities:

- Historical learning is characterized by the "competence of experience". This entails the ability to have temporal experience: "The operations of historical consciousness become learning processes when they concentrate on increasing knowledge of what has happened in the past" (Rüsen 1993:88). It is, however, not sufficient, to merely observe what has happened in the past. Learning about the past involves the capacity of learning how to look at the past and to distinguish the specific temporal quality that differentiates it from the present.
- Historical learning is characterized by the "competence of interpretation". This entails the ability through the operation of historical consciousness to bridge time differences between past, present and future by a conception of a meaningful temporal whole comprising all time dimensions; this form of learning integrates different types of knowledge and experience of the past into a comprehensive whole – that is, a "picture of history".
- Historical learning is characterized by the "competence of orientation". This competence is concerned with the function of historical experience "for the meaningful arrangement of practical life in the processes of time which change people and their world" (Rüsen



1993:90). Rösen (1993:91) denigrates historical knowledge which is “learned by simply receiving”, because such knowledge cannot be employed for orientating the problems of practical life. On the other hand, he regards it as a mistake to construct historical learning wholly around the subjective interests of its learners because in such a process of learning:

subjective interests would simply lead to the ideological fixation of orientations with corresponding dogmatic forms of historical identity; the learners would be deceived as far as a ‘sense of reality’ according to which they develop the meaning of historical experience is concerned.

### **4.3 THE DIDACTICAL ROLE OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HISTORY AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 2 (pp. 47-54), several of the basic functions of historical consciousness were delineated and the general role of historical consciousness in the temporal life-orientation of individuals and societies was underscored. In the following section, the specifically didactical functions which historical consciousness may be seen to satisfy in the teaching and learning of History as a school subject will be analysed. Aspects dealt with in this section will include: the preservation of tradition, culture and collective group identity; the nurturing of traditional culture and historical identity in a multi-cultural classroom environment; an integrated academic and spontaneous historical awareness about the past; the formation of national

identity and ideology; critical historical consciousness in the stimulation of a critical interest in the past; and a meaningful understanding of temporal change and continuity.

#### **4.3.2 The role of historical consciousness in the preservation of tradition, culture and collective identity**

In his formulation of the four modes of historical consciousness (see pp. 160-162), Rüsen (1990b.:130) sees traditional historical consciousness as the most basic and necessary condition for people to find their way in the world. In this regard he states: “In respect to historical education it should be acknowledged that traditions form the basis of historical consciousness of learners”. These are incorporated into the minds of children from an early age, and once so implanted play a decisive orienting role throughout their lives. Traditions play an important role in providing a sense of security and stability in learners’ lives; Rüsen (1990b.:139) maintains: “the most decisive characteristic of historical consciousness lies in the idea that *vis á vis* the temporal nature of human affairs, the essential forms and values of human life don’t change in the course of time.” Lowenthal (1985:40) comments in similar fashion:

we justify current practice by referring to ‘immutable’ tradition. ‘This is how its always been done’, we say ... precedence legitimates action on the assumption, explicit or implicit, that what has been should continue to be or be again.

The orientations of traditional historical consciousness are vital, too, in the formation of a cultural heritage which validates the present and fills it with significant cultural content. As

Lamm (1967:1) observed: “Tradition is ... a promise of roots, the precondition of a healthy continuity of that which is worthy of being preserved”. McClay (2003:Internet) elaborates on this theme. To him historical consciousness means:

Learning to be guided by the distilled memories of others, the stories of things we never experienced first hand. It means learning to make these things our own, learning to look at the world through their filter, learning to feel the living presence of the past inhering in the seeming inertness of the world as is given to us.

This notion has had a vital influence on those educationists who continue to advocate the type of traditional teaching which has its basis in the philosophical assumption that although there is change in the world, one may also discern much that remains changeless, and it is to the enduring and immutable to which one must ultimately turn if one is to gain a sense of security or confidence in one’s educational endeavours (Brubacher 1962:2, 29). Kneller (1971:233-234), for example, maintained some years ago that the basic principle of traditional teaching is to steep the intellect of learners in a rich, liberal curriculum that will expose them to the great works of literature, philosophy, history and science in which men through the ages have revealed their greatest aspirations and noblest thoughts.

According to Rüsen (1990a.:3-4), traditional consciousness also plays a crucial role in the shaping of personal historical identity. He states:

Historical identity forms a part of the human self. Identity is the relationship to oneself. It answers the question who one is. By its special historical character

it realizes this relationship to oneself in respect to temporal change as one of the basic factors in human life. By historical identity man/woman puts his/her identity into the course of time. He or she gives him or herself a temporal quality.

As such, historical identity is the core of collective culture. Rüsen (1993:4) states:

Historical identity means the feeling that one belongs to a group because of a common history. It means to share a collective memory which shapes the distinctive nature of one's culture. It articulates to whom one belongs and whom the others are, with whom one lives together.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers engaged in the Further Education and Training phase of schooling, to design learning activities that will orientate the historical consciousness of learners towards the preservation of traditional culture and the shaping of group identity.

#### *Classroom example # 1*

Facilitator asks the class as a whole to consider the following statement: At some stage in your life you should have seriously pondered the question: "Who am I?" The facilitator then explains to the learners that one of the most important functions of historical consciousness is to make one aware of the fact that history is not only about great events, wars and dates, but also about ordinary people like themselves, and how they lived. For this reason, their own particular family history is of great importance, and should be seen as part of the greater historical picture. To know who one is (personal identity) is to know

one's "roots" – where one comes from and where one belongs, and to do this, one must, first and foremost, learn about one's own immediate family history and see what changes one's family has experienced over the generations, and the impact that these changes have had on one's own thinking and actions. With this in mind, learners are instructed to complete the following assignments individually:

- Draw your own family tree showing both sides of your family (your mother's relatives as well as your father's). You should show at least three generations, and, where possible, include dates (of births, marriages or deaths). You will need to interview family members to find out these details.
- Assemble a collection of photographs, written information (letters, documents, diaries, etc.) and objects/relics that will illustrate various aspects of your personal past. What do these photographs tell you about the changes that have taken place over the years? Which of your chosen objects/relics from the past do you find most revealing about the past? Why? What does it tell us about the material conditions in which people lived?
- List several significant events that have occurred in your own life-time. Which of these had an impact on your own personal life or that of your family? State how and to what extent this was the case.
- Find out where your family came from? Have they always lived in the same location or did they move from one suburb to another in the same town, from city to city, or even from one country to another country? Give reasons why these movements took place.
- Interview your parents and grandparents to gain information on how they lived when they were adolescents. Gain information about schooling; technology and medicine;

cost of living; careers; state of culture; sport; entertainment, etc. What changes have taken place since then? Have these changes had an effect on your own life and on that of the members of your society?

*Classroom example #2*

Learners are informed that it is important to have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the most common rites of passage which find expression in their ethnic groups. These rites of passage mark a transition from one stage of life into another, create transitional periods in the journey of the individual's life cycle. Each period represents an important turning point which is frequently marked by ritualised ceremony. Learners are then divided into groups according to their ethnic origin and instructed to give a brief account of the following rites of passage which take place in their ethnic group during the course of an individual's lifetime:

- Birth
- Puberty into adolescence
- Marriage
- Death

The different groups must report their findings back to the class as a whole. Learners should then individually write one paragraph (4 lines) in answer to each of the following questions:

- To what extent are we defined by our membership in a particular ethnic group? By our religion? By the nation in which we live?

- How do the attitudes and beliefs that have come down to us from the past and are an integral part of our ethnic culture influence our thinking? How does our thinking affect our actions?
- To what extent do traditions provide a sense of security and stability in your life? Does it provide you with a guideline towards the future?
- “Tradition is a promise of roots, the precondition of a healthy continuity of that which is worthy of being preserve.” Do you agree with this statement? Is there still a need to preserve family and group memories and culture at a time when South Africa is undergoing a radical transformation in which “the future” appears to be emphasised at the expense of “the past”?
- Are you clear about your ethnic identity? State the reasons why or why not. How does it feel to have a strong ethnic identity? Or to be without one?

### **4.3.3 The role of historical consciousness in the nurturing of traditional culture and historical identity in a multi-cultural classroom environment**

Although, as stated above, traditional culture and identity, both products of historical consciousness, are prerequisites for the psychic well-being of individuals living in societies, it is imperative that learners be equipped to participate constructively in multi-ethnic societies where a large variety of cultures prevail (DNE 2002:23). Schutte (1991:104-105) cautions, however, against the introduction of a curriculum which aims for the lowest common cultural denominator. He states: “In the enthusiasm to find a commonality in a multi-cultural milieu there is the danger of merely creating a strange patchwork of different pieces of culture

disregarding the different ways of life that gave them meaning in the first place”. Sacks (as quoted in Schutte 1991:105) put it more strongly. It would be: “like gluing together slices of Da Vinci, Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Picasso and declaring the result a composite of the best in Western art”.

The most desirable way of educating learners in a multi-ethnic society is by means of a multi-cultural curriculum which will reflect the multi-faceted cultural nature of the groups that constitute it. The promotion of a multi-cultural system of classroom instruction of this nature need not impede the educational process. On the contrary, if conducted in accordance with the strictest didactical principles, a multi-cultural education can involve learners in more interesting and challenging learning experiences than one which is not (Jeffcoate 1979: 8-12).

Gollnick & Chinn (2002:vi) describe multi-cultural education as education that:

provides an environment that values diversity and portrays it positively ... .  
Educators have a responsibility to help students contribute to and benefit from our democratic society. Effective instruction strategies for all students in the classroom ... should be drawn primarily from the cultures of students and communities. The integration of multicultural education throughout the curriculum helps students and teachers think critically about institutionalism, racism, classroom sexism, ageism and homophobia. Hopefully educators will help their students develop both individual and group strategies to overcome the debilitating effects of these society scourges.



Grollnick & Chinn (2002:327) maintain further that in teaching subject matter, “culturally responsive teaching increases academic achievements because the subject matter is taught within the cultural context and experiences of the students and communities served.”

According to Seelye (1994:18-24) folklore offers a satisfactory bridge for those who are interested in gaining an understanding of their own or other’s culture. Seelye (1994:18-24) defines folklore as the material that is handed on by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. In the South African context this oral tradition may come down in the form of folk songs, folk tales, proverbs, or other materials preserved in words, all of which constitute a rich cultural resource which can be appreciated by all ethnic groups because of its cultural universality. In this regard Seelye (1994:19) comments that the very durability of folklore is an indication of the validity it has for people. Folklore is “the result of the creative contribution of many generations of people to spiritual culture ... it puts forward ... the most humane and democratic ideals in the education of the rising generation”.

Despite the desirability of multi-cultural History learning programmes, Hoffman (1996:553) warns that valuing cultural differences or developing positive attitudes is unlikely in the absence of real knowledge about culture, about “the meanings behind practices and ... about the broader context of meanings and values in which practices exist”. Hoffman (1996:557) also notes that in many schools in which multi-culturalism purports to be a true reflection of cultural diversity, views of what constitutes healthy identity are based on Western norms only. He states in this regard:

Notions of identity ... and attendant notions such as self-esteem, are simply not the same in all cultures or ethnic groups ... in particular, the Western self with its strong themes of individualism, autonomy, uniqueness, independence and consistency stands apart from other cultural understandings of self that stress social relatedness, interdependency, commonality, self-other identification, and social responsiveness.

In answer to the question whether a more genuine multi-cultural perspective on identity is possible, Hoffman (1996:559), while not denying the need for awareness of one's own culturally shaped views of identity or claiming that identity is something that can be cast off or changed at will, nevertheless eschews:

an overly ideological perspective in favour of a more learning-and-knowledge-based one that can help students move beyond fixed frames of reference to envision different or alternative views of self and other ... . To do so is not to undermine children's sense of themselves but to offer a richer base for self-development and, ultimately, social action.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers engaged in the Further Education and Training phase of schooling, to design learning activities that will orientate the historical consciousness of learners towards the nurturing of traditional ethnic culture and identity in a multi-cultural classroom environment.

### *Classroom example #1*

Learners are instructed to read the following statement written on the chalkboard by the facilitator: “Although every group of people have the right to cling to their traditional roots and to perpetuate that which is unique in their own cultural heritage, it is important that you, as a learner in a multi-cultural society such as South Africa show curiosity about other learners’ culture and a genuine empathy towards its members.” Learners are then divided into groups of five and instructed to complete the following activity to demonstrate their competency in this regard: Conduct research into the rites of passage (birth, puberty, marriage and death) of two ethnic groups (other than your own) that reside in South Africa. In conclusion, state to what extent and for what reason your group agree/disagree that: knowing how to respond to the glad and sad tidings that mark the lives of others makes one so much more sensitive and skilled in practising human relations! Learners present their findings in a group presentation.

### *Classroom example #2*

Facilitator breaks learners into small groups and instructs them to go to the media centre and find works of South African folklore (folk-songs, folk-tales, etc.). They must then study the above and complete the following questions:

Indicate the works of South African folklore (folk-songs, folk tales, etc.) which you have studied and which have made an impression on you. Have they helped you to gain a better understanding of your own or other people’s culture? In what way do they express the ideals of the people about which they speak? Each group should share its responses with the class.

### *Classroom example #3*

Let learners individually write an imaginary speech to explain to those of a different ethnic group: What they want others to know about their culture? What do they never want others to say about their culture? How do they want others to learn about their culture?

### *Classroom example #4*

Learners might sit in pairs and interview each other about their backgrounds, traditions, etc. These impressions can be recorded in a journal.

#### **4.3.4 The orientation of the historical consciousness of learners towards an integrated academic and spontaneous awareness about the past**

A distinction has already been drawn in a previous chapter of this thesis (see Chapter 2, pp. 41-44) between collective memory which has its roots in tradition, and the historical memory – that is, the reconstruction of the past by historians which is rooted in scientific research, and tends to be critical of accepted perceptions. Wilschut (2003:Internet) makes a similar distinction between what he calls educated and spontaneous historical consciousness. He describes spontaneous historical consciousness as follows:

It is obvious that some awareness about the past is present in any human being ... the majority of this awareness about the past, however, is spontaneous and uneducated ... shaped by tradition, stories, legends and myths. Important events very often acquire mythical proportions in popular tradition, especially when a struggle between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is involved.

Because dealing with the past in an uncomplicated, unsophisticated way easily makes people liable to propaganda and indoctrination, Wilschut (2003:Internet) deems it the task of History as a school subject to transform people's spontaneous awareness of the past into something more academic: "The study of history should be a serious, conscious and systematic way of thinking, instead of a passive and naïve consumption of stories told by someone else. A way of thinking which should be acquired and developed to a more perfect level".

In like manner, Seixas (2002:1) cautions against the usage of myths in present-day History teaching: "We live with an abundance of myths ... . Some of our myths feel crusty and irrelevant ... and many of them contradict each other in their social and moral messages. But they surround us nevertheless". He asserts further that despite the function of myths and heritage to reinforce collective identities, social values and moral orientation, they cannot be challenged or revised on the basis of new evidence. People believe in them deeply and faithfully. In his typology of historical consciousness, Rüsen (1993:7), likewise regards traditional historical consciousness on its own as wanting because: "Traditions alone are not sufficient as forms of orientation, because they are limited in their empirical content". Only exemplary narratives in the form of History, Rüsen (1993:7) declares, concretise abstract rules and principles which are valid for all times. Since these rules are supertemporal they provide a sense of stability and continuity to those living in a world of rapid change.

Even while recognising the legitimacy of objective scientific historical study, scholars such as Funkenstein (1993:45-46) maintain that collective memory still continues to co-exist alongside

it as part of a community's cultural consciousness. Indeed, the historian is himself/herself nurtured in the specific traditions and culture of his/her community and seldom represents in his/her writings, anything other than the past images shared by that community. Southgate (2000:5), however, goes as far as to question the very concept of historical objectivity: "historians ... choose their point of involvement ... for some purpose – even if they themselves are not always conscious of what that purpose is". For this reason Collins, Harkin & Nind (2002:40) advise that the teacher channelise the spontaneous historical consciousness of the learner to good effect:

Clearly, it is easier to orient learners to particular constructions if one has an idea of the constructions they are currently using ... we need to accept the reality of the learner's lived experience and not require them to shed or deny precious parts of their identity and history at the door of the classroom.

Richardson (1990:101) corroborates the opinion of Collins *et al* as follows: "These precious parts of themselves includes their culture, language ... and countless experiences, stories and memories of their families, communities and friends, including in particular stories of oppression and injustice". In similar vein Pendry, Atha, Courtney, Keogh & Ruston (1997:20) state:

It seems reasonable to assert that teachers should assume that pupils are not a blank sheet – whatever is being studied, it seems likely that they will have, if not knowledge, then ideas, beliefs, attitudes and images in their minds. It may well be that, especially in the case of beliefs and attitudes, these are held dear by the pupils and will not be easily changed or challenged by the teacher. It

may be that they are the product of a powerful media image of the past, of an attitude prevalent in the pupil's home or the expression of a prejudice common in society ... . If ... pupils came to their history lessons with this range of ideas, then ... an important task for the teachers is to try and gain access to them.

Phillips (1998:45) observes that there has been relatively little empirical or theoretical research which explores the ways in which learners are influenced by unofficial history, “consumed that is to say, outside the classroom, the symbols, images, versions, texts, institutions and media which bombard children daily with images of the past”. Partington (as cited in Phillips 1998:45) regards the power of such unofficial history as being the most crucial influence in shaping the “idea of an historical education”.

Connell (1971:128) reminds us of the degree to which television has played a significant role in breaking down narrow traditional thinking and practice. Phillips (1998:46) remarks on the manner in which popular music, combining more than one cultural form “has transcended traditional forms and norms”. Rosenstone (1995:12-13) recognises the degree to which “period piece” films “offer a new relationship to the world of the past” and “revolutionise our notions of the past”.

Hence, Poulsen (2001:Internet) sees the real challenge for History as a school subject in finding ways of teaching history that are not tied to history books with one or another interpretation of the past. “An important part of this challenge is finding ways to integrate history and memories

as they are being made and used outside the school.” According to this view an important distinction is made between institutionalised history as taught in the schools, and history as a subject of everyday life: “Treating this difference the challenge is acknowledging the right of children and youth to bring their everyday life shaped consciousness of history and personal memories into the school as part of the curriculum”. According to scholars such as Collinson (1996:11) it is important to build on learners’ backgrounds or prior knowledge: “Linking the curriculum with the students’ worlds to show the relevance of what they are learning in school is made much easier when teachers know their students and their worlds”.

Phillips (2002:25) insists that because History contains many abstract concepts, the subject could potentially be too difficult for younger learners. However, Booth (1980:246) argues that younger children can be taught to conceptualise at a relatively young age. A concept such as “historical consciousness” will nevertheless require a relatively sophisticated ability to think conceptually, an ability which, according to Peel (as cited in Phillips 2002:28) is a prerequisite for thinking hypothetically or deductively, and which only manifests itself (if at all) at the cognitive age of sixteen.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers engaged in the Further Education and Training phase of schooling, to design learning activities that will orientate the historical consciousness of learners towards an integrated academic and spontaneous awareness about the past. Learners must be able to make a clear distinction between the historical memory – that is the reconstruction of the past by historians which is rooted in scientific research, and the collective memory of the past which



has its roots in tradition. To gain a clearer understanding of this distinction learners must be aware of the various types of sources which may be studied by the historian in order to get to know more about the past. In the following classroom examples reference is made exclusively to oral testimony, namely, “to the more formalized records of the past which have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. These are not personal memories, but the memories of a community from which a person comes” (Schoeman 2003:89).

#### *Classroom example #1*

Facilitator distributes a worksheet and instructs the learners to answer the following questions individually using their textbooks:

- 1) What is historical evidence?
- 2) Name the different types of historical evidence.
- 3) Define the concept “oral testimony”.
- 4) Outline an example of oral testimony.
- 5) Can oral testimony be regarded as authentic evidence about the past?

#### *Classroom example #2*

Learners are instructed to conduct an interview with older people either in their own family or within their community who can provide information about famous twentieth century events and personalities. Facilitator explains to the learners that there are several South African themes which would particularly benefit from interview activities. They should choose two of the following themes: The Great Depression of the 1930s; The Second World War (1939-1945); The victory of the National Party in 1948; Life under the apartheid laws; The Soweto

uprising of 1976; The last years of White rule in South Africa. After they have conducted the interviews they should check these oral spontaneous accounts with those of the official classroom resources. Then they should answer the following questions in the form of a short essay: What are the main differences between the two sources of evidence? Do you detect a conflict between so-called objective and subjective interpretations of history? To what extent have your interviewees allowed personal beliefs and attitudes to distort their accounts? Is this necessarily a good or bad thing? State the reasons for your opinion.

### *Classroom example #3*

Learners are instructed to read the following statement: “The challenge is acknowledging the right of youth to bring their everyday life-shaped consciousness of history and personal memories into the school as part of the curriculum”. Then discuss, either as a class or in small groups, the feasibility of the above challenge. Does it have any particular significance within South African History education context?

#### **4.3.5 The role of historical consciousness in the formation of national identity and ideology**

Rüsen (1993:68) perceives national identity as an example of the consciousness of a “temporal immortality” which enables nations “to locate their wellsprings in a hoary and ancient past, and project an unlimited future perspective embodying national self-assertion and development”. Tosh (1991:3) also sees the historical enterprise as a powerful factor in the formation of national identity. He writes: “One of the strongest bonds uniting a large social grouping is its

members' awareness of a common history showing how group identity has endured through shifting circumstances ... . This is manifestly true in the case of the most powerful group identification in modern times – the nation”.

In like manner, Southgate (2000:39) maintains that, because history as a manifestation of memory is a way of ordering, recording and retaining of the past, “so it serves to underpin our identities at both a personal and public level.” Marwick (1970:13) asks his readers to try to imagine what everyday life would be like in a society in which no one knew any history. He answers succinctly: “As a man without memory and self-knowledge is a man adrift, so a society without memory (or more correctly without recollection) and self-knowledge would be a society adrift”. Thus the urgent need of every society to have some functionary whose responsibility it is to preserve and communicate such knowledge.

National ideology, which serves as a basis for national identity, has had a chequered career. The idea that mankind is always in a state of transition towards a new and better condition arose in the eighteenth century. The historians of the Enlightenment interpreted the past according to the idea of progress, which for them meant the moral and material improvement of mankind by the application of reason. During the nineteenth century these optimistic predictions of the Enlightenment were appropriated by a number of nation states – notably Britain, Germany and the USA – who proclaimed their own “manifest destiny” as the nations of the future (see Chapter 2, p. 79).

Yet, these essentially positive ideologies gave way to crass misrepresentations. In an attempt to inspire national pride, historical records throughout the previous century were constantly and deliberately tampered with for political and ideological purposes (Southgate 2000:59-83). In this regard, Ahonen (2001:180) observes how “Grand narratives” were constructed by ideologues often in the service of politics to make sense of the past, and to give direction to the future:

People’s historical consciousness, i.e. their sense of connection between the past, the present and the future, was thus manipulated through a “conspiracy” between those in power and the ideologues serving them . . . . It was the task of the common school to convey these narratives to the whole community.

Crittenden (1989:27-43) questions the extent to which it is consistent with educational values for schools in the present age to be nation-centred in selecting curriculum content and developing attitudes and practice. He too observes that the attempts of certain state-controlled schools, over the past century, to foster the awakening of national awareness through the superimposition of political and cultural unity on regional loyalties has resulted in “regarding national identity as overwhelmingly more important than common human characteristics”.

On the other hand, Mulholland & Ludlow (1992:25) maintain that, despite the philosophical nature of ideology which makes ideologies difficult to understand and simplify without distortion, the most important thing to explore with learners is the notion that ideologies serve to explain human experience and influence human actions: “They answer a human need to understand and to attempt to control events”. They recommend, however that, in the classroom “critical analysis should be largely avoided in favour of a descriptive explanation of ideology”.

Mulholland & Ludlow (1992:26) also repudiate the idea that most people have that nationalism means a “natural” love for one’s country and an identification with a specific culture. Learners must be made aware of the fact that nationalism is not only a relatively new phenomenon, having emerged in the eighteenth century, but is sometimes used by political leaders “to unite otherwise disparate groups of people for questionable reasons”. They insist that nationalism as a political ideology be rejected, *inter alia*, on the grounds that it very often simplifies the historical record and concentrates on heroes and certain events to arouse loyalty and patriotism. In so doing, many of the historical figures are ignored or misrepresented and the complexity of events and their causes is concealed. This is, of course, a gross manipulation of people’s historical consciousness.

Tosh (1991:20-22) has also demonstrated how an overriding political commitment may produce a mythical version of history which can be dangerous and difficult to discard especially when it is grounded in strong self-interest. Myths “produce misguided attitudes and responses and stand in the way of the lessons which can be learnt from the past”. Burke (1981:8) likewise maintains that using history as a weapon in political struggle is counter-productive: “One comes to believe one’s own propaganda, to over dramatise the past, and hence forget the real complexity of the issues at any time. One comes to idealize one’s own side and to divide human beings into Us and Them”. Dewey (1916:96) judged the quality of a democracy by the extent to which interests are shared among the members of any particular group, and by the “fullness and freedom” with which groups interact with one another.

Highlighting the difficulties presented by the wide diversity of historical national identities in the country, and stressing the need to create a History curriculum that would satisfy all of these manifold groups, Rüsen (1990a.:8-9), in his address to the South African Society for History Teaching which he delivered in Johannesburg in 1990, stated the following:

We all know that there are different schools of history in South Africa. And it doesn't make much sense to say that only one is the real and true historical studies and the others are ideological. The difference between the schools can't sufficiently be described by the difference between truth and error, but simply by a difference in standpoints where each has its (at least partial) justification or right of existence; standpoints bring about perspectives and perspectives allow the past the meaning, significance and importance of being history. They furnish the past with a fundamental relationship to the present time, and only within such a relationship it gains its dignity as history.

Rüsen (1990a.:8-9) maintains that each group should see it as its duty to write its own history; but such a history has to fulfil two functions:

First ... It has to explicate and formulate the distinct nature of the individuality of the culture in concern. It is a function of particularizing the distinctive nature of the people in concern. The other function is quite an opposite one: It combines the specific identity and distinctive nature with the identity of other people thus forming a common identity of a given (South African) political system.

Rüsen (1990a.:9) asserts that it is this bringing about of national identity in this manner which remains one of the main issues of History education or teaching in modern states.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African teachers engaged in the Further Education and Training phase of schooling, to design learning activities that will orientate the historical consciousness of learners towards the formation of national identity and ideology.

#### *Classroom example #1*

Learners are instructed to read the following statement: “The study of History plays an important role in the formation of national identity. In an attempt to inspire national pride, adaptations were often made for political and ideological purposes.” Then they have to use their textbooks and look for several attempts in world history on the part of ideologies to construct “Grand narratives” in the service of politics “to make sense of the past, and to give direction to the future”. The class as a whole should then discuss the following questions: Are such attempts consistent with educational values? Should Nationalism as a political ideology be repudiated? They should state their reasons. Learners should then, in partner pairs, look in their textbooks or any other books for “myths” which have predominated in South Africa over the last century. They should also indicate how these distortions of the truth have produced misguided attitudes and responses which have “stood in the way of the lessons which can be learned from the past”. They should write an essay about their findings.

#### *Classroom example #2*

In small groups learners could write an essay plan to answer the following question: “True democracy can be created in South Africa which will place on record a common national

history which will forge the collective identity of all South Africans, but which will at the same time allow for each of the various ethnic groups to write its own history from its own individual perspective.” With the above statement in mind, answer the following questions: Is such a proposal feasible from a political point of view at the present time? If implemented how would you envisage the effects it would have on History studies in the future?

### *Classroom example #3*

Let learners individually imagine their school were to arrange a special day of common commemoration in order to remember something important of the past. Which historical subject would they suggest for such project?

#### **4.3.6 The role of critical historical consciousness in the stimulation of a critical interest in the past**

Rüsen (1993:73) explains that the critical mode of historical consciousness “mobilizes a specific kind of experience of the past: evidence provided by ‘counter narratives’, deviations which render problematic present values and *Lebensformen*”. In the critical mode of historical consciousness history functions as the tool by which: “continuity is ruptured, ‘deconstructed’, decoded – so that it loses its power as a source for present-day orientations ... we say **no** to pre-given temporal orientations of our life”. Rüsen (1990b.:140; 1993:74) nevertheless sees this type of consciousness as an essential part of “growing up”: “Very often this kind of historical argumentation is used to contradict pre-given value systems and to find one’s own values by differing from them”.



A complex array of changes have occurred in the recent past which have been described by cultural theorists and socialists as “post-modern”. Phillips (2002:141) has observed the manner in which post-modernity has aroused heated debate amongst historians, and points to four important effects it has had on the teaching and learning of History as a school subject. These are as follows:

- Traditional views of history associated with the socialist Marxist or Western Liberal traditions seem no longer relevant.
- The emergence of alternative traditions associated with new forms of identity such as post-colonialism or gender provide alternative historical narratives.
- The epistemological (i.e. knowledge base) and methodological traditions of history are challenged.
- As new forms of identity emerge, so new values and ideas begin to develop.

Since the school does not exist in a vacuum but is profoundly influenced by the outside world, these issues generate much controversy, if not confrontation, in the History classroom. Bam & Visser (1996:2) have reminded us that, particularly in South Africa, the History classroom has now become the place where “teachers and students confront questions about why people have thought and acted as they have, and about the norms and values we use to interpret and judge their actions.” The need to find answers for past injustices must, of necessity, provoke heated controversy.

Gunsburg & Opper (1998:202-203) have observed that, generally, in the intellectual sphere, the adolescent has a tendency to become involved in abstract and theoretical matters, constructing political theories or inventing complex philosophical doctrines, sometimes to the extent that

he/she may “develop plans for the complete reorganization of society ...”. Elkind (as cited in Biehler & Snowman 1990:71) maintains that such unrestrained theorising about ideals without complete understanding of realities tends to make the adolescent “a militant rebel with little patience for parents or other adults who fail to find quick solutions to personal, social, and other problems”. Only when he/she becomes older does “more tempered understanding” appear, and does he/she begin to grasp the complexities of social and economic problems. This is particularly the case in early and middle adolescents who occupy the Further Education and Training Phase in South African public schools.

Weiten (1996:566) also maintains that such rebellious and moody behaviour might be expected to make its appearance during the adolescent phase: “As adolescents grow less dependent on their parents and try out new values and roles, they need to go through a period of crisis to separate themselves psychologically” and “carve out their own identity”. At this stage of their intellectual and emotional development learners can be most argumentative and highly critical of the present value system which prevails.

Collins *et al* (2002:78-79) describe the notion that learners be allowed to “talk back” to their teachers as “potentially frightening for individual teachers and threatening for institutions”, because learners have traditionally had to know their place in the scheme of things. They are convinced, however, that it is possible for teachers and learners to engage in genuine dialogue to improve learning and teaching, and quote Fielding (1999:286), who argues that a view of active learners at the centre of education “moves beyond students ... as objects of teachers’

professional gaze, to students as co-constructors of new meanings and shared understandings rooted in the unpredictability of dialogue”.

Hahn (1994:204) maintains in similar fashion that, “There is reason to believe that ... when students are taught in an environment, or ‘classroom climate’, that reflects the ideal of democratic discourse and open inquiry, they are more likely to develop attitudes that will incline them toward active citizenship”. In her analysis of the “wisdom of practice” of four teachers who have reputations in their school systems for being expert History teachers, Hahn (1994:210-214) reports that these teachers “succeeded in capturing students’ attention, primarily by focusing on themes that concern them in such a way that these issues are controversial enough to stimulate their interest”. She insists, however, that the engagement of learners in controversial issues should not distract them from the real goal of teaching, which is learning. All the above-mentioned teachers were seen to intervene when they felt it necessary “to ensure a fair hearing, for diverse opinions, to dispel intolerance, and to promote civility and openness ...”.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African teachers engaged in the Further Education and Training phase of schooling, to design learning activities that will orientate the historical consciousness of learners towards the stimulation of a critical investigation of the past. It is critical that learners be permitted to “let off steam” and to air their grievances on contentious issues. This is of crucial importance at a time when adolescent learners and their parents still carry the burden of the memories of the injustice and oppression which they suffered in the past. The following classroom activity must, however, be conducted in a self-disciplined, dignified and respectful manner.

### *Classroom example #1*

The facilitator writes the following statement on the chalkboard: “Some people say that the social impact of the Group Areas Act can be seen in the gang violence so wide-spread on the Cape Flats today”. Learners are instructed to discuss this statement in small groups to see if they agree with this or not. Learners should share their views with the class as a whole. Learners are then asked to discuss the following two questions: When participating in a discussion or debate, do you, the learner, try to live up to the following standards: self-discipline, dignity and respect? Is it possible to think of the past in an objective manner without allowing one’s passions and emotions to intervene?

### *Classroom example #2*

The facilitator distributes a worksheet with statements. Learners are individually instructed to indicate which of the statements do they regard as true. They should motivate their answers.

- “Since the school does not exist in a vacuum but is profoundly influenced by the outside world, controversial issues generate confrontation in the history classroom.”
- “It is possible for teachers and learners to engage in genuine dialogue to improve learning and teaching.”
- “The engagement of learners in controversial issues should not distract them from the real goal of teaching which is learning.”
- “Teachers/facilitators should intervene in classroom debate when they feel it necessary.”

#### **4.3.7 The cultivation of historical consciousness as a means to a meaningful understanding of temporal change and continuity**

Egan (1979:52-53) speaks of the natural craving in humans for organizing chaotic particular knowledge within some general scheme that will reduce it to manageable proportions. He states: “From these concepts and principles, they form ideologies and metaphysical schemes, intellectual tools with which they can organize, simplify, and reduce even the greatest complexities with casual confidence”. A major function of historical consciousness is to ascribe a corresponding meaning to man’s temporal existence. Uncomfortable with the jumble of historical facts with which we are confronted we tend to impose a meaningful pattern upon the past (see Chapter 2, pp. 49-51). Tosh (1991:1) explains:

we constantly interpret our experience in time perspective, whether we are conscious of it or not ... we know that we cannot understand a situation in life without some perception of where it fits into a continuing process ... our sense of what is practicable in the future is formed by an awareness of what has happened – or not happened – in the past.

Rüsen (1993:9, 74-75) maintains that critical historical consciousness with its dynamic of negation does not suffice in this regard, because it only replaces one pattern with another but fails to find the resultant change meaningful and significant in itself. He argues that on the highest level of the modes of consciousness, on the level of what he refers to as the genetic mode: “Change is of the essence, and is what gives history its sense ... our behaviour

necessarily differs now from what it would have been in the past. It is construed within a process of dynamic involvement”. In the genetic mode of historical consciousness, “temporal change sheds its threatening aspect, instead becoming the path upon which options are opened up for human activity to create a new world”. The present is thus conceptualised as, “An intersection, an intensely temporalized mode, a dynamic transition from past to future”. Paradoxically, change becomes a necessary condition for permanence: “To remain what we are, not to change and evolve, appears to us as a mode of self-loss, a threat to identity. Our identity lies in our ceaseless changing”.

Shemilt (as cited in Haydn *et al* 1997:106) noted in his research that “change” is a historical concept that adolescents initially find difficult to entertain in any but everyday use. Many learners, he observed, saw change as an episodic rather than continuous process. One change (event) was not seen in any way connected with changes (events) preceding it in time. This limited understanding tends to be reinforced by a syllabus which is in itself episodic, which moves from one topic to another, with little apparent relationship to that which precedes or follows. Shemilt also noted that the difficulty learners might have with the idea of historical change seems to stem from their inability to imagine the daily life which gives the events their meaning: “History lessons can so often present learners with a succession of events with little reference to the context in which they occurred; and as a result the pupils are not sure of what precisely it is that changes”. Haydn *et al* (1997:106-107) suggest that it would be rewarding for teachers to find out how learners interpret the idea of “progress” over time:

It is quite common for young people to assume that the changes that occur over time are all for the better. Consequently there is value in stopping to

consider whether this was always the case. What were the consequences of the discovery of gunpowder? Did this represent progress? Such questions prompt a consideration of the wider issues that the study of history can generate showing that the subject is fundamental in the Humanities.

Learners need to experience the passage of time as a meaningful process; to this end it is imperative that teachers become aware of the importance of the inculcation in learners of a consciousness of the past-present-future nexus in the teaching of History in order to bring the three time-dimensions into a new and unified relationship.

Klafki (1970:9-20), maintains that it is indeed within the field of tension of past-present-future that History properly proceeds; and he cautions those who would emphasize the importance of one of these poles to the exclusion of the others. For example, in the traditional teaching of History, which has as its main objective the conservation and transmission of the essential moral tradition of Western civilization, there is a general orientation towards a romantic and idylized past to the exclusion of present-day realities. Klafki (1970:14) argues that tradition alone is not a safeguard against the danger that the desired History education might be lost unless connected with present reality. A surrender to traditionalism leads too easily to a blind acceptance of values simply by virtue of their hoary age. At the same time, the teaching of History which takes the continual present purified of all negative elements as its focal point, and disregards the past and future, must equally be repudiated, as must the utopianistic form of History teaching which ignores the present and past for what it sees as an idealistic future. Although each of these forms of History teaching has its valid claims one dare not absolutize or

view any one in a one-sided manner. Rather, they should, by means of dialectical thinking, be brought into a new relationship and logical unity.

To do this teachers must have as their point of departure the dynamic present, that is, the life-world of everyday appearance with all its variety, novelty and necessities, its ever-emerging, ever-new desires, hopes and questions. Klafki (1970:20, 21) asserts that History education fails if it does not assist concrete persons in a concrete epoch of time. At this stage in the education of the learner, the dynamic present opens into the future, and it is at this point that the establishment of a sense of security and the directing of the learner's consciousness towards the tasks and problems of the future are the most important duties demanded of the educator. It is only the educational situation which is related to the future that will give present satisfaction to the learner. Klafki (1970:23) then returns to the past, yet to a past which has value only when seen from the perspective of the present and future of the learner. Here, it is only the classical values, basic attitudes and forms of life which provide solutions to the present tasks of life, which are answers to modern-day problems and which give youth the moral support and courage to face the future. This is a truly living tradition.

Rüsen (1990b.:136) is convinced that the problems that historical consciousness address in the History classroom, are those which only History as an autonomous school subject, and no other, can solve: These are, namely, the problems which deal with the experience of temporal change ("contingency") and the necessity of adjusting human activity to this experience. Many historians, he observes, have started the laborious task of reinterpreting the South African past *vis á vis* the present-day situation of clearing away all traces of the apartheid past, and building a new democratic society. But, to Rüsen, it is important to clarify to both teachers and learners



that one has to go back into the past in order to understand what is happening at the present time. This understanding includes elements of future perspectives.

De Keyser (1999:Internet) attributes great significance to the direction of the focus of learners on the present as well as in the past when teaching History:

The present, just like the past, is characterized by several layers of reality. The top layer consists of daily events. These are explicitly visible, they are transformed into news items by the media ... . However trivial and futile they may seem, they are part of reality ... . History teaching, as it is aimed at enabling pupils to achieve understanding of past events, institutions, beliefs and values, should neither neglect nor disdain current affairs. These phenomena do not merely occur on a surface level. They are caused by motives functioning on a deeper level. They are symptoms of fundamental behaviour, symptoms of man and society in our times. For pupils they are a starting-point to probe deeper in the present. In this way, we automatically end up in the past ... where one gets to discover the process of becoming human and the creation of society. Linking up the elusive with the persistent one learns to recognize the singularity of present and past.

Whitaker (1995:123-124) reminds us too that as educators, we are faced with the challenge of preparing learners for adult life in a future we cannot predict with the same assurance that was once possible. One way to help learners acquire the necessary relevant skills that will serve them in the future is to place a concern for the future in the curriculum, in much the same way as we place the past:

This use of the future dimensions helps pupils to understand that the value of learning lies in its application at some future time. The experiential learning cycle is itself future-oriented as well as action-focused – it is concerned with change, development and growth.

Poulsen (2001:Internet) also advises that learners make their own narratives out of personal memories, collective memories from their respective communities and history. She also discards the view that the past under the name of history or cultural heritage is of the greatest importance in the identity construction of learners. She declares:

What makes the difference is the future. Children and young people are very much concerned ... to develop their personal search for meaning ... . What they want is to be able to form and master their own future and being part of the history making in their society. The more they feel acknowledged as citizens and thinking human beings the more they feel an interest in their society and its history

Wilschut (2003:Internet) emphasises the notion that historical consciousness is not the equivalent of the simple demonstration of knowledge of historical facts: “Historical consciousness is demonstrated in attitudes towards the present and the future, using history as a background”. To this end it is crucial that educationists concentrate on “the function of historical knowledge within the framework of historical consciousness ... . To be able to appreciate any historical theme, topic or problem correctly, it should be positioned somewhere in a general course of events, in a general context of periods”, thus the importance of creating “a coherent chronological system in the hearts and minds of students”.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers engaged in the Further Education and Training phase of schooling, to design learning activities that will orientate the historical consciousness of learners towards the cultivation of a meaningful understanding of temporal change and continuity.

#### *Classroom example #1*

Learners are instructed to read the following statement: “History teaches that all things are subject to change, and that humankind is always in a state of transition towards a new condition, but without breaking away from the historical past”. With the above statement in mind, they should individually do the following:

- Using their textbooks, give two examples of abrupt change and two examples of change over many years that have taken place in world history.
- Using their notes on the “First and Second World Wars” explore the connections between the First and Second World Wars (with special reference to conditions in South Africa).
- Complete the following questions in paragraph form:

Is all change over time for the better? Motivate your answer.

Does continuity in history serve a socio-political purpose? Or a psychological purpose?

#### *Classroom example #2*

The facilitator writes the following question on the chalkboard: What part does the present have in History studies? Learners are instructed to discuss this issue as a class. They should also

relate the issues discussed to the past-present situation in South Africa, and explore the interrelationships and connections between present and past.

*Classroom example #3*

The facilitator arranges a debate. The subject of the debate is: The future plays a role in the interpretation of the past. The facilitator divides the class into two groups, who debate this issue “for-and-against”.

*Classroom example #4*

Learners are instructed to individually write a short essay in which they speculate on some of the changes that might occur in subsequent decades in South Africa and the rest of the world. They should also address the issue of the way in which these changes have their origins either in the past or in the present.

*Classroom example #5*

In small groups, learners have to use their textbooks and place any ten pivotal events that have occurred in South African history in chronological order. They should then, if possible, trace a “golden thread” which links these events together, and provides meaning to the historical process.

#### **4.4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF HISTORY AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT**

##### **4.4.1 Introduction**

An attempt will be made in this section to demonstrate how historical consciousness may itself be advanced in South African public schools, for the betterment of History studies and, indeed, for the mental and emotional welfare of learners as a whole. This development might take place through the nurturing of an empathetic understanding of the past; the enrichment of moral values; and the cultivation of a multi-perspective interpretation of history.

##### **4.4.2 Historical consciousness and the nurturing of an empathetic understanding of the past**

The issue of the place of empathy in the study of History has generated a great deal of controversy amongst History educationists throughout the world. Davies (as quoted in Phillips 2002:32), a strong advocate of the use of imagination in History teaching, wrote in this regard:

It is in our imaginations that we are fulfilled; it is there that we dream and become truly human. There are many dimensions to imagination, but one is surely the historical dimension. It is not a matter of the dates of battles or kings

or the courses of revolution – important as these are – but about registering the essential otherness of the past or rather the otherness of all pasts.

Illingworth (2000:20) contends likewise that:

Raising standards of attainment in history should not be our only object. Pupils should feel, as well as think, their way through history lessons. We should encourage them to feel outraged, inspired and moved by events in the past, and to develop their own ideas of right and wrong from this experience. In this way history becomes more meaningful and relevant to pupils' lives in the modern world ... . To achieve these aims, it is necessary that we engage not just the minds of the pupils, but also their hearts and souls ... . In this way, history can make a vital contribution to the wider development of the whole person.

Research done by scholars such as Ashby & Lee (as cited in Phillips 2002:47) found, however, that much of the attempts to develop empathy in schools using History as a school subject, led to historical anachronism, stereotyping and profound misunderstanding. To obviate these difficulties Haydn *et al* (1997:100) advise that teachers should give particular attention to the following aspects:

- Context – ensuring that learners have access to a rich variety of sources of evidence.
- Purpose – emphasizing that the objective or outcome of the task is to express the views of people at the time, thus avoiding anachronism.
- Structure – learners must be meticulous about the smaller details; for example, if setting a letter writing exercise, care must be taken over the name, address, language and phrases, and so on.

Mathews *et al* (1992:8-9) have stressed the fact that empathy is not only the experiencing of another's emotional state: "it does involve more than an emotional component, for the ability to empathise depends to a great extent on the level of cognitive development and the ability to differentiate between ourselves and others". Although imagination is necessary for the attainment of true empathy, imagination must be distinguished from fantasy, for the latter does not belong to Historical studies. To achieve a true empathy which involves the reconstruction of other people's beliefs, values, goals and feelings, Mathews *et al* (1992:9) suggest that teachers should plan learning programmes using the following qualities of empathy as guidelines:

- It is the means by which the historian attempts to "get inside" the minds of those who lived in the past in order to understand events.
- By the use of evidence and imaginative reflection, one tries to understand what others believed, valued, felt and tried to achieve.
- These beliefs, emotions and actions should be linked to the context in which the person or persons lived and acted.

Swanepoel (1992:85) makes an important contribution to the debate regarding an empathetic understanding of the past by suggesting that one of the many creative methods of teaching History is through the study of local history, followed by its application through fieldwork. He defines local history as:

the study of a particular place and its people. Over time the people and locality have developed a unique culture; each village, town or city has

distinctive dwellings; each group of people have used their natural resources differently. So the local history of each locality will be unique.

Swanepoel (1992:87) sees fieldwork, particularly in the secondary school (Grades 10, 11 and 12) as being of vital importance to learners who:

experience the urge to collect things related to the past ... . Through an on-the-spot investigation of a place or scene the pupils can be brought closer to historical realities ... the pupils can develop a greater regard for, and appreciation of, historical personalities and their actions. They thereby **relive and experience the historical events** for themselves ... .

Dever (1965:153) suggests that teachers also develop learners' experience of "real" (as opposed to "abstract") history by releasing it from the close confinement of the classroom:

History is the sum of humanity and must not be divorced from men and the world by a school-bell. Historical characters were more than names; they were men who lived and breathed, who hoped and feared, who were in the world as we are. If we are to understand their times we must understand the men themselves and for this we must go to the relics and reminders they have left.

Berlin (1961:20-21) affirms that empathetic understanding of the habits of thought and action that have governed the human attitudes and behaviour of others in past times can be gained because:

We ... know what – in essentials – a human being is, in particular a human being who belongs to a civilization not too unlike our own, and consequently one who thinks, wills, feels, acts in a manner which ... we assume to be



intelligible to us because it sufficiently resembles our own or those of other human beings whose lives are intertwined with our own.

The social historian G.M. Trevelyan (1876-1962) (as quoted in Southgate 1996:120) writes of the “poetry of history”. According to him, the “poetry” derives from the fact that history ultimately consists of what other people have done, and people are human: “men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passion”, and the objective of History then becomes to understand such people, and to do so requires that the historian possesses not just intellect, but also “the warmest human sympathy, the highest **imaginative** powers”.

In the remaining part of this section, several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers to design activities to teach to learners in the Further Education and Training phase, so that they might develop their historical consciousness through an empathetic understanding of the past. Empathetic understanding of the past takes place on both the cognitive and the affective levels. While doing empathetic understanding exercises learners will attempt to “get inside” the minds of those who lived in the past in order to understand the events which they lived through. Learners will also try to understand what these people believed, felt, valued and aspired for. At all times such imaginative reflection must be based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of the factual evidence. At no time should learners permit themselves to fall into the error of “fantasy”. It must finally be stressed that any attempt to enter the page and engage with the major issues must be accompanied by a genuine willingness on the part of the learner. Learners should be encouraged to engage in the empathetic understanding exercises with confidence. Although achieving empathy is a

difficult task, it should be possible to gain a fair measure of insight into the minds of people in the past, because, after all, we all share a common humanity (Mathews *et al* 1992:9).

#### *Classroom example #1*

When teaching Grade 10 learners the knowledge focus areas, “Kingdoms, communities and trades” and “Interventions and explorations”, the following empathy exercises may be appropriate:

- Invent a conversation between a Khoi Khoi adolescent and his/her father while observing the growth of the new Dutch settlement at the Cape (circa 1785).
- Create a dialogue between Xhosa teenagers which might have taken place after the British attack on the Xhosa of 1811-1812 (the Fourth Frontier War) pushed the Xhosa east of the Fish River.
- Imagine you are a young Afrikaner trekker. Write a letter to your friend whom you left behind in the eastern Cape describing the journey upon which you and your family are embarked.

#### *Classroom example #2*

When teaching Grade 12 learners the knowledge focus area, “South Africa 1910-1948” the facilitator may use the following empathy activities:

- Invent an exchange of letters between an unskilled worker on the Johannesburg mines and his wife and children who live on the reserves (circa 1913).
- Write a plea presented by a striker-leader to the government after the mineworkers’ strike in the early 1920s explaining your participation and experiences in that event, and how you feel about the manner in which it ended.

- Create a diary entry written by a young teenager, belonging to a recently arrived immigrant family, about the difficulties experienced by people of all races during the Depression of the early 1930s.

### *Classroom example #3*

If the learning programme organiser is “The Sharpeville-massacre and the birth of the republic” (1960-1963), an empathy exercise for Grade 12 learners may be the following: Write two brief imaginary reports, one by a young black reporter, the other by a young Afrikaner policeman, describing their thoughts, feelings and emotions on witnessing the Sharpeville shootings on 21 March 1960.

### *Classroom example #4*

When South African public schools celebrate Freedom Day on 27 April History teachers may give their learners the following empathy activity to complete: Write an essay in which you imagine the thoughts and emotions, hopes and expectations of a black voter queuing during the country’s first democratic election on 27 April 1994.

Apart from the above activities which are linked with the imaginary experiences of the “common folk” who lived at the time of the pivotal events under discussion, it is of equal importance that learners also project themselves into the thinking and emotional states of some of the more significant historical figures whose decisions and actions tangibly affected the course of history. In this regard, the written biographies of such personalities could add an additional dimension to a more vivid understanding of the past.

### *Classroom example #5*

Learners will be asked, on the basis of a wide assortment of historical sources, to place themselves in the position of, for example, the following historical figures and to examine the decisions which they made:

- Jan van Riebeeck. His decision to defend the Dutch Colony against the Khoi Khoi.
- Piet Retief. His decision to publish a manifesto in the *Grahamstown Journal* on 2 February 1837.
- Dingaan. His decision to execute the Boers in his royal kraal (6 February 1838).
- Lord Carnarvon. His decision to annexe the South African Republic (September 1876).
- Paul Kruger. His final ultimatum presented to the British resulted in the outbreak of the South African War (9 October 1896).
- Steve Biko. The decision to form a “black consciousness” movement in 1968 (Bottaro & Visser 1999:285-286)

They should then write a paragraph in which each of the above explains why they made the specific decision.

It is important, wherever possible, that learners be given the opportunity to relive and experience historical events for themselves through an on-the-spot investigation of historical sites.

### *Classroom example #6*

When teaching the section on the “Resistance to Bantu Education”, “The Soweto uprising of 16 June 1976” is, among others, examined. Learners may, for example, also visit the Hector

Peterson memorial in Soweto. In order to maximize the effectiveness of such a visit, learners need to answer the following questions on worksheets during their visit to the historical site:

- Is there a good reason to preserve the site?
- Has the site been preserved totally intact?
- Has it been altered over time?
- If so, how and for what reasons?
- What are your personal reactions to the site? What memories, thoughts and emotions does it invoke in yourself?
- Has the investigation of the site in any way altered your knowledge and historical perspective of the events which occurred in that place?

#### **4.4.3 Historical consciousness and the enrichment of moral values**

Rüsen (1993:65) places much emphasis on the fact that every course of action which a person chooses to embark upon is dependent on values. These values are general principles and guidelines for behaviour, which suggest what should be done in a given situation where various options exist. They acknowledge the social relationship within which man lives and express this relationship “as an obligation for us, addressing us at the core of our subjectivity, calling upon our sense of responsibility and conscience”. Historical consciousness, Rüsen (1993:66) avers, is a necessary prerequisite for orientation of this kind in a present situation requiring action because:

This conception moulds values into a “body of time” ... . History clothes values in temporal experience. Historical consciousness transforms moral

values into temporal wholes: traditions; timeless rules of conduct ... .

Historical consciousness amalgamates “is” and “ought” into a meaningful narrative which informs about past events to help render the present intelligible and to bestow upon present activity a future perspective. In so doing, historical consciousness makes an essential contribution to moral-ethical consciousness.

Rüsen (1993:76, 81) suggests, however, that moral values should not be upheld purely on the basis of hoary tradition. In its most evolved phase, the phase of genetic historical consciousness, temporal change becomes a decisive argument for the validity of moral values.

In this phase:

Moral principles include their transformation within a process of communication. It is here that they are realized concretely and individually, engendering difference; these differences, in turn, activate procedures of mutual acknowledgement, changing the original moral form ... .

Van der Merwe (1992:6) argues that one of the most important factors, among others, highlighting the value of History education, is its focus on providing us with “lessons”. Situations existed in the past which parallel those in the present. These might, with understanding, help us to find guidance and solutions for present and future problems. In order to achieve these understandings, it is essential that learners learn to “judge” the past in a critical and unbiased manner. Crittenden (1989:35) has likewise maintained that familiarity with the main features of history “develops a sense of continuity with past generations of the society, based on a critical appreciation of their achievements and failures; and it provides a perspective for recognizing our responsibility towards those who will belong to the society in the future

...”. According to Crittenden (1989:35), the formal curriculum should, therefore, defend the basic social moral values on which the coherence of any social order depends (truth telling; honesty; just treatment; and so on), as well as the values indispensable for a pluralist society (respect for personal freedom; tolerance of diverse ways of thinking and acting; respect for the worth of the human being as a moral agent; commitment to non-violent means of persuasion). These values should also be reflected in the so-called hidden curriculum – the organization and day-to-day life of the school. The philosopher Thomas Hobbes (as cited in Southgate 1996:31) was convinced of history’s moral value. He wrote of “the principal and proper Work of History being to instruct, and enable Men by the knowledge of Actions Past, to bear themselves prudently in the Present, and providently towards the Future”. Southgate (1996:31) comments, “In much, if not most historical writing some such underlying moral is evident – a moral that almost inevitably emerges from any attempt to make some **sense** of the past, or to give it **meaning** ...”.

History has often been written in the form of biography; as Thomas Carlyle (1908:11) in his famous lecture *On heroes, hero worship, and the heroic in history* expressed it: “History is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here”. Southgate (2000:27) wrote: “We identify as ‘heroic’ those figures in the past who seem to lead to the present of which we personally approve, or to the future which we would wish to have”. These heroes have, in traditional historiography, been identified in military and socio-political terms. Nietzsche (1983:68) has indicated, however, that there are some more universal values with which history might be concerned. He wrote: “That which in the past was able to expand the concept ‘man’ and make it more beautiful must exist everlastingly”. Southgate (2000:30) explains in this

regard: “Greatness ... can be taken to apply to the whole concept of ‘humanity’. The great or heroic person will then be the one who exemplifies the characteristics we associate with that concept ...”.

Baldwin (1994:29-32) attempts to answer the question whether History teachers (like historians) should remain detached and refrain from moral judgement when teaching the events of the past. Can they, for example, withhold judgement on the Holocaust, arguing that the events speak for themselves. He replies that such teachers may rest assured that:

it is difficult to maintain objectivity against the commonsense outrage of children. Children ... also voice opinions from their communities; how are these to be handled by the teacher whose position is unclear to the children either because it is not expressed or because it is not understood.

Baldwin (1994:30) finds himself on the horns of a dilemma: teachers might object to taking up the position of neutral chairpersons; but a teacher might use his/her power as a role model to influence the children towards his/her own perception of good and bad: thus, “the solution to this dilemma may rest in procedure. If the procedure of the debate is neutral and opportunity given for all arguments to be expressed and defended, historical objectivity may be maintained whilst personal moral concerns can be addressed”.

According to scholars such as Feshbach, Werner & Bohart (1996:362); Van Aswegen (1976:27); and Weiten (1996:418), it is during the adolescent phase of a learner’s life that he/she develops a capacity for abstract thought. He/she is less inclined to find meaning in the mere outward appearance of things than to penetrate to their essence. He/she is more



susceptible and aware of abstract relations and of the necessity for logical, ordered and critical thought. Things previously taken for granted become problematic, for he/she looks for their essence and meaning. He/she wants to argue and form his/her own opinions. Van Aswegen (1976:27) also points out how in late adolescence the learner becomes conscious of different moral codes. He/she is influenced not so much by what adults say as by what they do:

In moulding the juveniles' moral character the educator must not fail to provide the help necessary for the child to form his own hierarchy of values. Therefore, instead of merely *prescribing* values to the juvenile, he must be a *living example* of the values he wishes the adolescent to live by.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers, engaged in the Further Education and Training phase, to design activities that will develop the historical consciousness of learners through the inculcation of moral values. One of the most important factors highlighting the value of History education is its provision of past situations which parallel those in the present, from which learners might find solutions for present and future problems. This is particularly the case regarding so-called “right actions”.

#### *Classroom example #1*

The facilitator distributes a handout containing the following opposing viewpoints:

- The assumption that moral judgements have to be made about societies of the past in order to prepare for a better future.

- The view that we adopt a totally morally neutral stance *vis a vis* the actions of human beings who featured in history, and that we concentrate solely on recalling the facts of the events under discussion.
- The affirmation that patriotism, tolerance, empathy, honesty, etc. are important values and that the History teacher/facilitator can and should do something to create them in the classroom.
- The conviction that any attempt to influence the moral and spiritual values of young people is a threat to the most basic human right of all – the right to make up our own minds on questions of value and morality.

Learners are instructed to read the viewpoints attentively and then write a short essay analysing the viewpoints within a South African context. They should clearly state which of these viewpoints they have personally adopted. Is a middle path between these views possible as a form of compromise? They should also state their reasons.

### *Classroom example #2*

After completing the knowledge focus area “Totalitarianism – the road to the Second World War and beyond (1919-1945)”, learners are instructed to discuss the following issues in small groups. The group’s recorder should write down the main conclusions for discussion in the class.

- After World War II the Allies held the international war crimes trials in Nüremberg (1945-1951). What is the purpose of a trial? Is it to punish the guilty? Avenge the victims? Warn those who might commit similar acts in the future? Did the Nuremberg trials fulfil their purpose? (Examine the evidence.)

- In 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Research the bombings (use your textbooks) and decide whether they were “war crimes”.
- The Nazi war crimes resulted in what many described as the “shock and outrage of mankind”. On the basis of the extant evidence, can you confirm or deny this observation? Can you name several examples of “war crimes against humanity” that have taken place in South Africa and elsewhere, either in the recent or the distant past.
- Many argue that the Second World War (1939-1945) has been over for several decades and that it is time to stop “beating a dead Nazi horse”. Do you agree? Should there be a statute of limitations on war crimes? Should there be exceptions to the rule: “let bygones be bygones” in certain cases?
- “Anyone who closes his/her eyes to the past is blind to the present.” Do you agree with this statement? Give examples from your own experience or your reading that either support or call this view into question.

#### **4.4.4 Historical consciousness and the cultivation of a multiperspective interpretation of history**

Rüsen (1993:53) further reiterates that, historically, it is a truism that every historiographical work is a product of its time and shares the value system of its social context:

all historical knowledge is based on the practical needs of human life for orientating itself in the course of time. So it is constituted by the values and norms of practical life and by the practical interests of persons, groups and

societies ... . A multitude of different perspectives is accepted ... and we call it pluralism.

Yet, Rüsen (1993:53) rejects what he calls “lazy” pluralism because there is no possibility of deciding between perspectives in an “objective” way: and because such subjectivity excludes other points of view. Rather, he conceptualises pluralism as:

a discursive relationship between different historical perspectives ... determined by mutual criticism and by the attempt to overcome the limits of a single perspective by compromising them ... . Standpoints are not simply kept up, and fought for but they change, they become transformed and synthesized with other standpoints.

This discursive communication of ideas of historical identities, Rüsen terms “the principle of multiperspectivity”.

Mulholland & Ludlow (1992:2) advocate that learners be brought to the recognition and acknowledgment of the fact that the historian’s interpretation of historical evidence cannot ever be completely objective; many different factors such as age, nationality, religion, education, political opinions, influence them to interpret events and actions in different ways. Collingwood (as quoted in Carr 1990:26) remarked for example that: “St. Augustine looked at history from the point of view of the early Christian; Tellamont from that of a seventeenth century Frenchman; Gibbon from that of an eighteenth century Englishman ...”.

Mulholland *et al* (1992:2) remind us that the questions historians ask of the available evidence, the importance given to events and the topics chosen for study are not neutral: “The culture in

which we live and in which we were educated, and our socio-political positions in that culture makes some things more important to us than others. It gives events and personalities emotional associations”. Learners must be made aware of the distortion of evidence on the part of many historians to suit their ideological positions. They must follow the sound advice of Carr (1990:23), namely, to: “Study the historian before you begin to study the facts”. Learners must gauge the extent to which, *inter alia*, the writer gives a one-sided account, over-simplifies complex issues, and imposes stereotypes through a prescriptive language. It is also important to ask: Who has been left out? According to Mulholland & Ludlow (1992:4) a good course in South African history “would consider the history of all groups and cultures, seeing things from a perspective (that) ... would uncover all people’s struggles. Such a history would not marginalise any groups or cultures”.

Southgate (1996:135) argues that an important function of history is “to expose us to other possibilities, to enable us to distance ourselves from our immediate present, and to view ourselves in a wider perspective; for we may then be made aware of alternative options for the future”. According to this view, the past, present and future are once again seen as indissolubly interconnected, and “our preferred options for the future can determine our apprehension of the past”. Southgate (1996:136) notes, too, how the contemporary detection of alleged omissions and distortions in previous accounts has given rise to the phenomenon of historians looking at the past from a quite different perspective: “Not only does new data come to light but the old is seen in need of drastic reinterpretation or at least supplementation”. The rehabilitation of those who have previously been long lost to history has a serious underlying purpose: “an imbalance to be redressed and a whole new system of values accepted”. Learners need to

recognize the fact that if they wish to change the way they are perceived by themselves and by others and reconstitute themselves for the future, then they shall need to re-interpret, re-perceive the past as leading rather to new, more wholesome ideals.

Kobrin (1996:90-93) maintains that learners need to be biased. In this regard, the term “bias” should not be seen as synonymous with the terms “prejudice” and “discrimination”; to be biased in this sense means to have a perspective, a frame of reference, a particular point of view: “we see the world through our own eyes, heart and mind ... . Without this personal perspective history could not be written. Bias gives form to accounts of the past ... . Without a point of view, historians would sail rudderless through a morass of ... data”. To be objective, then, means “sharing and acknowledging premises and assumptions, utilizing known pools of evidence ... including the work of others in the field ... . When the ‘histories’ a class writes are placed together, they form neither chaos nor, obviously, a new synthesis, but a mosaic”.

Giroux (1992:50) suggests that learners must be offered opportunities to read texts that affirm and interrogate the complexity of their own histories:

In this perspective, culture is not viewed as monolithic or unchanging, but as a shifting sphere of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories ... intermingle ... . There are no unified subjects here, only students whose multi-layered and often contradictory voices and experiences intermingle with the weight of particular histories that will not fit easily into the master narrative of a monolithic culture.

Seixas (2002:1) argues that in our own early twenty-first century, with different pasts and a wide diversity of cultures, traditional practices are no longer adequate for providing meaning largely for the reason that they inhibit the reconciliation of different stories and accounts in a multi-cultural society: “Students need guided opportunities to confront conflicting accounts, various meaning, and multiple interpretations of the past, because these are exactly what they will encounter outside of school and they need to learn to deal with them”. To this end critical historical discourse is of the essence since “it provides a rational way, on the basis of evidence and argument, to discuss the differing accounts that jostle with or contradict each other”.

Levistick & Barton (2001:2) advise that to enable everyone to see themselves as participants in the ongoing drama of history one has to rethink the ways in which we conceive history in the following manner:

- Begin with the assumption of a pluralistic society (many groups intricately related to one another).
- No single story about the past can possibly be the only story.
- History is alive, constantly changing as one speaks and acts. Studying a range of perspectives helps learners understand enduring human dilemmas that have their roots in the past.

Learners see these perspectives existing on two levels:

- On the micro level: historical perspectives bearing on current issues both in the class and the larger society.
- On the macro level: global phenomena that require national and global responses.

Furedi (1992:3) articulates the dilemma facing contemporary History curriculum designers when he argues that now that history is “in demand” by a range of competing groups each seeking to find its identity in an uncertain world, there is no longer “a history with a capital H: there are many competing histories”. Jenkins (1999:66) likewise argues that it would be more appropriate to use the plural “histories” which have been affected by local, regional, national and international perspectives. Phillips (2002:142) sees the existence of multiple histories as a distinct advantage since “they provide a means by which we can view the past from a range of different perspectives and histories”. He sets bounds to this cultural relativity however, and denies that “racist, fascist or other partial histories should be given validity in the classroom”.

Allen (2001:Internet) emphasizes the fact that historical consciousness is not “a monolithic juggernaut that enforces orthodoxy”. Just as people are individual so is their historical consciousness. In fact, it might even be preferable to use the plural and refer to historical consciousnesses. Allen (2001:Internet) further points out that the understanding of historical consciousness as a nexus where the past and future meet and interact with each other in the context of the present “justifies the constant reinterpretation and re-interrogation of history in the light of hindsight and in terms of our own situatedness in time, space and ideology”.

In the remaining part of this section several classroom examples are provided to assist South African History teachers to design activities to be implemented in the Further Education and Training phase that will develop the historical consciousness of learners through a multi-perspective interpretation of the past. It is natural that, in a country like South Africa, in which



a variety of groups and cultures co-exist, the common past will be differently interpreted as a result of controversial and different perspectives on that past.

*Classroom example #1*

Learners are instructed to individually read the following three different statements about different perspectives of the past:

- “The historical consciousness of the British was shaped by their vision, as an imperial power. Their justification of British expansion in South Africa on the grounds of humanity, Christianity, civilization and progress has been well represented in the historiography of South Africa” (G. Verbeeck).
- “From their earliest settlement in South Africa the Afrikaners saw themselves both as victims of British imperialism as well as the heroic defenders of South African soil and civilization, against Black infiltration. This perspective ultimately influenced their self-image and thus also determined their historical consciousness” (F.A. Van Jaarsveld).
- “The Black interpretation of the past became a weapon in their struggle for freedom. In the ‘new’ future the history of Black societies would be given a rightful place ‘as fellow players on the historical stage’” (F.A. Van Jaarsveld).

They should then discuss the following three questions in small groups:

- In what way have these different modes of consciousness affected the course of events in South African history?
- What do these different perspectives have to do with your own life in the present?
- Have some peoples’ beliefs and attitudes changed over time? For the better? For the worst?

Finally, the learners should then individually write a script for a talk they want to give on TV, supporting one of the above statements. Learners should read their scripts aloud to the class as a whole.

### *Classroom example #2*

Learners are instructed to carefully read the following three passages dealing with the history of the trekboers in South Africa and then answer the questions which follow:

- Passage A. From *The Story of South Africa*, by Leo Marquard, pp. 53-55.

In adopting the life of the trekboer the sons and daughters of Europe ... moved from settled agriculture to the nomadic life of the cattleman, the life which the earlier inhabitants of Africa had led ... these nomadic conditions left distinct marks on the society that grew up in them. The trekker became hardy, independent and self-reliant ... and his freedom and individualism were bred in isolation far from the settled society in which a man's rights are limited by the rights of his neighbours ... . Finally, the isolation of the trekboer left him outside the stream of the European civilization, except for the Calvinist religion ... . When at last the nineteenth century caught up with him he had developed many sterling qualities, but was unprepared for **the new ideas that were changing the world.**

- Passage B. From *A History of South Africa*, by C.W. de Kiewiet, p. 17.

When the Trekboers entered (the interior) ... their life gave them a tenacity of purpose, a power of silent endurance, and the keenest self-respect. Their virtues

had their obverse qualities as well. Their tenacity could degenerate into obstinacy ... and their self-respect into suspicion of the foreigner ... . For want of formal education ... they read their Bible intensively, drawing from the Old Testament a justification of themselves, of their beliefs and their habits.

- Passage C. From *South Africa in the Making*, by Whiting Spilhaus, pp. 91-92.

The men who drove the wagons (during the Great Trek) feared neither the distance nor silence, nor the void of learning or of bodily comfort ... many believed that the footsteps of the Israelites had preceded them.

1. What do these passages tell you about the various historical perspectives of those who wrote them? 2. Do you find the various descriptions of the early trekboers biased and judgemental, or accurate and reliable sources of information? 3. On contemplating these passages can you discover new insights which you did not have previously? 4. How would you view a multi-perspective interpretation of the past in which opportunities would be afforded you to discuss, in a rational way and on the basis of evidence and argument, differing accounts that contradict one another? 5. Would such an approach have an advantage/disadvantage over the traditional way of learning History? State your reasons.

### *Classroom example #3*

Learners in partner pairs are instructed to complete the following exercise:

Read the extract and then answer the questions.

I suggest that the task of changing the **hidden curriculum** of history to an open one, from a **protected discourse** to a **contested discourse** ... . You can learn that you have a right to your own history, a right to learn to make your own narrative, a right to be heard, and a right to find a place in the **grand narratives** of your nation and of the world.

1. Define the terms written in bold print in this passage.
2. To whom generally, is this message addressed?
3. Does it resonate within the South African History studies context?
4. Whose task would it be to implement a programme that would give substance to this proposal?
5. Would such a programme be difficult or easy to accomplish in South Africa? State the reasons for your answer.

## **4.5 AN OUTCOMES-BASED HISTORY LEARNING PROGRAMME DESIGNED TO DETERMINE AND ASSESS THE HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF LEARNERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **4.5.1 Introduction**

In the final section of this Chapter, as a way forward, an example of an outcomes-based History learning programme is provided to assist History teachers to determine and assess the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools. By doing this they may be in a better position to address (and redress) the issue in their classrooms using the suggestions and guidelines provided in the previous sections of this Chapter.

An approach to classroom learning programmes design has been put forward by the National Department of Education in accordance with the requirements of *Curriculum 2005* (1998) and the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002). Apart from the learning outcomes and assessment standards, it prescribes that the facilitator should determine the following:

- Knowledge focus areas (comparable to themes), which serve as guidelines for the facilitator's choice of subject content, as well as learning programme organisers (the latter being comparable to sub-themes).
- Learning outcomes for the school's learning programme organiser. The outcomes (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) to be achieved are, at the outset, made known to the learners and the facilitator selects the subject matter to ensure that these outcomes are achieved.
- Activities to provide learners with learning opportunities. These should be clearly and comprehensively set out in the programme.
- Media or teaching aids. The facilitator should explain the nature of the relevant aids and how they are to be used to the learners.
- Assessment of learner achievement to determine whether the requisite learning outcomes have been demonstrated (Schoeman 2003:29-33).

In the following sections an example of an outcomes-based History learning programme, designed in accordance with the above approach to learning programmes design, will be presented.

#### **4.5.2 Rationale for the selection of the schools learning programme organiser – *The Holocaust* – to determine and assess the level of development of the historical consciousness of the learners**

The teaching of the sub-theme – *The Holocaust* – is most appropriate for the determination or assessment of the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools. Educational authorities throughout the world, as well as in South Africa, where it has been included as a knowledge focus area in the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002) for History (FET-schools), have been resolute in their determination to ensure that its study be included in the curriculum, seeing in such a study both the possibilities and imperatives for moral education (Gregory 2000:36-47). Blumberg (1968:13-20) points, however, to a major problem in teaching *The Holocaust*, which needs to be negotiated if learners are to emerge with the rare combination of intellectual awareness and spiritual maturity when confronting the tragedy perpetrated against European Jewry. He points, rightly, to the myopic focus of many teachers upon detail; on the catalogue of information; on sterile facts of history; and on the preoccupation with dates, names, events and places, all of which conceal the wider perspective and the timeless universal lessons which demand the study of *The Holocaust* in the first instance.

Hammond (2001:15) reinforces the above view; young people might know an impressive amount about the Holocaust but their understanding is limited: “From a horde of random facts they are unable to see the bigger picture and to comprehend the historical significance”. Hammond (2001:15) sees the attempt by many teachers to evoke horror in their learners by

“lurching from one murder to the next” and “focusing on the gore”, as one which results in the trivialisation of *The Holocaust* because it leads to a loss of the true sense of horror for learners: “Only by placing the Holocaust in the context of a variety of important and contrasting overviews, can we achieve our twin related aims: a proper understanding of the historical significance of the event **and** a quiet appreciation of its true horror”.

Hammond (2001:16) asserts that in order for learners to really begin to understand *The Holocaust*, they need to see how it fits into the rest of the history they have been studying, and how the events of the past have actually shaped the way the genocide came about and developed. In teaching *The Holocaust*, Hammond (2001:16) prescribes that it be placed fully in two important contexts: that of World War II (1939-1945), and that of the persecution of the Jews throughout history. In the first context learners are given the opportunity to work out how the war acted as a catalyst to *The Holocaust* and shaped the way it developed; the second context takes learners into a much wider canvas of time and space allowing them to explore the history of the persecution of the Jewish people throughout history.

#### **4.5.3 Proposed learning outcomes to determine and assess the level of development of the historical consciousness of the learners**

An attempt will be made in this section to list a number of learning outcomes that might be utilized as guidelines when determining and assessing the depth and scope of the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools. These outcomes, which embrace both the cognitive and affective domains (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes), have been

formulated only after reflecting deeply upon the nature and value of History as a school subject; the significance of the outcomes-based approach to historical studies; the nature of historical consciousness; and the role that historical consciousness might play in the History Didactic enterprise. The proposed learning outcomes to determine the level of historical consciousness of the learners are: knowledge and skills; values and attitudes; and distinctive learning outcomes apposite to the assessment of historical consciousness.

#### **4.5.3.1 Knowledge and skills**

In the domain of knowledge and skills pertaining to the subject History the following learning outcomes are proposed:

- The learner is able to show an ability to use specialist historical terminology and concepts in order to analyse historical processes and events; construct a general historical frame of reference; and gain an authentic image of the past.
- The learner is able to show evidence of critical thinking skills, value judgements, problem-solving skills, communication skills, co-operative learning and public-speaking.
- The learner is able to address a wide range of historical evidence with a view to evaluating its usefulness and reliability.
- The learner is able to identify different representations of the past and can, on the basis of an analysis of evidence and historical knowledge, form a sound opinion as to their quality and veracity.



#### **4.5.3.2 Values and attitudes**

In the domain of values and attitudes pertaining to the subject History the following outcomes are proposed:

- The learner discloses a common humanity with people of the past and shows an imaginative identification with them.
- The learner displays the aptitude to analyse the diverse range of ideas, beliefs and attitudes of particular periods and societies, and understand how these would influence his/her actions in the present and the future.
- The learner demonstrates the capacity to look upon different historical perspectives in an objective, impartial and empathetic manner in the understanding that different people in the past saw their problems in various ways.
- The learner shows a sense of broad citizenship which owes a wider allegiance not only to his/her own country, but to the world and mankind as a whole.
- The learner is able to see history as something significant which lends meaning to his/her life, confirms his/her sense of a personal and purposeful identity, and which changes for the better people and their world.
- The learner is able to list the basic values of history necessary for an understanding of today's world.

### **4.5.3.3 Distinctive learning outcomes apposite to the assessment of historical consciousness**

In assessing the historical consciousness of learners they should be seen to demonstrate several qualities which make manifest the operation of a well-balanced historical consciousness.

These are:

- The learner demonstrates, both through writing and verbally, a clear perception of the inter-relatedness between past, present and future.
- The learner shows, through the knowledge he/she has gained about past events, his/her capacity of looking at the past and distinguishing the specific temporal quality that differentiates it from the present.
- The learner displays the ability to bridge differences between the time dimensions through a consciousness of a temporal whole which encompasses past, present and future.
- The learner shows the ability to discern past events not only as isolated moments occurring in time but in relationship to one another, forming an overall picture in which each particular event is part of a wider whole.
- The learner evaluates past events in terms of their relevance for the present and to discern that the present is, in reality, the fulfillment of the past.
- The learner ascribes meaning to his/her own present situation in a manner which reflects the value he/she attaches to the past and the expectations he/she has for the future. His/her activities in the present are directed toward making life more meaningful in the future.
- The learner demonstrates an awareness of inherited traditions which embody values and value systems, and manifest a loyalty to their original spirit.

- The learner evinces a perception of “togetherness” of social groups or wider societies in terms of a sense of common origins.
- The learner possesses a set of behavioural frameworks by which he/she is able to scrutinize past events and discern similar practices in the present in conformity with a general idea of human conduct which is regarded as valid for all time.
- The learner demonstrates a well-developed critical approach to past events while regarding all negative events, past and present, as transformational and in progress towards more positive configurations.

#### **4.5.4 Learning activities to determine and assess the level of development of historical consciousness of the learners**

Before presenting a learning programme designed to determine and assess the historical consciousness of learners in South African public schools, in which *The Holocaust* constitutes the central sub-theme, it is essential that learners are in possession of a solid body of factual information about the subject under discussion. They should have gained this prior knowledge from a close study of their textbook and might, in addition, have been brought to a deeper understanding of *The Holocaust* through a viewing of such movies as *Schindler’s List*, *The Pianist* and *The Devil’s Arithmetic*; or/and through a reading of the *Diary of Anne Frank*. The use of the internet would prove to be of great value in this regard. The extensive internet site, *Cybrary of the Holocaust (1939-1945)*, for example, contains full-text materials, images, eye-witness accounts and bibliographies about *The Holocaust*; while the site, *Simon Wiesenthal*

*Center*, dedicated to the concept of tolerance, chronicles the history of human rights and features exhibits, articles, glossaries and links to other Holocaust sites (Craver 1999:179).

It may be expected that during the Further Education and Training phase (schools), History learners would have a fair understanding of such concepts as holocaust; genocide; and anti-semitism; and that they have mastered such facts as the reasons for Nazi persecution of the Jews before and after World War II; and the course which Nazi policy against the Jews took in the Third Reich. Using this knowledge and understanding, critically and judiciously, will go a long way towards helping learners to appreciate the timeless universal lessons which this unparalleled event imparts; and will play a major role in facilitating the determination and assessment of the level of development of historical consciousness which they have attained (Blumberg 1968:13-20).

**Activity 1: Individual questionnaire (An assessment of general historical consciousness)**

Facilitator distributes a questionnaire containing the following questions:

1. To what extent do you think it is necessary to study the past. Do you think the past teaches us anything meaningful? Substantiate your view.
2. Do you talk about history with your family and friends in your everyday life? What events would most likely be the topic of conversation?
3. Who is the one person in history you honour the most? What contribution did he/she make to present and future generations?
4. Do you have an optimistic or pessimistic view of the future? State the reason for your view.

5. In what fundamental way is the past different from the present?
6. What is the significance, if any, of inherited traditions?
7. Do you know what the concept “historical consciousness” is?
8. Do you think that events have definite causes or does the accidental play a role in history?
9. Is there a relationship between past, present and future, or are all events only isolated moments occurring in time? Motivate your answer.

Learners are asked to answer the questions individually.

### **Activity 2: Group work activity**

The facilitator briefly revises the factual information about *The Holocaust* previously learned in the classroom. The learners are then divided into four groups, and each group is assigned one of the following questions:

Group 1: Would the study of *The Holocaust* make any repetition of the Nazi genocide less likely? State your reasons.

Group 2: Should the rationale for study of *The Holocaust* be primarily historical or should a moral or social dimension be included? State your reasons.

Group 3: What is the function of a Holocaust Exhibition or Museum? To what extent does it perform this function effectively?

Group 4: Why, despite the lessons learned from the Holocaust, are religious and ethnic groups still persecuted at the present time?

After a free and uninhibited discussion of the question, the reporter of each group is called upon to present, verbally, a summary of the fruits of its discussion to the class as a whole. The ideas and knowledge gleaned will thus be shared by the class as a whole.

### **Activity 3: Class discussion**

This activity calls for a participative discussion in which the entire class will be involved (see Chapter 3, pp. 130-132). The facilitator writes the following statement on the chalkboard: “The Holocaust was a significant event in history in terms of its causes, its impact on the present, and its consequences for the future.” Discuss the extent to which the above statement is true. The learners are allowed to take five to ten minutes to write down what this statement represents. After completion of this task, the learners discuss their ideas. The main points deriving from the discussion will be summarized by the teacher/facilitator on the blackboard.

At the end of the discussion the learners might be asked to write a short essay highlighting these points, thereby consolidating the knowledge that they have acquired during the course of the learning programme.

### **4.5.5 Assessment of the outcomes of the learning programme**

Historical consciousness is a mental activity which requires a high degree of skill and competence on the part of the teacher/facilitator to detect. The instruments for this detection are the learning outcomes which have been formulated previously (see pp. 227-230). Thus, in assessing the historical consciousness of the learners by means of observation of those

performance tasks in which *The Holocaust* constitutes the school's learning programme organiser, the teacher/facilitator might, for example, endeavour to answer the following questions:

- Was the learner able to define the most important concepts related to the Nazi persecution of the Jews, e.g. holocaust; genocide; and anti-Semitism; and could he/she define the reasons for this persecution and discuss the course which Nazi policy against the Jews took in the Third Reich.
- Is the learner capable of placing these events within a general historical frame of reference?
- Was the learner able to show evidence of critical thinking, communication skills, co-operative learning and public debate?
- Does the learner have an interest in furthering his/her History studies?
- To what extent does the learner regard the study of the past as meaningful?
- Does the learner engage in outside-the-classroom discussions about historical issues with his/her family and friends?
- To what extent does the learner perceive an inter-relatedness of past-present-future?
- Does the learner see the events of the past as sign-posts for present and future orientation?
- Does the learner disclose a common humanity with people of the past and show an imaginative identification with them?
- Was the learner able to analyse the process of genocide and mass destruction which occurred during the Third Reich and relate it to other such patterns which have manifested themselves both in the past and at the present time?
- Does the learner possess a set of behavioural principles by means of which he/she is able to critically scrutinize past events in terms of what he/she deems morally justifiable?

All the preceding questions relating to the assessment of the outcomes of the learning programme could be assessed by means of the holistic rubric below.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
4	Demonstrates complete understanding of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes associated with historical consciousness.
3	Demonstrates considerable understanding of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes associated with historical consciousness.
2	Demonstrates partial understanding of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes associated with historical consciousness.
1	Demonstrates little or no understanding of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes associated with historical consciousness.

In reporting learner achievement these four levels are to be used:

Level 1 - Not achieved

Level 2 - Partially achieved

Level 3 - Achieved

Level 4 - Outstanding / Excellent achieved

If the teacher/facilitator wants to use percentages to record learner achievement, the following table provides a method of converting percentages into levels:

<b>Percentages (%)</b>	<b>Levels</b>
1% - 39%	1
40% - 49%	2
50% - 69%	3
70% - 100%	4

(DNE 2002b.:20, 24)



## **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The general aim of this chapter has been to propose ways in which historical consciousness in learners in the Further Education and Training phase of South African public schools might be oriented and advanced through History studies, so as to give them direction in determining the shape of their present and their future. To this end a number of classroom examples have been provided to aid teachers in their practical day-to-day teaching activities. An example of an outcomes-based History learning programme has also been provided to assist History teachers in determining and assessing the level of development of the historical consciousness of the learners in their charge. In the next chapter a summary of the entire thesis and general concluding remarks will be presented, as well as recommendations made as to how the historical consciousness approach to History studies might best be pursued in South African public schools.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introductory remarks

In this final chapter, by way of crystallizing the present research project, a chapter-by-chapter summary will be provided, and, having completed the work, the main conclusions arrived at will be delineated. Finally, a list of recommendations will be presented, to assist teachers in the advancement of historical consciousness in the History classroom in South African public schools using, among others, the so-called historical consciousness approach.

#### 5.2 Summary

**CHAPTER ONE:** This introductory chapter commences by placing the present investigation on a firm theoretical-conceptual basis. Focusing initially on the main title of the thesis – “The development of historical consciousness in the teaching of History in South African schools” – it proceeds with the clarification of such key concepts as: history; historical consciousness; teaching and History teaching; development; South African schools and Outcomes-based Education (see Chapter 1, pp. 4-20). In the course of the discussion the chapter refers, briefly, to several controversies which currently prevail among historians, and which have been carried over into the History teaching profession. These involve such questions as whether History should deal with contemporary issues or whether it concern itself

solely with the past; whether History teachers concentrate exclusively on providing learners with the historical facts, or whether they demonstrate that History imparts more lasting values and attitudes than factual knowledge alone; and whether History become integrated into a more comprehensive framework of “clustered” subjects, or whether it retain its unique structure as an autonomous discipline (see Chapter 1, pp. 4-7; 8-11). All these issues are fundamental to the very nature of History and are discussed extensively within the main body of the thesis.

To lend focus to the study as a whole, a brief description of the several functions of historical consciousness is then provided: significant among these is the function to assist us in comprehending past actuality in order to grasp present actuality and to bestow on present actuality a future perspective; and the function which enables us to engage actively in experiencing time to be meaningful (see Chapter 1, pp. 7-8).

Caution is taken in this chapter to ensure that the concept “development” in this thesis is understood, essentially, as the “unfolding” of the natural cognitive and affective abilities of the learner. This study eschews as undidactical any form of instructional system that regards learning as causal-mechanistic. Through his/her learning experiences, the FET phase learner not only comes to a fuller understanding of the world, but also discovers that life has meaning. This understanding and discovery can, it is maintained, be facilitated through a deepening of historical consciousness in which imagination and empathy play a primary role (Chapter 1, pp. 12-13).

A brief reference is made in this introductory chapter to the school system in South Africa (see Chapter 1, pp.13-17). This system includes public, independent and home schools. It is indicated that the desire on the part of the government for the gradual integration of learners of diverse cultural and racial backgrounds into a unitary school system, has, to a large degree, been accomplished in the multi-cultural schools that have been established mainly in the urban areas of the country. This study investigates, in later chapters, the manner in which this “rubbing of cultural elbows” and the opening of “highways of social intercommunication”, might be facilitated.

This section concludes with a brief reference to the outcomes-based approach to education proposed by the Department of Education in 1997, within the framework of which historical studies is presently being pursued (see Chapter 1, pp. 17-20). It discusses the justification for the adoption of the new approach; briefly examines several of its basic theoretical assumptions; and emphasises OBE’s primary aim as being the development of critical, investigative, creative, problem-solving, communicative future-oriented citizens (DNE 1997b:10). This section of the chapter also refers briefly to some of the difficulties currently being experienced by teachers who grapple to adjust to this new “paradigm shift” in education.

The next section of this introductory chapter provides a brief background to the study (see Chapter 1, pp. 20-22). It outlines the several empirical investigations that have been carried out in Europe and Asia in recent years into the development of historical consciousness among children, adolescents and adults, and suggests that the findings of these enquiries may well prove edifying to those wishing to engage in similar research within a South African context.

The section goes on to consider the various educational and socio-economic factors that have given rise to the marginalisation of History as a school subject in South African schools; and which have, in consequence, hampered the development of historical consciousness at the present time (see Chapter 1, pp. 23-28). It refers to the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000) which has recently demonstrated that contemporary History classroom procedure continues to be plagued by rote learning and memorisation; lack of learner involvement; a “regurgitation” of facts, and overuse of the textbook and note-taking. In addition, society as a whole now appears to judge History as being irrelevant and lacking in utilitarian purpose. The utilisation of History by the apartheid regime as an ideological tool has likewise impugned the legitimacy of History as a subject in the school curriculum. The main problem, stated in this chapter, and one which is addressed by the thesis as a whole, is whether, despite this combination of factors which has given rise to the impoverishment of the subject History in South African schools, an effective methodology cannot be found that will develop the historical consciousness of learners, and thereby restore to the subject the respect and dignity it formerly possessed.

The chapter continues with a presentation of the researcher’s personal motivation for the research (see Chapter 1, pp. 28-31) in which high tribute is paid to the German didactician and philosopher, J. Rüsen, the fruit of whose labour in the field of the didactics of historical consciousness is regarded by the researcher as being crucial to the revitalisation of History studies in South African public schools in the future. A statement of the main aims of the thesis is then specified (see Chapter 1, p. 32) namely, to stimulate innovation in History studies and encourage the teaching of History within an historical consciousness approach to

education. Special note is made of the fact that according to this approach, history no longer is identified only with the past. Rather, history is conceived as encompassing past, present and future. The chapter concludes with a description of the research method employed in the course of the study and a demarcation of the field of research (see Chapter 1, pp. 33-35). Emphasis is placed on the fact that this study is wholly of a theoretical-didactical nature, its chief purpose being to lay the theoretical foundation for a comparatively new approach to the teaching of History, the basic principles of which have not, as yet, been explored in this country. The hope is expressed that this study will serve as a basis for further empirical research.

The following hypotheses have been formulated in this introductory chapter to guide the research process:

- In a period of profound educational change in South African public schools it is imperative that if the sense of collective identity; the preservation of traditional values; and the appreciation of the cultural heritage of learners is to be maintained, the best route to take in the cultivation of History studies, is the path afforded by the concept “historical consciousness”.
- Historical consciousness, as a primary element of History study, can legitimately be developed in learners within the context of the newly adopted OBE approach to education, because the basic principles of both OBE and History study are consonant with the highest didactical criteria, and are largely compatible with one another.

**CHAPTER TWO:** This chapter commences with an examination of the nature and functions of historical consciousness (see Chapter 2, pp. 37-54). Beginning with a definition of the concept “consciousness” as a general mental condition which plays a primary, constitutive and purposive role which gives meaning to human existence, it then proceeds to discuss particular aspects of collective and historical memory, and their relationship to each other and to historical consciousness which activates them. An operational definition of the concept “historical consciousness” based on that devised by J. Rüsen is then presented. According to this definition, which operates as the theoretical corner-stone of this study, historical consciousness is characterised by a complex, constantly changing correlation between interpretation of the past, perception of the present reality and future expectations.

A further scrutiny of this mental phenomenon reveals the several basic functions which historical consciousness may be seen to satisfy. These are: the perception of the inter-relatedness between past and present; the attribution of meaning and orientation to life; and the nurturing of a sense of future-orientation. While dealing with these basic functions, the discussion in this chapter revolves around several basic issues (see Chapter 2, pp. 47-54). Some of these are: Firstly, that past events are perceived through historical consciousness as having relevance for the present as well. According to this perception the present becomes a dimension of history, being in reality a fulfillment of the past and serves to reflect the value a person attaches to the past. Secondly, that historical consciousness serves to arouse curiosity and a sense of wonder about the past. Thirdly, that through historical consciousness, the study of the past can provide a valuable historical perspective on some of the most pressing problems of our time. Fourthly, that historical consciousness assists in ascribing meaning and

significance to a person's temporal existence; it imposes a meaningful pattern on a seemingly meaningless past, thus confirming one's sense of personal and purposeful identity. Fifthly, that by means of historical consciousness one extends the limits of human consciousness beyond a single life-span. Sixthly, that historical consciousness projects a vision of the future; although this future is unpredictable, a person is activated to fashion a set of goals in terms of experience gained in the present and the past.

In a further section of this chapter a brief survey is made of the several modes of historical consciousness which have been manifest at different periods in history (see Chapter 2, pp 55-81). Beginning with the pre-literate age (before approx. 3000 BCE), and continuing through the ages down to the twentieth century, an attempt is made to demonstrate how historical consciousness is particularly affected by the material and moral circumstances of the age and society in which it is exercised. In order to gauge the presence or absence of historical consciousness at any given period in history, certain criteria have been applied in this section, the most crucial being the extent to which societies demonstrated the capacity to perceive history as "a mirror of past actuality into which the present peers in order to learn something about the future" (Rüsen 1993:67).

It is shown in this section how the notion that mankind is always in a state of transition towards a new condition in the future, appears intermittently throughout the ages. Finding its fullest expression in the Hebraic heritage of civilization with its perception of history as ultimately meaningful and purposefully redemptive, this notion remained unknown in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds which harboured a cyclical view of history in which



civilization was subject to an ever-recurring life-cycle of growth, maturity and decay, and which rendered historical consciousness impossible. Medieval thinkers, following the ancient Israelites, believed that the world was moving inexorably according to G-d's purpose towards the Last Judgement. They paid no heed however, to the notion of historical change in secular affairs. It was only during the later Renaissance, during the seventeenth century, and with the advent of the age of Enlightenment during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that historians and philosophers interpreted the past according to the idea of progress, which for them meant the moral and material improvement of mankind by the application of reason. This hope in "historical progress" began to fade during the twentieth century when, as a result of two World Wars the sense of meaning in history sharply declined. The accusation by postmodernists is that history is plagued by relativism and that nothing can be learned from it to guide the actions of the present, has added to the sense of the hollowness of the past and to the concomitant diminution of historical consciousness.

An historical overview of the various modes of historical consciousness which have emerged in South African history, from the earliest period of settlement until the present time, is then presented and, wherever evidence is extant, the impact of these variegated perspectives on the teaching of History as a school subject in South African public schools is traced (see Chapter 2, pp. 82-102). What emerges in the course of this analysis is the manner in which the major population groups (British, Afrikaner, Black) residing in South Africa before the advent of democracy in 1994 viewed the past, and how these divergent modes of historical awareness created a political, cultural and social breach which left an indelible mark on the education system, making a common orientation towards the future impossible.

The chapter continues with an acknowledgement of the several initiatives that were taken between the mid-eighties and early nineties of the last century towards the introduction of a “new” South African History (see Chapter 2, pp. 102-107). Significant in this regard was the emphasis placed by role-players such as policy-makers, parents, teachers and educationists alike on the need to make History appropriate for a democratic society; it was urged that a new interpretation of History be introduced that would redress past wrongs and restore the history of the oppressed people as part of a common national heritage. The call also went out during this period, to teach learners how to use skills, the development of which would be based on the learners’ own experiences and to introduce into the classroom a history which would be more topical and relevant to the South African situation.

The chapter concludes with a brief account of how the so-called historical consciousness approach to the teaching of History as a school subject is presently gaining ground overseas (see Chapter 2, pp. 105-106). It laments the fact that little debate on this matter has taken place in South Africa, and states that, at the present time, history appears to have no obvious relevance to the needs and pressures of the contemporary world.

**CHAPTER THREE:** In this chapter suggestions are made for the effective implementation of an outcomes-based approach to the teaching of History in the Further Education and Training phase (schools). The chapter commences with an analysis of the basic theoretical principles of Outcomes-based education (OBE), with special emphasis being placed on the definition of the term “outcomes”; on the types of outcomes which should find expression in the learning programmes, and on the holistic relationship existing between outcomes and

learning programmes; and on the principles upon which learning programmes might be constructed in order to promote the attainment of these outcomes (see Chapter 3, pp. 109-128). Several of these principles, (e.g. individuality; learner-centredness; activity; participative learning and relevancy) are all shown to fully satisfy the highest didactical criteria.

The principle of individuality, the first of the didactical principles to be analysed in this section, acknowledges the fact that individuals differ from one another and that the teacher has to take these differences into account when planning and carrying out teaching strategies. Each learner brings with him/her distinctive resources for transforming what he/she studies into knowledge with personal meaning (see Chapter 3, pp. 118-120). The second principle studied in this section, the principle of learner-centredness, focuses clearly and deliberately on learners and learning rather than primarily on content-based and teacher-centred instruction. In accordance with this principle learning programmes are constructed to give all learners an equal opportunity to achieve learning outcomes (see Chapter 3, pp. 120-122). The third principle examined in this section is the integration of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. According to this principle any attempt to develop the intellect, the emotions and the will as separate faculties should be abandoned as undidactical. All these faculties must be integrated if the learner who attains them is to be seen as a whole person (see Chapter 3, pp. 122-124). The fourth principle appraised in this section is the principle of relevancy. This principle acknowledges the fact that learners are more likely to be motivated to learn if the work will assist them in some way to value themselves as individuals and see a meaning and purpose in their existence (see Chapter 3, p. 125). The fifth principle discussed in this section is the principle of activity which is seen to be fundamental because the learner is, by nature, an

active participant in life. According to this principle the tendency in schools to transmit a commodity called knowledge which learners are expected to passively ingest must be studiously avoided (see Chapter 3, pp. 126). The sixth principle dealt with in this section, the principle of participative learning is recommended here because this form of learning promotes the acceptance of diversity by presenting opportunities for learners of varying backgrounds to work interdependently on common tasks and learn to appreciate each other: (see Chapter 3, pp. 126-128).

The *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002a.:14) indicates knowledge, skills, values and attitudes as constituting what “learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training Band” or FET phase. A section of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of each of the above-mentioned components (see Chapter 3, pp. 122-124). Knowledge gained through meaningful learning-content is still regarded by educationists as being of great importance because it enables learners to interpret aspects of reality and to establish their own perspective on reality. Skills are indispensable if learners are to become independent. These skills might include, *inter alia*, collecting information from a variety of sources; discussion with other people; observation; making notes; interpretation and evaluation. Values and attitudes play a vital role in creating, *inter alia*, an awareness of human rights; social justice; democratic values; and a respect for human dignity.

The chapter continues to discuss the various types of activity that teachers might consider when constructing learning programmes that lead to the mastery of outcomes (see Chapter 3, pp. 128-136). In OBE a wide range of activities of this nature is employed to accommodate

different learning styles. These activities might include: individualised learning activity in which instructional procedures are adapted to meet individual learners' needs, and participative learning activity in which learners are engaged in learning procedures either as a class; in partner pairs; or in groups of varying sizes. Several effective participative learning activities are discussed in this section of the chapter (see Chapter 3, pp. 130-136). Here, the activity of discussion is accorded great significance because it allows for the expression of a broad range of viewpoints which can lead to the development of mutual tolerance and respect (see Chapter 3, pp. 131-132). Another learning activity discussed in this section is the question-and-answer method, which allows for the participation of both facilitator and learners in a creative learning experience (Chapter 3, pp. 135-136).

The next section of the chapter deals with the listing of a set of assessment practices designed primarily to determine the progress of learners towards the achievement of the above-mentioned outcomes (see Chapter 3, pp. 138-140). A number of principles are listed to which effective assessment is expected to conform. According to these principles assessment procedure should, *inter alia*, be valid, reliable, fair, comprehensive and explicit. Several types of assessment are also listed here. These are: diagnostic assessment, which determines learning difficulties and which takes place before learning commences; formative assessment, which determines the progress of learners and takes place during the learning process; summative assessment, which determines the overall achievement of the learner and takes place at the end of the learning programme; and continuous assessment, which provides continuous feedback to learners.

The final section of the chapter advocates how an outcomes-based approach to History education in the Further Education and Training phase (schools) might be effectively implemented (see Chapter 3, pp. 142-156). According to this proposal, History, while yet being accorded the status of an autonomous discipline with its own unique axiomatic structures and abstract concepts, is taught within the framework of OBE which places the emphasis on the knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes that the learner needs to acquire, and the competences he/she needs to demonstrate at the end of this phase of learning. This being the case, it is thus suggested that the outcomes of History must, of necessity, be formulated as pertaining specifically and uniquely to the subject History. In accordance with this view an analysis is made, in the remaining sections of the chapter (see pp. 143-156), of the following specific History outcomes which, it is argued, should form the basis of all History programmes: the construction of historical knowledge and understanding; the application of historical skills; the acquisition of historical concepts; the ability to evaluate and use evidence; the comprehension of the role of narrative and the textbook in History studies; the awareness of values and the ability to make sound value judgements; and the ability to understand and demonstrate civic responsibility and democratic values. The chapter concludes by reiterating that all the manifold principles utilised in this study are based on strict didactical principles.

**CHAPTER FOUR:** This chapter proposes a so-called historical consciousness approach to the teaching of History in the Further Education and Training phase (schools) within the framework of an outcomes-based approach to education. The chapter commences with an indication of the role which historical consciousness has come to play in the didactics of

History theory in Germany, America and Canada, and speculates on its potential to transform and enrich History studies in South Africa (see Chapter 3, pp. 157-159). The very idea of conceiving history as no longer identified with the past alone, but as a process that encompasses the past, present and future, might well, it is suggested, lead to a new appreciation of the legacy and meaning of the past, as well as to a new capacity to assess and judge contemporary problems and complexities within the context of their evolution in time.

In the next section of this chapter an investigation is made into the contemporary didactical theory of the noted German didactician, J. Rüsen, in which the general analysis of the nature and significance of historical consciousness plays a major role (see Chapter 4, pp. 160-164). Special reference is made to his presentation of a general typology of historical consciousness. According to Rüsen, there are four basic modes of historical consciousness, each of which requires adequate development if the didactics of History enterprise is to succeed. These models, he termed the traditional, the exemplary, the critical and the genetic. The traditional mode of historical consciousness, so Rüsen expounds, functions to keep traditions alive. Such traditions define the cohesion of social groups in providing a sense of common origin, as well as shape personal identity. The exemplary mode of historical consciousness entails the application of historically derived rules to actual situations in the present. Historical memories are viewed not as the remembrance of the infinite number of events in the past but only in relation to “an abstract idea of temporal change and human conduct valid for all times” (Rüsen 1993:72). The critical mode of historical consciousness renders problematic value systems and life systems based on age-old traditions. Finally, the genetic mode of historical consciousness represents experience of past actuality as “transformational events (which)

evolve into more positive modern configurations” (Rüsen 1993:72). Rüsen (see Chapter 4, p. 162) asserts that History education is essential in developing historical consciousness from the traditional into the genetic stage, that is to say from a spontaneous and uneducated awareness which is shaped by tradition, legends and myths, to a multidimensional, multiperspectival consciousness of the past, the present and the future. It is this new orientation in the didactics of History theory which has, to a large extent, served as a foundation for the remaining investigation upon which this study is embarked.

The next section of the chapter explores several of the specifically didactical functions which historical consciousness is seen to fulfill in the teaching and learning of History as a school subject (see Chapter 4, pp. 164-199). The first and most basic of these functions of historical consciousness is the preservation of tradition, culture and collective identity. This section highlights the important role which traditions play in providing a sense of security and stability in learners’ lives; the formation of a cultural heritage which fills the learner’s present life-world with cultural content; and the shaping of historical identity as the core of national culture. Practical suggestions are then put forward as to how the historical consciousness of learners in a multicultural classroom environment might best be advanced to nurture the learner’s traditional culture and historical identity (see Chapter 4, pp. 170-175).

The chapter continues with a discussion of such themes as academic and spontaneous historical consciousness; the relationship of historical consciousness to national identity; ideology; critical historical consciousness; and temporal change and continuity (see Chapter 4, pp. 175-199). An attempt is also made in this section of the chapter to demonstrate how



historical consciousness might further be advanced and intensified through the nurturing of empathetic understanding; the development of moral consciousness; and the cultivation of a multi-perspective interpretation of history (see Chapter 4, pp. 200-223). In addition to a theoretical analysis of such themes, special treatment is also given in this section to the provision of classroom examples, which will allow for the practical engagement, through a wide variety of learning activities, of the learner's historical consciousness, thereby assisting South African History teachers to design similar learning activities within their own classroom environments.

The next section of the chapter deals with the construction of an outcomes-based History learning programme designed to determine and assess the historical consciousness of learners in the South African public schools (see Chapter 4, pp. 224-235). The approach to learning programmes design taken in this chapter is fully in accordance with the requirements of *Curriculum 2005* and the *Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002)*. In this learning programme, the learning programme organiser – *The Holocaust* – has been selected as being most appropriate for the assessment of historical consciousness in Grades 10 to 12.

A set of learning outcomes, which might be utilised as criteria when assessing the depth and scope of the historical consciousness of learners, is then proposed. Among these are several outcomes which are uniquely apposite to the assessment of historical consciousness, requiring as they do a demonstration of the learner's ability, *inter alia*, to show a clear perception of the inter-relatedness between past, present and future events; the capacity to participate in the ongoing dialogue between historical and contemporary reality; the ability to distinguish the

specific temporal quality that differentiates the past from the present; the competence to form an overall picture in which each particular event of the past is part of a wider whole; and to ascribe meaning to his/her own present situation in a manner which reflects the value he/she attaches to the past, and the expectations he/she has for the future.

The chapter continues with a selection of learning activities which might be implemented as a framework in which the assessment of learners' historical consciousness might be attained. These activities might include: an individual questionnaire; group work activity and class discussions. Assessment of outcomes conforms to the principles laid down in Chapter 3 of this thesis (see Chapter 3, pp. 138-140). A rubric is also provided to assist teachers in recording learner achievement. The chapter concludes in the firm belief that the adoption of a so-called historical consciousness approach will lend a new legitimacy to the subject History which can play a significant role in enriching learners' lives in the present, and in orienting them towards a better future.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

Following an extensive study of the pertinent literature (both the literature of historical consciousness as well as that pertaining to History teaching and outcomes-based education) and in terms of the hypotheses generated in Chapter 1 (see pp. 34-35), it can be concluded that, in a period of profound educational change in South African public schools it is imperative that, if the sense of collective identity; the preservation of traditional values; and the appreciation of the cultural heritage of learners is to be maintained, the best route in the

cultivation of History studies is the path afforded by the concept and notion of historical consciousness. Historical consciousness as one of the primary elements of History study, can, as has been demonstrated in this thesis, legitimately be developed in learners within the context of the newly-adopted OBE approach to education because the basic principles of both OBE and History study are consonant with the highest didactical criteria, as well as being largely compatible with one another.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to facilitate the adaptation of the so-called historical consciousness approach to the teaching of History in South African public schools, and in so doing develop and advance the historical consciousness of learners, the following recommendations are put forward for consideration:

### **5.4.1 Training and retraining of teachers/facilitators/educators in the historical consciousness approach**

The success or failure of any endeavour to develop historical consciousness in learners in South African public schools will depend on the teachers that comprise the History teaching profession in South Africa. Only when there is a well-trained, confident and well-informed body of teachers can any degree of achievement be attained. Teachers should thus be trained to see themselves as bearers of historical knowledge; promoters of historical skills; and nurturers of values and historical consciousness. A situation in which teachers are incapable

of dealing with the challenges which History as a school subject provides at the present time, because of a lack of the necessary competencies, is one that cannot be condoned. The provision of a more effective initial training of History teachers is therefore imperative to provide teachers with the confidence of ability to become effective in the classroom. Pre-service training programmes should therefore include an in-depth study of all the theoretical principles dealt with in this thesis, as well as the methodology needed for their successful implementation in practice. In-service training programmes should continue to train teachers in the newer pedagogic skills in enrichment programmes organised outside the confines of the school. Training in the new so-called historical consciousness approach to History teaching would be of utmost significance in this regard. Highly trained History Subject Advisors should also be appointed to render assistance to teachers mastering this approach.

At the heart of this new approach to History teaching lies the profound knowledge and understanding of the nature and significance of historical consciousness. Trainee History teachers need, firstly, to grasp the significance of the general role of historical consciousness in the temporal life-orientation of individuals and societies. Secondly, and crucial to their teaching task, they will need to be completely conversant with the specifically didactical functions which historical consciousness may be seen to satisfy in the teaching and learning of History as a school subject. They need to be aware, too, of the various ways in which historical consciousness can, itself, be developed for the enrichment of History studies, and, indeed, for the mental and emotional welfare of learners as a whole.

In the course of their professional careers, teachers/facilitators need to familiarise themselves with the physical, mental, emotional and volitional characteristics of the learners in their charge, as they pass through the various phases of their learning careers. This knowledge is of particular importance during the FET phase of learners (Grades 10 to 12), when some of these changes can be of a dramatic nature (see Chapter 1, pp. 12-13). To this end, trainee History teachers should engage in an intensive study of the Psychology of Education to prepare them to meet this challenge.

It is of paramount importance that ample time be allocated during initial teacher training to equip prospective History teachers to be able to implement the new outcomes-based approach to History as a subject effectively. For those large numbers of History teachers who were not trained in this new educational approach in their initial training, there is an urgent need for a specialised in-service training programme, offered by the faculties of education of universities, in which the basic theoretical principles of Outcomes-based Education could be expounded. Many of these teachers, trained in highly biased apartheid history would naturally have a great lack of confidence about their own knowledge, and even a reluctance to abandon outworn curricula and methodology, and much forbearance will be necessary in this respect.

#### **5.4.2 Methodology for the historical consciousness approach**

Teachers must be able to make informed decisions about the type of learning activity that should be initiated in the History classroom to achieve the required outcome, namely, the nurturing of historical consciousness. It is recommended that participative learning activity

become the mainstay of History teaching and learning for the advancement of historical consciousness. The foundation of co-operatively achieved learning success is, to a large measure, based on learners talking back and forth with one another on topics that are meaningful and relevant to them. But this activity should not become a “fetish”. There are times in which teacher-talk should predominate, just as there are times when learning should be allowed to continue quietly with the teacher supervising learners as they work on individual assignments.

A great deal more use should also be made of the in-depth interview method as a research tool to investigate the oral traditions of learners, i.e. the narratives and descriptions of people and events in the past which have been handed down by word of mouth over several generations. Ways must be found to integrate the personal memories of learners into the curriculum.

It is also imperative that learners be offered opportunities to read texts that both affirm and interrogate the complexities of their own histories. It is here recommended, in compliance with the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000), that learners in the History classroom be taught to view the past from different perspectives which alter with the viewer and with time, “seeing history as a continuous argument between the present and the past, based on new assessments, positions and source material” (DNE 2000:13).

### **5.4.3 Revamping and strengthening the content and scope of the curriculum to accommodate the historical consciousness approach**

Knowledge of content will always be an essential outcome of the historical consciousness approach to History teaching. Free access to the broadest range of historical information must thus be provided in all public schools. This is, however, not always possible: many schools in South Africa still lack libraries, photocopiers and even the most basic instructional materials. This matter calls for an urgent response from the South African educational authorities.

The textbook remains central to the cause of an improved historical consciousness History education. Textbook development must thus avoid susceptibility to contemporary pressures, eschew partisan-political ideology, and remain in touch with recent academic historiographical development. The multi-perspectival approach to teaching History, presented in this thesis (see Chapter 4, pp. 214-223), is recommended here. It advocates that textbooks should try to incorporate a wide range of primary source voices, plural “histories” which have been affected by local, regional, national and international perspectives, which will stimulate debate among learners and encourage them to make judgements based on evidence.

Although there has been a broadening of the overarching narrative in History studies in South Africa to move beyond white history – an initiative which is well in accordance with the necessary adaptation to the needs of a democratic order – the present History curriculum does not effectively explain the formation of the present. As the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000) has made clear, while detailed study is required of the development of apartheid

policy and resistance until 1976, “there is nothing by way of curricular content or guidelines to spur on the study of South Africa in the 1976-1994 period”. As such, little attempt is made to engage the historical consciousness of the learner, so that he/she might perceive history as a process that encompasses not only the past, but the present and future as well.

In an historical consciousness approach to History teaching, the history of South Africa should not be presented as isolated from the British-Afrikaner-African past, nor from the rest of the African continent. Regarding the latter observation, the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000) levels criticism against the manner in which History is still taught in a fairly narrow and conventional way: the interim syllabus for Grades 10 to 12 remains overwhelmingly Eurocentric in conception. Decolonisation, independence movements and the post-1970s development of modern Africa are not processes for learner examination. This matter requires serious deliberation.

Implementation of an historical consciousness approach within the context of the new OBE system, content must be selected in such a manner as to allow, not only for the increase of the general knowledge of learners, but equally important, to develop their skills, critical thinking, attitudes and values as well. In view of the fact that, as the Report of the History/Archaeology Panel (2000) has indicated, the crowded content-driven FET phase of History curtails the freedom of both teachers and learners to investigate more deeply the rich inner substance of History, it is imperative that for a successful implementation of an historical consciousness approach this curriculum content be pared down through a process which uses transformational History and historical consciousness outcomes as its criteria.



Ideally, all learners need, first and foremost, to be brought into contact with and gain understanding of, those defining events which belong to the past in which all South Africans have a common share. Yet, within this framework, textbooks should allow room for regional or provincial experiences which have an integral link to the overarching South-African past.

#### **5.4.4 Promoting History as a discipline as a means to implement the historical consciousness approach and ultimately advance the historical consciousness of all learners**

To develop and advance the historical consciousness of learners in public schools, there is an urgent need to remove the many misconceptions that prevail in the minds of potential learners and their parents, government officials, and, indeed, the general public, about History as a school subject. The idea that History is a subject which is learned “for its own sake” must be eschewed as elitist and unacceptable in an age in which pragmatism and vocationalism hold sway. History must be shown to have genuine relevance to the needs and pressures of a contemporary world. According to Schoeman (2003:6), the skills acquired through the study of History are of value in a wide range of work environments, including those which call for analyzing; effective communication; presentation of information; and seeking solutions to many present-day problems. More specifically, as this thesis has set out to demonstrate, historical consciousness, as a primary element of History studies, can play an essential role in fostering values of democracy and respect for human rights through a conscious awareness of the legacy and meaning of the past.

#### **5.4.5 Research projects relating to the historical consciousness approach and History teaching in South African public schools**

An ongoing engagement in research is essential in order to develop and to improve the range of knowledge and skills of the History teacher regarding the historical consciousness approach. Some research projects relating to History teaching which have yet to be carried out within South African History educational circles may for example be the following:

- Research on so-called “controversial issues” in History teaching. This research would be concerned with among others evaluating the ways to teach sensitive issues (such as race, gender, etc.) related to the South African past in an effective manner.
- Research on assessment in History teaching. Such a research project should consider a central element of the teacher’s role – authentic assessment procedures and performance-based assessment – which has crucial implications for the manner in which History is taught and learned.
- Research into the learners’ political awareness; knowledge of the different political parties; knowledge of parliamentary and local politics. How one can best educate learners in the History classroom about politics and government in order to make them responsible, effective and participating citizens.
- Research into the orienting role which tradition and folklore play in the lives of learners; the ways in which learners are influenced by the “unofficial history” which they ingest outside the classroom through television, films, novels, newspapers, magazines; and the extent to which a mythical version of history colours learners’ perceptions of the past.

- Research that investigates the extent to which the practice of multi-culturalism in schools is a true reflection of a cultural diversity in which learners are taught to think critically about social scourges such as racism and sexism, and are encouraged to show interest in another's culture and empathy towards its members.

These recommendations will, it is envisaged, assist in the formation of a conscious historical consciousness in learners in South African schools. It will be recognized, however, that they are, by no means exhaustive. Indeed, the development of historical consciousness in the teaching of History in South African public schools is such a comprehensive theme that justice cannot be done to it in a single thesis. It is hoped, however, that the adaptation of the so-called historical consciousness approach to History will open up a spectrum of opportunities for fresh educational research. A series of distinctive learning outcomes apposite to the assessment of historical consciousness to be used as guidelines in the design of a learning programme have been suggested in this thesis (see Chapter 4, pp. 229-230). It is hoped that this learning programme will serve as groundwork for a continued empirical investigation into the development of historical consciousness in South African public schools. Indeed, each of these outcomes can serve as the legitimate basis for empirical research particularly in the upper grades. Thus for example one might engage in:

- Research into the extent to which learners regard History as meaningful.
- Research to investigate the manner in which learners engage in mature ethical judgement when scrutinising past events.
- Research to determine whether learners perceive an inter-relatedness between the time-dimensions.

- Research to ascertain the ways in which learners are able to empathise with the peoples of the past without falling into the trap of anachronism, stereotyping and misunderstanding.

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